



Case Study

The Sixth Sense and Innate Wisdom: Clinical Value in Rupert Brooke's "There's Wisdom in Women"

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ABSTRACT

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Contemporary counseling for women and mothers includes two psychological exigences that women face: parenting and personal value. In particular, the concept of a mother's intuition is seen as both scientifically possible and mythical, often framed as a potential 'sixth sense.' In consideration of scientific credence on the biological and psychological link between mothers and children, amid the growth of women often adopting a sense of defeatism and self-criticism, this study considers the celebratory intuitive capacity of women in poetry. Centering the study on the applicable value in a therapeutic reading of Rupert Brooke's poem *There's Wisdom in Women*, the poem offers potentiality for women to reflect and trust intuitive judgment, thereby situating personal value as instinctual and biologically empowering, especially for mothers, as reflected in Brooke's poem.

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Introduction

In the early 1970s, Cathy Terkanian reluctantly gave up her daughter for adoption, who was named Aundria Bowman after the adoption (Richards, 2024). Years later a crime investigation led Terkanian to seek justice for her missing daughter. Despite all reason and no scientific backing to her very specific belief, Terkanian claimed repeatedly that Aundria had been murdered by her adoptive father, Dennis Bowman, and buried in his backyard. Years later, after Dennis Bowman was indicted for other violent crimes, an investigation led to the discovery of Aundria's body in the exact spot that Terkanian had claimed the body was buried—a striking prediction or ability on the part of Terkanian to push investigators to search the backyard for her daughter, long assumed to have run away. In the Netflix series covering the tragedy, Terkanian insists that her intuition about her daughter's fate and location are accurate, but at the same time mentions her own feelings of looking crazy to those who do not understand her situation (White, 2024; Tamron Hall Show, 2025). A Stanford University periodical called this the mysterious "Sixth Sense" of mothers where mothers have an undocumented ability for "weird insights" that almost seem like a "superpower" (Fernandez, 2022).

This is further complicated by misogynistic tropes such as the "mad woman," "screaming woman," and "crazy woman," tied to the historic assumption that women cannot put reason above emotion (Majkoski, 2018). In her own intuitive nightmare and awareness that her daughter was dead, Cathy Terkanian describes this as her urge to "prove that he did do it, and if I have to get crazy to shake everyone up, well then so be it" (White, 2024, 51:20–51:22) to prove that "My daughter, she's in that backyard!" (White,


2024, 1:01:09–1:10:11). At the same time, these historical stereotypes had alarming consequences in clinical treatment of women, where "labeling of women as insane was done very lightly and was influenced by social attitudes toward women" (Pouba & Tianen, 2006, p. 95).

So, what is it that could work as a median between misogynistic and misguided assumptions about women and the historic clinical challenge that women face in these situations? As a therapeutic treatment while the female mind is better understood—particularly in the situation of motherhood—this study examines the value of treatment about innate and misunderstood wisdom in women's ability to diagnose their surroundings, particularly in relation to familial and close relationships, in the encouraging and aesthetic value observable in Rupert Brooke's poem *There's Wisdom in Women* (All Poetry, 2025; RupertBrooke.com, 2025). The site All Poetry interprets Brooke's poem's insights by acknowledging "that women possess an intuitive understanding of the world, even if they lack conscious knowledge or experience" (All Poetry, 2025). And this wisdom is heightened in motherhood (Le Monde, 2023).

There is something that happens to a woman when she becomes a mother. She changes. Her brain literally alters. She becomes the ultimate guide, the ultimate friend, the ultimate advocate (Le Monde, 2023). Researchers at the University of Amsterdam recently found that "pregnancy is specifically associated with significant and lasting changes in the volume of cerebral grey matter in mothers, including reorganization of a small region known for its involvement in social cognition and particularly our ability to put ourselves in the place of others" (Le

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Monde, 2023). What happens when a woman becomes a mother? Her brain is reorganized and driven toward an increased ability to sympathize with others and respond to problems (Pletzer et al., 2012).

The Motherly Burden in Psychology

These findings coincide with a woman's ability to see inklings of current variables that foreshadow future implications, as described in the young woman in Brooke's poem (RupertBrooke.com, 2025). As Brooke wrote the poem, he was certainly moved by something, some woman or women in his life, that helped him see what many have observed in my own lives (RupertBrooke.com, 2025). Brooke would be observing the gifted problem-solving ability that comes from the gray matter in a woman's brain (World Health Organization, 2022). For the young woman in the poem, the quality of the time the couple spent together was rare, and her seeming ability to foresee what she would certainly lose coincides with research today aligning with the artistic and haunting paralleling findings from scientific research on this female intuition (Le Monde, 2023; Pletzer et al., 2012).

Einstein's description of intuition was interpreted by Bob Samples, who suggested that Einstein described intuition as a "sacred gift" and reason as "a faithful servant," lamenting that society "honors the servant and has forgotten the gift" (Samples, 1976, p. 26). There's something amiss in our effort to move past an age of the mad woman assumption, and the intertwining relationship between a woman being regarded as naïve in her claims (such as Brooke implies as an error by the male in the poem) is later shown to be wisdom, such as the lived experience of Terkanian (White, 2024; Tamron Hall Show, 2025). Brooke's poem is a therapeutic response to misogynistic arrogance that assumes a woman's intuition is just feelings rather than intellectual and biological ability (All Poetry, 2025; RupertBrooke.com, 2025).

The Sixth Sense and Scientific Possibility

With these claims about embedded wisdom in women, what about biological science? A 2012 study showed that women keep the DNA of their children in their brain (Pletzer et al., 2012). That is, a part of a child is literally locked into the brain of a mother forever (Sadeghi, 2025). The science, psychology, and power of this wisdom within women, especially mothers, answers and rebuts the age of the mad woman, culminating in a therapeutic applicability of Brooke's poem (RupertBrooke.com, 2025).

This gift of rapid observation is rooted in the brain's gray matter, where "the process of sensation, perception... and cognition take place" (World Health Organization, 2022). Studies have found that "women tend to have stronger connections between regions of the brain, which could lead to better intuitive thinking, analyzing, and drawing of conclusions" (Northwestern Medicine, 2016).

Famous medical author Dr. Habib Sadeghi is clear on this: "Every mother knows that 'a mother's intuition' is a very real thing—but no one has ever been able to explain it" (Sadeghi, 2025). Science is suggesting the DNA makeup—the mental and biological makeup of everyone on Earth—is also part of the mind of every mother (Sadeghi, 2025). This means that some research is showing that women have more gray matter—or problem-solving skills—in their brains than men do (Northwestern Medicine, 2016; World Health Organization, 2022). The same studies note that men's physical perceptions may be stronger, but intellectually and socially, women demonstrate greater intuitive capacity (Northwestern Medicine, 2016).

All of these speak to the role of the "sage." The sage is a psychological concept—also called an archetype—of a wise person entering into our lives (Jung, 1968). Famous researcher

Carl Jung recognized numerous archetypes that emerge in fiction but also in life. That is, archetypes are constants in both social life and storytelling. Two of these archetypes are the sage and the mother—often one in the same (Jung, 1968)—and I would suggest that these roles are deeply intertwined, and the sage can also certainly come in the form of a father archetype.

Importantly, the sage is objective in their ability to see. The sage is so committed to what is true, or correct, that they can be reflexive enough to be impartial and not resort to cronyism for the sake of winning for their own tribe, particularly as the woman in Brooke's poem—despite being in love—is able to separate herself from the moment of romantic and relational bliss and admit what she sees happening in the future (RupertBrooke.com, 2025). This means that the sage is not easily corrupted. She will certainly fight for her own, but will also reprimand and demand change of her own tribe in order to pursue what is right. So, the sage—or mother, is the ultimate leader who can provide voice to be able to overcome the violent language and cronyism that emerges in a history of the mad woman (Taylor, 2019; Leadership Circle, 2025).

Connected to a woman's ability to lead through objectivity is the concept of cognitive complexity, a field of study that has been explored for over fifty years by leading scholars (Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics, 2017). Cognitive complexity matters most when political turmoil is starting to emerge. Researchers at the Department of Defense and Syracuse University differentiate cognitive complexity—or "open-minded, flexible, multidimensional thinking... [where] demonstrating high complexity interprets nuance... multiple perspectives, distinguishes among ideas, and considers their connections"—against cognitive simplicity, the "concrete information processing wherein an individual may gravitate toward a singular perspective without recognizing alternatives or nuances" (Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics, 2017).

Human progress often depends less on mathematical brilliance than on the ability to navigate complex emotional and rational problems. We can see that cognitive simplicity can be problematic, which is without concern for interests outside of a particular tribe. This extra intelligence within mothers is one to recognize, further explore, and utilize as a significant gift in therapy that is bolstered by aesthetic applications, such as poetry (RupertBrooke.com, 2025).

A business executive consulting and analysis team—Leadership Circle—analyzes behavioral patterns of workers to gauge their tendencies and capacities in situations where leadership is needed. Comprehensive analysis of their findings, over 150,000 surveys conducted, demonstrate that women are upwards of 20% more creative in problem solving and 15% less reactive than male leaders (Leadership Circle, 2025). Her ability to find solutions in rapid business environments and to be less reactive to stimuli that could compromise productivity speak to this ability for detailed observation.

Neuroscience research is finding the same. The female brain seems to be more prone to collaboration and community (Northwestern Medicine, 2016). More poignantly, research shows that women have an ability to "read others" according to neuroscientist Shontee Jovan Taylor because of special cells in the brain known as "mirror neurons" which allow us to mentally process what others are feeling (Taylor, 2019).

Therefore, the female brain is indeed regarded as intuitive, and the reason why is observable, but still a mystery. Rupert Brooke became aware of and fascinated by it (RupertBrooke.com, 2025). Jovan Taylor calls this the awareness of danger within women that "allowed women to ensure the survival of their offspring by enhancing responsiveness and the ability to pick up on unconscious ... nonverbal cues, danger, and emotions" (Taylor,

2019). Woman's intuitive power is not mysteriously strange nor the mad woman symptom, and the poetic reverence for this is applicable to situations when a woman is gaslighted into thinking she is incompetent or crazy, as well as confirming this innate gift (RupertBrooke.com, 2025).

Brooke's "There's Wisdom in Women" as Therapeutic Capacity

Rupert Brooke was a British poet known for his graceful descriptions of the difficulties of life. His *There's Wisdom in Women* (All Poetry, 2025; RupertBrooke.com, 2025) shows us what we take for granted, what we might initially think is simple but is actually complex. The poem is a reflection of a man who initially thought the adoring love of his young girlfriend who—in declaring her love to him—saw things that he wouldn't realize until later in his own life (RupertBrooke.com, 2025). When she declared that "love is rare," he responded condescendingly: "kissed her hair and laughed at her. Such a child she was; So new to love" with the qualifier "new" referring to her "naivete" (RupertBrooke.com, 2025). But, the man notices something different about her. She had a prevailing sense of bitterness despite their love.

In the second verse the poem jumps in time, where he realized what she knew long before he was able to tell. He admits his mistake in his condescension toward her, and declares, "But there's wisdom in women" (RupertBrooke.com, 2025). More importantly, he begins to describe the natural, deep, foresightful wisdom within women, showing how a woman's insight is "more than they have known" at the time of intense stress (RupertBrooke.com, 2025).

The point is that a woman's instincts bring her understandings that are "wiser than their own" (RupertBrooke.com, 2025). She has a capacity that her arrogant lover could not yet see. She saw the outcome ahead of time. She wasn't naïve. He was. Later in life, he knew he was talking to someone who saw the trajectory, the future. The poem is speaking of a deep and mysterious wisdom in women, a natural capacity to see the periphery around them, the ability to rapidly evaluate and assess their circumstances. Perhaps a woman's ability to perceive both danger and goodwill. As part of that, there is a bravery with this perception. In moments of intensity, women are fearless (Taylor, 2019). Size and strength don't matter. Part of it is bravery, but more importantly, these are instincts of quickly deciding that honesty in these moments is essential (RupertBrooke.com, 2025).

Woman's heightened cognitive complexity, which I think is a better explanation than a sixth sense, is driving her protective awareness and ability to problem solve. It seems a child's DNA is floating in a mother's mind and is guiding her thinking; it is thereby generating her capacity for problem solving for the sake of protection (Pletzer et al., 2012). She is prone to protect by her ability to gauge her and your surroundings. An age of stereotyping the mad woman needs an age of this talent that has developed in her mind, permanently (Majkoski, 2018).

What does this mean for women and her historic stereotypes that lead her to being misunderstood? Self-doubt can be subsumed through wisdom, wisdom that sees what is ahead—the young woman in Brooke's poem who was overcome with bitterness at knowing her love for him would end. A mother's capacity to survey the landscape, read and adjust to human behavior, and list the challenges of seeing the depths of human motives and implications cannot be ignored. In his observed wisdom in 1914, Brooke's poem was ahead of science, ahead of the ages of distrust toward women, and now works as application (RupertBrooke.com, 2025). The mad woman is not always mad. Rather, the "bitterly" pain she felt—repeated twice in the poem—was a form of intellectual and psychological power. Brooke's poem

can be an anchor for women in an age when women are still encouraged to question themselves (RupertBrooke.com, 2025).

Therapeutic Applications

As a guest on the Tamron Hall talk show, Terkanian describes to her audience the "jolting" power of knowing exactly where her daughter was buried (Tamron Hall Show, 2025). Her intuition about her child's fate defied explanation. In a similar pattern, Brooke's poem concludes with a metaphor that haunts the arrogant boyfriend, and he recognizes at the conclusion of the poem that she was embedded in her life with a gift: "So true a tongue" (RupertBrooke.com, 2025). She saw what he only later realized. The poem website Elite Skills describes the purpose of the poem being a recognition of "women as possessing a kind of magic that men can never fully understand, and he is captivated by this" (Eliteskills, 2025). Women aren't simply nurturers; they are problem-solvers and strategists. We see that as nurturing, and it certainly does offer that. Terkanian describes her awareness of knowing that her daughter was buried in the killer's backyard as "I was just feeling it in my bones" (White, 2024, 58:58–59:01). Women, particularly in their motherly capacity if and when that opportunity arises, become the source of wisdom of a society (Fernandez, 2022; Sadeghi, 2025).

We move past stereotypes as the mind of a mother is a guide to the future. As a sage, her cognitive complexity operates outside of competition and prioritizes sacrifice as social union, and invites reflexivity in place of the brutality of needing victory that is ongoing in an age of stereotypes (Taylor, 2019; Leadership Circle, 2025). Brooke's poem, coinciding with the evolution of scientific exploration, speaks to this mysterious ability that Brooke himself was stunned in his own observation (RupertBrooke.com, 2025).

Dedication

This article is inspired by and dedicated to my mother, **Connie Yergensen**, whose motherly "sixth sense" has always been a demonstration of the "wisdom in women."

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