

Shapes of a Girl: The Archetypal Embodiments of Bjork

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“I’m a fountain of blood, in the shape of a girl.”

-- Bjork

The first time I really heard Bjork was a revelation to me indicating that something new could again be emerging on the frontier of modern music. Although I was already vaguely aware of the super-star musician Bjork for a number of years, I had barely paid much attention to perhaps nothing more than a few partial songs played over a radio-- until I finally heard the emotional power and creative genius of Bjork through listening to her song, “Bachelorette.” The song opens in a dramatically cinematic escalation of orchestral strings, from which then the sheer power and boldness of her voice emerges like the natural calling of a hungry female chimera from a dense and thriving forest of sound, “I’m a fountain of blood, in the shape of a girl.” Her vocals then continue to unravel in an emotionally explosive poetic rhapsody, delivering a song of enigmatic presence that ultimately climaxes and leaves the listener with a sense having been witness to an embodiment of the cosmic feminine force. Completely taken by the influence of this song on my mood and imagination, I soon found myself exploring the vast collection of Bjork’s musical artistry that spans more than seven albums over two decades. I came to recognize how Bjork, as a professional artist and radical alternative cultural icon, has sculpted not only a varied spectrum of styles and textures of artistic expres-

sion, but has also continuously transformed and re-invented her self as a persona in the process. The common perspective is that Bjork is uncategorizable, experimental, unpredictable, and intelligently passionate--one of the music world's most resolutely pioneering figures. In the biography, "Bjork: Wow and Flutter," Mark Pytlik says, "at the center of Bjork's enormous appeal is really, truly, a heart in arrested development, perpetually threatening to combust with the sheer force of so much emotion."

My intrigue into this super-star goddess naturally led me to consider her astrological natal chart. Born on November 21, 1965 at 8:50 AM in Reykjavik, Iceland, Bjork has the Sun, Moon, Neptune, and Ascendent all closely compounded in Scorpio. Additionally, the planet Pluto is in close conjunction with the Mid-Heaven axis (also in conjunctions with Uranus). These potent loci signify Bjork's uniquely tempered character representative of a vastly dynamic and expressive Scorpionic and Plutonic archetypal matrix. Bjork says of her own astrology:

Scorpio is all about life, death, and sex. ... My three fucking obsessions. I've got Pluto in a very important place, and that's what I'm all about. I have to re-create the universe every morning when i wake up. And kill it in the evening ...

In her song "Pluto," a violent, fast-paced, and technically intricate musical piece, Bjork sings, "Excuse me, but I have to explode this body of me." Bjork explains her intention behind the song:

It's about getting plastered, that need to destroy everything so you can start over again. Having a lot in the planet Pluto, which I do, means you want to cut the crap, throw all the rubbish away. No extra baggage. It's death and rebirth.

The techno throttle of the *Homogenic* album's next-to-last song is this static-touched exorcism, the anguished tremor before the eventual rebirth of "All is Full of

Love,” which then resonates with intricate sonic detail a transposition of angelic harmonies, invoking images of sub-molecular energy landscapes and quantum processes. In the multi-award-winning music video, this “love” is depicted through a high-resolution computer animation of Bjork as two 21st century industrial robots falling in love.

Accordingly, Bjork appears to embody the Scorpionic and Plutonic in a much broader and more powerful way than what might be more commonly associated with the typical and concrete expressions of the “dark side” of these archetypes (for example, wearing black leather and casting witchy spells). Clearly, as a vastly evolved creative genius, Bjork is somehow able to engage with utter “chaos in control” and emerge time and again with gifts of grand and intricately embellished beauty of both audio and visual artistry that is indicative of the natural force of evolution itself. Blending naturalism with technology, self-empowerment with unflinching vulnerability, and the avant-garde with her own irrefutably unique sensibilities, her voice trembles along the very edge of abysmal disintegration, ultimately resounding in powerfully graceful vocal spaces that depict extraordinary delicacy while never losing technical control of pitch or amplitude.

Bjork as Diva of Transformation

The most down to earth expression of Bjork’s Plutonic personality is in her clear mastery of personal change and transformation. Looking through the biography of Bjork’s life, both personal and professional, we clearly see transition points of change marked by new levels of self-empowerment and novel artistic expression. Having been

in a number of musical bands previous to going solo (including the “Sugarcubes” in the 1980s), Bjork never slowed down for long, using each experience as a rung to climb her genetic ladder upward to fully actualizing herself as an international music star.

Beyond these more general tendencies of marked transition in Bjork’s overall life stream, she also embodies a modality of *transformation* in a much more direct and literal way of personal “morphing.” Looking through the massive amount of available portraits, and her numerous music videos and films--one will notice the variety of incredible costumes, larger-than-life personas, and wild interactive atmospheres she casts herself into. From animals, to divas, to robots, to cartoon characters, to even a pre-natal fetus, and geologic formations--she reminds us of a little girl, fully grown up into the world as if it is a giant dress-up closet and creative play ground.

Her embodiment of roles often involves truly unique experimental artistry, including computer animation and special effects that truly tip and spin presentational innovation (Pluto / Uranus conjunction). The music video for “Hidden Place” contains a close-cropped shot of Bjork’s face, while computer-generated globules travel between various points in her facial tissue (out from her nostrils into the corner of her mouth, out from her crow’s feet onto her outstretched tongue), circulating like tiny vessels on a self-sustained transit system.

Much of Bjork’s artistry is representative of the intricate, inter-penetrating, and interior processes of the nature and the human body. We often see images of her entwined by natural foliage (or enshrouded by technology). And we often hear her lyrics describing biological forms or processes of nature, such as in “Triumph of the Heart”:

The nerves are sending
shimmering signals
all through my fingers
the veins support
blood that gushes
pulsively towards

The stubborn trunks
of these legs of mine
serve as pathways
for my favorite fuel
heading upwards towards
my kidneys

Smooth
soft, red
velvety lungs
are pushing a network
of oxygen joyfully
through a nose
through a mouth
but all enjoys
all enjoys

The triumph of a heart - that gives all

While observing Bjork's face and body in her photos and videos (very often naked), people may often experience her as a "shape-shifter," as if the very fabric of her skin is floating between boundaries of human, animal, and otherworldliness. In articles and interviews, she is typically conveyed as deeply enigmatic, offered her own unique pigeon-holes of cute word-play descriptions, such as: "The Elf Child, the Elfin Alien, A Deranged Pixie, The Icelandic Imp, The Otherworldly Icelandic Diva, Kooky Nordic Sprite, Bjonkers, Nordic Child-Woman, The Girl Who Fell to Earth, Lunar Astronaut", and the list goes on and on.

Bjork as Embodiment of Mother Nature, Re-Invented

Bjork, in her natural fusion of artistic expression and personal mastery, broadens her articulation of the Plutonic archetype through a certain dynamic aesthetic that

speaks enigmatically to the more globally sweeping motions, intricate forms, and powerful subtleties within the raw stream of the natural, evolution force. She appears to manifest aspects of the Plutonic archetype that represents “massive movement,” “big natural process” and “evolutionary beauty”--holding such song titles as “Nature is Ancient,” “Ancestors,” “SubMarine,” “Army of Me”, “Cocoon,” and “Oceania.”

The hit song “Joga,” written by Bjork while roaming around Iceland’s destitute landscape in solitude, is a tribute to voice Iceland’s spirit in geography and song. “With this song, I really had a sort of Icelandic national anthem in mind,” she said. “Not the national anthem but certain classic Icelandic songs--very romantic, very proud, very patriotic. Mountains, glaciers, that kind of thing.” The corresponding music video then presents unique arial photography of the Icelandic terrain, with computer-generated special effects to depict a changing, “living”, volcanic landscape, while Bjork sings over a propulsive bass line:

Emotional landscapes,
They puzzle me,
Then the riddle gets solved,
And you push me up to this

State of emergency,
How beautiful to be,
State of emergency,
Is where I want to be.

Bjork appears to also somehow hold a strong fusion of both the innocence and playful creativity of a child, as well as the grander strength of the archetypal mother. Musically oriented at age of five, and publishing her first hit album at age eleven, Bjork began her path to artistic and personal empowerment during youth, and has carried this youthful inspiration all the way through her profession. She is also a real mother, having

birthed her son, Sindri (June 8, 1986), on the same day she founded her first popular band “The SugarCubes.” Bjork says, ““I became my own mum very early, and i developed a relationship to myself where I was the mum *and* the child.”

Having Neptune in close association to both her Sun and Ascendent, she shows the world a highly conscious embodiment of the divine feminine through music and imagery. In 2004 (with Pluto conjunct her natal Mercury, and at midpoint between natal Neptune and Venus), Bjork was commissioned to write and perform a song for the International Greek Olympics. In the resulting hit song and music video, “Oceania,” she is beautifully embodied as the Greek goddess “Oceania” beneath the ocean surface, surrounded by computed-simulated jelly-fish, and singing a lyrical song to her children, humankind. Bjork says, encapsulating the diffusiveness of the Neptunian archetype, “the song is all about how the ocean doesn’t see boundaries between countries and thinks everyone is the same.” During the actual performance at the opening of the Greek Olympics, Bjork emerged onto the ground level of the massive stadium wearing a custom made, world’s largest dress, that covered the entire stadium floor in a brilliant, undulating blue fabric, representative of the ocean. And she sings to the audience of the stadium and the world:

You have done
good for yourselves
since you left my wet embrace
and crawled ashore

Every boy is a snake is a lily
every pearl is a lynx is a girl

Sweet like harmony
made into flesh
you dance by my side
children sublime

Little ones
my sons and my daughters
your sweat is salty - I am why
your sweat is salty - I am why

And in her very recent song, "Gratitude," she sings lyrics more literally representative of the creative, ancient evolutionary force:

A million year old fossil
I send to you
This comes from my family
And the ancient sea
A prehistoric impression
Of the modern krill
She feeds the noble whale
And offers you longevity

And in the equally recent song, "Cetacea," she recites words in a vocal melody that tend to capture the "deep form" and intelligent wisdom embedded in natural process:

Into pattern
Flowing blood
Giving form

In every part
The whole you see

From the moment of commitment, nature conspires to help you.

Bjork appears to have an extra layer of talent for giving expression to the deeper and larger forces of life and nature. Some astrologers may recognize that her having the Moon in the 12th House may be indicative of a keenly intuitive capacity to revealing the underflow of the collective psyche--all the while, doing it with an extraordinarily strong conscious awareness as a self-realized individual, having the Sun in the 1st House. And this Sun / Neptune conjunction near the Ascendent, sextiles the tight Pluto / Uranus conjunction at the Midheaven--allowing for the powerful broadcasting beacon

by which she communicates her involuted sense of personal identification with the collective out to the global audience.

In the music video for “Big Time Sensuality,” Bjork rides atop a mobile trailer platform as it moves down a dense urban street. She dances about in ecstatic awe and wonder of the stimulating environment, while she screams out a type of prophecy:

I can sense it
something important
is about to happen
it's coming up

It takes courage to enjoy it
the hardcore & the gentle
BIG TIME SENSUALITY

We just met
and I know I'm a bit too intimate
but something huge is coming up
and we're both included

It takes courage to enjoy it
the hardcore & the gentle
BIG TIME SENSUALITY

I don't know my future after this weekend
- and I don't want to!

It takes courage to enjoy it
the hardcore & the gentle
BIG TIME SENSUALITY

Indeed, what might we have to look forward to through Bjork’s continual creative blossoming? With a Uranus transit in opposition to her natal Uranus (and Pluto conjunction) coming up in 2007, we may be surprised by another electrifying and grandly revealing performance.