

# *Female Genius:*

## *PHANTOM or PHENOMENON?*

maria.musiol@t-online.de

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*Vittoria Colonna:*

*I do not want to be a tree*

*That does not grow out of its own roots.*

## *Female Genius*

*In Search of the PHENOMENON*

*First let's chop our way through the Thicket of Conceptual  
Confusion smothering the phenomenon of FEMALE GENIUS*



Quelle: AlMare - wikipedia.de

*Dear Genevieve Kineke,*

Whereas I appreciate your personal devotion to communicating the

*Catholic Model of Femininity*

of Pope John Paul II ( Apostolic letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* ),

I find fault with the title of your blog:

*FEMININE GENIUS*

Firstly, it is a contradiction in terms: The adjective *feminine* suggests tender, femininity in contrast to the

*Intellectual and Creative Power of a Female Genius.*

Secondly, the term *Genius* does not bear any reference to the women addressed in your blog:

Neither does *Genius* apply to *you*, as a mediator of the Pope's Ideal of a Catholic Woman. In this function you are certainly

*No Self-Constituting Female Genius.*

Dear Genevieve, I'd call you, a *Female Genius*, if independently from any male influence, in an act of *Female Self-Constituting*, you did propagate your *Self-Created Female Variety* of the Pope's male-made ideal Catholic woman or, if you at least had added improvements from your female point-of-view.

That was exactly what Vittoria Colonna, the *Genuine Female Genius* of Italian Renaissance, did.

Nor does *Female Genius* apply to your *female audience*, who are indoctrinated by you according to **John Paul's Enzyklika**

***Mulieris Dignitatem.*** They are no female geniuses, but believers of the Roman Catholic Church.

I guess, the reason why you misapply *Genius* in the headline of your blog, and why you incorrectly combine the term *Genius* with the adjective *feminine*, is not a negligent use of terms, but a matter of straining after effect.

*"Feminine Genius"* assuages the female longing of being a self-fashioning individual, ineradicably engraved in the unfulfilled soul of a Bourgeois wife imprisoned in the everyday drudgery of her boring marital life, an unfulfilled longing even inherent in a Catholic woman, who is also denied the fundamental human right of pursuit of happiness by self-realisation, because, according to your formulation **"feminine vocation is a call to live as an icon of her Holy Mother Church."**

*Yours sincerely:*

*Dr. Maria Musiol*

maria.musiol@t-online.de

Quelle: Wolfgang Stuck – wikimedia.org



*Levelling Down !*

*GENIUS in OUR BRAVE NEW WORLD*

*How Mr and Mrs Everybody go Genius.*

THINK LIKE A GENIUS!

From: *Scientific American Mind* Volume 23, Issue 5

PREVIEW by the two authors:

“Women tend to choose work-life balance rather than the pursuit of eminence  
– although the choice is not entirely freely made.

By Sandra Upson and Lauren F. Friedman

Try this simple thought experiment. Name 10 female geniuses from any period in history. Odds are you ran out of names pretty quickly. The message is clear: Something is rotten in the state of genius.”

*Dear Sandra Upson and Lauren F. Friedman,  
The Cover-Photomontage of the Special Issue of the American  
Scientific Mind - THINK LIKE A GENIUS - is positivistic:  
Putting Magic Glasses on the snub nose of an ambitious smarty-  
pants transfigures Bond Girl into Genius.*

*Of course, your invitation to THINK LIKE A GENIUS makes an  
appeal to your bourgeois readership, women “cabined, cribbed,  
confined, bound in to” their midlife crisis, because in their jobs,  
though somehow managing “a work-life balance”, they have not  
been able to fulfil their innermost yearning after Self-Fashioning  
in a Prominent Top Position.*

*Perhaps they will get a better chance after being taught*

*by You Two*

*to*

*THINK LIKE A GENIUS.*

*but*

*HOW DO GENIUSES THINK??*

*And*

*HOW DO YOU KNOW??*

*FEMALE GENIUS*

*SHROUDED IN MYSTERY*

*Female Genius: Oh, the Words - the Sound!*

*Female Genius - melts on our tongues!*

*The two resounding words send shivers up and down our spines!*

*But only:*

*As long as Female Genius remains shrouded in a Divine Aura!  
Try to describe Female Genius as a Human Phenomenon and you  
will destroy the Magic!!!*

*FOR THE SAKE OF TRUTH ??????*

*Dear Julia Kristeva,*

Considering the widely spread discredit of the term GENIUS in our BRAVE NEW WORLD of Identical Human Products, considering the public outcry FEMALE GENIUS will arouse, rejected as it has been, as a mere feminist phantasm by an army of male misogynists, I admire your courage of choosing the title *THE FEMALE GENIUS - HANNAH ARENDT* for your biography..

Your explanation that you see in Genius

*a therapeutic invention that saves us from dying of  
equality in a world without transcendence*

reveals *your creating a divine aura round your heroine to enhance her  
singularity*, at the same time *highlighting your elitist and rather cryptic  
mode of writing*, evoking the *individual complexity of Hannah Arendt*

in narrative, associative, intuitive mode of writing, *steering clear of a simplistic profile of this most extraordinary woman of the twentieth century.*

At the end of your introduction you are posing the essential question, whether Hannah Arendt owed what you, cryptically, call her *Atypical Genius* to her *Femininity*. Though emphasizing that the question is a legitimate one, you refuse the answer:

*I do not want to answer it at the beginning.... I prefer not to give a definition at the outset so that the answer can distil itself after patiently considering a number of examples.*

*Dear Julia Kristeva,*

Your cryptic, associative, idiosyncratic rather than diagnostic and analytical mode of writing aims at encrypting rather than unfolding the intellectual and psychic complexity of Hannah Arendt's personality, you, alone of all people, pride yourself of getting to grips with.

*Anyhow!*

Your mode of presenting fails the most extraordinary aspect of Hannah Arendt, who was so much more than just one more female intellectual.

*HANNAH ARENDT WAS THE ONLY WOMAN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WHO ROSE TO THE CHALLENGE OF THE WORST MALE DESTRUCTIVENESS MANKIND HAD EVER*

*EXPERIENCED: TO THE DESTRUCTION OF HER JEWISH  
PEOPLE BY THE NAZI GOVERNMENT OF GERMANY*

Hannah Arendt's Female Genius

*is NOT atypical.*

Her female genius is **not divine, not a phantom nor a  
phantasm**

Her female Genius is a

*Human Phenomenon*

\*\*\*\*\*

*TOWARDS A PHENOMENOLOGY  
Of  
FEMALE GENIUS*

Never researched, let alone defined,

*the Phenomenon of Female Genius*

must be substantiated by distilling

*the Common Features of Genius Women:*

A.

*Female Geniuses* are *Self-defined, Self-Thinking, Solitary Heroines*, working as *FUTURISTS* in *Self-imposed Isolation* to propagate their *Authentic Female Ideas* about a *Better Life* in a *Better world*.

VITTORIA COLONNA

*I do not want to be a tree that does not grow from its own roots.*

SUSAN SONTAG

*I think of myself as self-created.*

HANNAH ARENDT:

*I don't fit - Ich bin unabhängig. Ich gehöre keiner Organisation an. Ich spreche immer nur in meinem eigenen Namen. Ich habe großes Vertrauen zu*

*dem, was Lessing Selbstdenken nennt, das meiner Ansicht nach niemals ersetzt werden kann, weder durch Ideologie noch durch Öffentliche Meinung noch durch Überzeugung.*

I don't fit – I am independent. I do not belong to any organisation. I only speak for myself. I put my trust on what Lessing called “Self-Thinking”, which in my opinion can never be replaced neither by an ideology, nor by Public Opinion, nor by any settled conviction.

Kristeva, Arendt S.183

B.

*Female Geniuses are Shakespeare's Spirited Sisters  
excelling in creative intellectual liveliness:*

**HANNAH ARENDT:**

*The only life of the mind is the sensation of being alive.  
Without thinking the mind is dead.*

**SUSAN SONTAG:**

*I'm afraid of passivity and of dependence. Using my mind  
makes me feel active (autonomous) That's good.*

LA DUSE:

*Who knows how to comprehend, learns every day.  
Consciousness is tantamount to strength and joy, pain and  
liberation.*

C.

*Female Genius* versus **Male Genius**

*Cognition, Renaissance, Creativity, Revival*

against

**Hardened thinking and rigid male dogmatism**

Baldassare Castiglione on VITTORIA COLONNA:

*Her sublime, even divine intellect penetrates into matters hitherto unknown to  
others.*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Imaginative female creativity*

versus

**Rigid Artefacts of Homo Faber**

Indeed, the substantial difference of male genius and female genius originates in physical and psychic differences of the two sexes.

Both, men and women, conceive creative ideas as individual geniuses.

*BUT*

**male geniuses objectify their creative ideas in cooperation, bent on construing ever-lasting, perfect systems of absolute validity.**

*Whereas*

*Women* endowed by nature with the protection of life in its fullness, in its diversity, in its dynamism, and in its natural growth are averse to the

**rigidity of male systems**  
and  
**male-fabricated artefacts.**

*Genius women* turn inward to find *Authentic Humanity* engraved in their *Female Souls*, take their pens and create *Counter-Solutions* emerging from their *Female Imagination*, from their *Authentic Female Thinking*, and from their

*Comprehensive Ontological Perspective.*

*Female Geniuses* qualify **one-sided male artefacts**. They expose **male claims of absolute validity** to the

*Dynamics of Life.*

Their *Female Instincts* tell them that *LIFE IS CHANGE* and will override and has overridden all **male claims** to

**Eternal Permanence  
of their male artefacts**

*So far!*

D.

*Female Geniuses* versus **male Intellectual Rigidity**

VITTORIA COLONNA

gave ample proof of her *Creative Liveliness* as a *Female Genius* in **opposition to male dogmatism** by refining **obsolete medieval mentality**, as a *Humanist* venturing on **sacrosanct religious myths, challenging Godfather** to answer for the shameful death on the cross he inflicted on his only son. *Vittoria* applied her extraordinary imaginative strength, her powerful intellectuality, and stupendous rhetoric to remake the **male medieval icon of the Godmother** into a *Lively Human Being and yet a Woman Divine*, lavishing on *Maria* the *greatest-possible liveliness* making her an unparalleled *Role-Model for Women* and a protective shield against male vilification of women in her patriarchal society, thus increasing the *Value of Femininity*.

## SUSAN SONTAG

Turned her back on the **rigid male-dominated academic system** to become a *Self-Defined Freelance Female Intellectual*, grounding her essays on her *Female Subjectivity*, albeit of exemplary validity, to counteract **stifling reactionary Philistinism of interpretation**. According to her female intuition, she proclaimed:

*In the place of hermeneutics we need an erotics of art.*

## HANNAH ARENDT,

*the Female Genius living in the darkest period of history* was challenged by **male destructiveness of hitherto unimaginable dimensions:**

**the extermination of her Jewish People  
by the Nazi Government of Germany.**

**A male challenge without a precedent!**

*Hanna Arendt mastered the unparalleled provocation of a Female Genius with the capacity of self-thinking, with extraordinary insight and cognitive capacities, with the determination to act in her personal authentic way, with her readiness (as an independent,*

*self-reliant woman) to cast obsolete Jewish conventions over board, because they did not provide adequate solutions.*

*Even in these excruciating circumstances Hannah Arendt demonstrated the courage of her convictions, in spite of being aware that her Un-Jewish answer to the Nazi Horror would scandalize the male Jewish Establishment entrenched in Judaism.*

*Only Hannah Arendt's Headstrong Reaction, Unexpected and Misunderstood until this day, rose to this extremely challenging, extremely horrifying occasion, without a precedent in the whole of Human History.*

In her interview with Joachim Fest Hannah Arendt said about the Holocaust and Auschwitz:

*"It should not have happened. One cannot cope with it!"*

According to her, Eichmann should have been put on trial at an International Court for Human Rights. She declined the Jerusalem show trial against Eichmann, because eye-for-an-eye and tooth-for-a-tooth retaliation, is in need of equilibrium between perpetrator and victim. The crime must be repaid in the same coin. But Eichmann was not a demonized villain like Macbeth or Jago or Richard III.

Instead Eichmann was only a cog in the machinery of the Final Solution and certainly not one of the masterminds.

The punishment of one morally, personally and intellectually deformed Nazi functionary, who refused to plead guilty, because he was forced to obey the order of the German NAZI Government to organize the deportation of a million Jews into the death camps, did not fit this genocide of unparalleled dimensions in Human History, but debased the Human Dignity of the million Jewish victims in Hannah Arendt's view.

Yet she accepted the assignment by the American magazine THE NEW YORKER to travel to Jerusalem and to report about the Eichmann trial. Later, Hannah Arendt again and again emphasized in her interviews that she had even read the interrogation records covering 2000 pages, before she formulated her *Phenomenal Phrase of the BANALITY OF EVIL* and used it as the subtitle of her report. The Phrase caused an outcry of indignation and scandalized the Jews entrenched in Judaism, who reproached Hannah Arendt for making light of the Holocaust, whereas the opposite was true:

The Jerusalem Show Trial gave Eichmann the opportunity of pleading his innocence, because he performed his "duty" as a functionary in zombielike obedience to the Nazi Government.

The execution of just one "ethical Hanswurscht" (Arendt!), a mere functionary of the true perpetrators, who split the extermination of the Jews up in diverse actions performed by many functionaries, was no adequate way of recompensing the extermination of a million people. Hannah Arendt is right: genocide could not be revenged by the Hebrew law of retaliation.

*How did Hannah Arendt manage to live on, herself?*

Like all other *Female Geniuses* she put her trust in the

## *Dynamics of Life*

to overcome **male destruction**.

She wrote two books to enhance *Personal Intellectual Liveliness* as the self-protective bastion against totalitarianism. One of her books deals with *Active Life*. A second book deals with *The Life of the Mind*.



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*Heraklitus*

*Everything flows and nothing remains.*

# *Female Geniuses* *Timeless Sisters of Mind*

It is an ironical turn of fate that the glory of most male geniuses, for instance of inventors or of politicians, of Napoleon, Bismarck, Hitler, who claimed eternal fame for the changes they brought about in the world for better or worse, vanished, because their artefacts thought to be permanent, collapsed before long.

## *The Dynamics of Life*

have always got the better of  
**static artefacts**  
of

**Homo Faber.**

*However,*

## *Female Imaginative Creations*

originating in

*Female Understanding and Participating*

in

## *Genuine Humanity*

have resisted **Decay**, because they are

*Timeless.*

*Feminine Calls  
For  
Liveliness*

cannot be **objectified**

but must be *poetised*

*Therefore*

*all Female Geniuses,*

in chronological sequence,

in varying historical circumstances

have made the same demand

*FOR*

*Liveliness*

**endangered**

**by**

**male-made artefacts**

*By qualifying*

**male rigidity, abstraction,  
one-sidedness, dogmatism**

in their

*Imaginative Literary Counter-Worlds*

from their more

*Comprehensive Female Outlook*

on

*Life.*

*Genius Women*

have always *appealed* and will *never cease to appeal*

to

**male world makers**

to

*restore Liveliness*

and

to protect

*Life in its Fullness.*

As their

*Cassandra Calls*

have been

**in vain.**

*New Female Geniuses  
will repeat them.*

*Of course,  
Following Apollinaire we can go on  
dreaming of a*

*Woman on Wings*

*Rising out of Mankind,  
Pushing aside  
**male world makers**  
Renewing  
**Our man-made world.***

*Better*

we dream of

**male** and female  
*Cooperation*

for a

*Humanized World*

Populated with

*Spirited Human Beings,*

on whom

*Nature*

lavishes her

*Cornucopia of Life.*