

Edited by Leslie Gardner and Catriona Miller



Exploring Depth Psychology and the Female Self

Feminist Themes from Somewhere



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Exploring Depth Psychology and the Female Self: Feminist Views from Somewhere presents a Jungian take on modern feminism, offering an international assessment with a dynamic political edge which includes perspectives from both clinicians and academics.

Presented in three parts, this unique collection explores how the fields of gender and politics have influenced each other, how myth and storytelling craft feminist narratives and how public discussion can amplify feminist theory. The contributions include some which are traditionally theoretical in tone, and some which are uniquely personal, but all work to encounter the female self as an active entity. The book as a whole offers a multi-faceted and interdisciplinary approach to feminism and feminist issues from contemporary voices around the world, as well as a critique of Jung's essentialist notion of the feminine.

Exploring Depth Psychology and the Female Self will offer insightful perspectives to academics and students of Jungian and post-Jungian studies, gender studies and politics. It will also be of great interest to Jungian analysts and psychotherapists, and analytical psychologists

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Preface

In the dark, on land resistant to human cultivation, three transgender figures await the victorious warrior and his best friend. Marginalized by poverty and ostracized by their religion, these outcasts know what the warrior does not, that his triumph will lead him into unbearable temptation. As a feted patriarchal conqueror, he has all the privilege denied to these so-called women with beards and wild attire (Shakespeare 1606: Act 1, sc. 3, l. 40–45: 776). They gather to dissolve all the divisions and hierarchies of order in their nasty pot of human and animal parts. The warrior too is fresh from dismembering bodies. His violence not only sanctioned but, as he is about to learn, rewarded.

Within the teeming cauldron of destroyed identities, this victorious male finds his own mirror image. In fact, he so fatefully weds his inner being to these vagrants that he will return to summon their powers of chaos again: “I conjure you, by that which you profess” (Act IV, sc. 1, l.50: 689). From then on, the witches’ annihilation of boundaries becomes this warrior’s project of apocalyptic destruction: “though the treasure/of nature’s germens tumble all together/even till destruction sicken.” (ibid.: l. 58–60: 690). And yet, what he hears in both encounters is not the truth they tell. That is why he finds their seduction irresistible.

The witches in Shakespeare’s play *Macbeth* remain at the heart of feminism, not least in their refusal to be unambiguously women. In fact, these characters who perform the deconstruction of identity, remain radical to all four terms in this rich book’s title: Depth Psychology, Female Self, Feminist Themes and Somewhere. Depth psychology designates psychologies that place the unknown psyche as an important yet mysterious contributor to being. That which resists rational knowing cannot be cast out without terrible consequences. Just so the weird women are dangerous because there is no rational context for the hero to process the desires they arouse.

As female selves, the witches conform to no recognizable social dress or body standards. Possessed of ‘beards’ and ‘wild attire’, they were, of course, first performed on stage by boys. Here is the performance of gender as its most un-placeable, most toxic and most overpowering to the dominant patriarchy personified in the successful warrior. Of course, Macbeth the great successful subordinate in King Duncan’s wars, cannot find it in his heart to treat the sovereign with love for

a father. Hailed as future monarch by these 'female' selves, he hears only Oedipal urgings to replace Duncan as lord of the Mother's body, the land itself.

'Feminist themes' is a potent conjuring of interwoven enquiry. For feminist themes serves to open up that contested term, 'Feminism' to the contests of the twenty-first century. Feminism has a history of struggle against the rule of the father. In theological and political terms, father-rule in Western Christianity produced cultures of dominion that moulded sons into warriors. Women were only visible as the flesh and wombs to generate more of them. Women did not *matter*, they simply enacted it on behalf of father-rule. Hence the struggle to liberate women was one condensed out of patriarchy's relentless binary structures. Feminism was about the necessary liberation of women who would be freed from being abjected (made repulsive and meaningless) through their bodies (Kristeva 1982).

Step forward Shakespeare's witches as those very abjected women. They figure the horror of all that is repressed from warrior patriarchal culture to form its norms. Yet today, these very same characters sponsor of twenty-first-century feminist themes of questioning binaries such as women versus men, heterosexuality versus LGBTQ, even machine versus natural. Feminism has long understood that oppression must be apprehended, understood and combatted in its multiple locations. Women and men of colour suffer together what some white women never apprehend. Class, sexual, religious and geographical status may manifest in ways that crush being.

Fortunately, depth psychology is a knowing of human potential which no oppression can magic away. Unfortunately, the radical potential of depth psychology has not yet been accepted fully established. This book of diverse essays is predicated on the notion that the depth psychology unconscious, particularly in the work of C. G. Jung, contains the seeds of creativity so innate that they can never be entirely obliterated by oppression or exterior circumstances. It is this psyche that contains the 'nature's germens' invoked by Macbeth. Despite his scorched earth reign, strong shoots of regeneration dominate the last moments of the play. Ultimately the undaunted witches on the heath are answered by the dauntless spirit of the survivors.

'Somewhere' reminds us that the heath of those witches is as fundamental as their dark practices. In fact, the witches embody that wilderness of earth as nature, including psychic nature, that cannot be tamed. Perhaps more significant for the Climate Emergency of today, the heath speaks through the barely human beings to the men whose war has both destroyed and fertilized (with blood) more clement ground. The witches in the play are the Anthropocene, a term signifying that no part of this planet is untouched by human industry (particularly of Western industrialization). They are the Anthropocene as the untameable both inside humans (as unconscious) and outside as the climate that is changing in ways, we can neither wholly predict nor control.

The witches are Anthropocene because they are uninhabitable wilderness *made so* by the human world that celebrates the warrior. They are the deep

psyche as that which has been repressed and that which can never be known. Repression makes them dangerous; unknowability makes them generative. In *Macbeth*, they germinate regicide leading to the darkest kind of father-leader; one who controls by more killing. In the dominant Western culture, the witches/Anthropocene births the monstrous Climate Emergency we face today. What exiles them, masculinity warped into killing machines, is precisely that structure behind the rape of the earth and the subjection of it to warrior-capitalism.

Yes, the witches are from ‘somewhere’ indeed, and from some specific inscription upon place. The essays in this book explore the ‘somewhere’ evoked in their feminist themes and how it may provide hope and meaning to female selves through depth psychology. For just as this book’s scope can be understood through the lens of a play of the seventeenth century, so too are new directions in the academy such as quantum consciousness, comparable to Jung’s own delve in the past (such as alchemy) for ways to re-imagine present and future. Here Karen Barad, from physics and philosophy, speaks of a new materialism characterized by agential realism. “Barad’s work has focused on the way our inquiries are ontologically generative – they create realities as opposed to describing them” (Rosick 2018: 637).

The world of matter is that of nonhuman agency, she finds. Witchcraft is everywhere and may not even require witches. There is no subject/object divide; knowing intervenes in being in ways we cannot fully trace nor comprehend. Barad explores what this means for research and ethics:

Ethics is therefore not about right responses to a radically exteriorized other, but about responsibility and accountability for the lively relationalities of becoming, of which we are a part. Ethics is about mattering, about taking account of the entangled materializations of which we are a part, including new configurations, new subjectivities, new possibilities. ... Responsibility, then, is a matter of the ability to respond. Listening for the response of the other and an obligation to be responsive to the other, who is not entirely separate from what we call the self.

(Barad 2012: 69)

Radical, counter-cultural connectedness links witchcraft, feminism, depth psychology and now new materialism. For decades feminism has argued that scholarship, research and knowing are interventions that require ongoing ethical exploration. Shakespeare’s witches demonstrate the necessity for a feminist theme of such ethics. It is, of course, my own perversity that sees the modern feminist as a witch (of any gender and none). Whatever emerges in the struggles of this time will be from somewhere, sustained by depth psychology and tender to the female self: that is my feminist theme.

Susan Rowland

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Introduction

Leslie Gardner

Feminisms purposively and relentlessly evolve. Grounded in ‘situated knowledges’, as Donna Haraway (1988) called it, feminism has come a long way since its renewed modern-day iteration in the early twentieth century, and it further broadened its scope recently in the language and scholarship of the field, influenced by American, French, Italian, Asian, Australian and South American writers. Haraway noted that knowledge is not a “view from above, from nowhere” (Haraway, 1988, p. 589), that is ‘objective’, but a ‘joining of partial views and halting voices ... within [living] limits and contradictions – of views from somewhere” (p.590). This collection of essays offers a range of such recognisably situated voices conversing with the female self within the frame of depth psychology. Some are traditionally theoretical in tone, some are uniquely personal, but all work to encounter the female self as an active entity.

‘Situated knowledge’, together with Karen Barad’s (1998) explanation of ‘agential realism’, exposing the underlying subjectivity of ‘objectivity’ with their commitment to unconscious ‘algorithms’ (to use digital language metaphorically) and the impact of regarding female as a performative enterprise from Judith Butler’s work (1990 and 1993), includes angles explored in Spivak’s ideas (2010) about the subaltern’s form of colonial communications, subverting meanings and Drucilla Cornell’s (1992 and 1993) focus on transformative and ‘deviant’ language, based in part on Luce Irigaray’s innovative albeit problematic and essentialist approaches (see 1985 and 1987). These writers, working to unpick male bias inherent in mainstream ideologies around gender, referred to psycho-analytic theory for their precepts and guidelines, and theoretical analysis also naturally spread to Jungian theorists, as well as to therapeutic practice and critiques on the practice of therapy on individuals, exploring and questioning subjectivity and the very notion of the ‘individual’.

As contemporary feminists in philosophy and education – Audre Lorde, bell hooks, Haraway – point out, the collective and particular coincide in personality as contexts shift. Each self-presentation, multi-faceted and complex is worn when needed, without compromising a basic integrity. Deviance, given a difficult-to-pierce patriarchal world, is an inevitable resource as Drucilla Cornell points out.

Her efforts at ending of apartheid in South Africa did much to heal and set out liberating pathways in that beleaguered country.

Crafting language that circumvents its phallogentric frameworks requires 'thinking outside'. As such, feminist politics and law, as collaborative endeavours, contemplate the person on her specific home ground – the battered wife who seeks to exonerate her abuser is respected, as is the single mother giving up her child for adoption, and the feisty warrior represented on epic television, or the subservient handmaiden. The master/slave formula, as Lorde (1984/2007) tells us, is a tangle of objectives, and survival is the name of the game. Spivak (2010) recommends making discourse a strategic deployment of power positions. These issues are tackled in a variety of ways in this volume reflecting aspects of feminisms.

Helene Cixous questions how women can be free to write in the language of the prison, articulation under siege, overcoming fears of being ostracised, unread, accused of unreadability, and, finally, unaccountably, women 'let out a scream' in her essay 'We Who Are Free, Are we Free?' (1993). We propose here to release different responses to the constraints and contexts in themes of depth psychology, to open up discussion further into the twenty-first century.

Feminists of Jungian orientation have also sought to unpick gender bias evident in the theory, in order to overcome its namesake's anomalous practices and theories. In these pages too we question the notion of the 'feminine', which Jung distinctively nominated as the inferior 'anima' archetype, applied to the non-rational, feeling-based way of approaching the world. He contrasted these traits to those of the 'masculine': the 'animus' (about which he wrote more) as an 'opposite' – ideas which have been blown up in years since he wrote. As he set it out, the notion that it is possible to designate a feminine attribute in cultural and social habits of behaviour and thought is recognisably oppressive and distorting. Post-Jungian theorists have quashed his ideas in this realm, while utilising other Jungian theories of the persona, individuation, and transformation that he made part of analytical psychology. Language and semiotics are constrained by patriarchal patterns embedded deeply in communication, the imagination, psyche and thought, and the writers in this volume explore these modalities eschewing many of the futile ideas of depth psychology at its inception.

The Jungian perspective and its depth psychology allied orientations are where we focus in this volume with contributors from around the world, from theoreticians and clinical practitioners, but depth psychology is under tension at the moment, and we purposively include perspectives from throughout the field. Kleinian, Winnicottian and Lacanian ideas as well as reference to Freudian theories are among theories we also include. We are able to arrive at a positive formula of multiple personalities, alluding to Jungian notions of emergent aspects of the psyche in the moment, thriving together as the agent/individual seeks to steer in the world successfully.

This present collection follows on from an earlier book, *Feminist Views from Somewhere* (2017), which itself arose from an online colloquy of Jungian analysts

and commentators. As Susan Rowland refers to it in the Preface, we follow on from that earlier volume with ‘feminist themes from somewhere’ and, like that earlier group of essays, we do not leave out those scholars who identify as male.

One of the most commented on parts of the earlier volume was the appendix, ‘Voices’. In that section, we collected comment and interchanges from a forum belonging to the International Association for Analytical Psychology, an organisation open to academics and analysts, and therapists of all persuasions, but which is primarily Jungian. ‘Voices’ included exchanges which were rarely righteous or indignant – rather, participants were sympathetic not only to each other in allowing differences to be appreciated and acknowledged, but also in presenting pragmatic approaches to the patriarchal world even as it is a frustrating world. We follow up here with a similar exchange from a depth psychology forum, the International Association for Jungian Studies. But as Haraway insisted on the embodiment of vision, we insist upon the embodiment of the voices in this volume, which offer stories, experiences and specific points of view from around the world.

The female selves who emerge throughout are more difficult to pin down – they are not ‘nice’ or necessarily compassionate figures – like the bawdy Baubo from Greek mythology, and the ancient and modern representations of raucous warrior women; they include females who grab power with both fists, as in *House of Cards* (Netflix, 2013–2019) or in the myths of the devious and strong figures of Indian myth or the ‘modern ancient’ practices of the belligerent characters in Philippines origin stories (not to speak of the Sumerian power house goddesses)—they seek power or riches in sometimes ugly, brutal ways which can be read as ‘aggressive’ in derogative way only because it is female agency.

These chapters expand and reflect a similar sense of clearing-the-decks to focus on ways to accommodate themes from particular places and you will sense collaborative sensibilities which are the hallmarks of feminist groups, scholarly and in action. We have expanded the strong presence of voices to point up what may seem paradoxical, a universal set of differences. Where you are as a scholar/writer in space and time (Western and patriarchal notions in themselves that require attentive self-awareness from the writer) wholly impacts on themes and observations – how your voice articulates ideas, including feeling and situated perspective provides the impetus for points of view. Depth psychology depends on awareness of the distinctions of consciousness and unconsciousness in culture and in personal ‘interiors’. How do these elements combine in the moment and in the place?

Feminist theory has contributed to discourse around LGBT and gender, artificial intelligence and technology globally, and has entered into the mainstream as more nuanced discussion has taken place across social media. Feminism has become feminisms. As noted above, the Jungian orientation itself has been informed by problematic originary stories, and questionable notions of so-called ‘archetypal’ notions of femininity and masculinity (‘archetype’ itself a much over-used word), which on closer examination quickly break down from supposed universal

characteristics, to those of a particular cultural time and place. However, these terms present an easily surmountable hurdle – although we include here chapters that find these designations useful as guidelines (if only to be dismissed), many of the chapters include backdrops of women’s mythic behaviour which Jung saw as amplifications of psychological tropes, indeed his typology evolved from his creative use of important cultural tropes. We add to what is a burgeoning psychosocial field dealing here with feminism and depth psychology (see our *Select Bibliography* for some sources which have been influential in this area, may not be otherwise referenced in individual chapters).

What this new volume offers is a collective and multi-faceted approach from around the world, emerging from what became an international annual event at Amnesty International in London UK with the title ‘Feminist Views from Somewhere’. Voices which this time were scholarly, poetic and specifically culturally based as we contemplated together, and later, what is here set out in writing, varied perspectives from different locations but also from differing senses of perceptions of the world and across the depth psychology field additionally to orientations enumerated above: relational psychology is reflected on with frequent reference to Jessica Benjamin’s work. It is in that collaborative spirit that this new set of essays has emerged and while the contributors are predominantly clinicians, a scholarly interpretive approach also has a strong presence.

To differentiate the various aspects we pursue in this volume, we have divided papers into several sections, reflecting perspectives first on gender and politics; then on stories that expose feminist concerns in the analysis of their cultural impact; and finally a presentation of more personal voices, set in specific contexts that illuminate feminist concerns.

First up, in her insightful Preface, Susan Rowland, a long-time writer on feminist issues, draws our attention to Macbeth’s witches – possessed of ‘beards’ and ‘wild attire’ – a pointed, and appropriate launch into the essays of the book.

In the opening section on gender as politics, Betty Sue Flowers uses samples of the stories of Texan women in their posture as strong ‘male’ figures despite otherwise female physical attributes – evoking female warrior figures of Elizabeth I or Joan of Arc. Laura Tuley adds the complaints and solutions of clients working through dilemmas of desire to achieve wholeness and health with humour, exploring Baubo’s ancient presence as consoler and bawdy commentator. Martyna Chrzescijanska looks at the therapeutic space itself as a focus of political language and feeling – briefly, its history and attempts at liberation. Lene Auestad follows in a recounting a catastrophic event in Oslo tracking a neo-Nazi group and its impact on same-sex ‘traitors’ as a reflection of the political issues that are recognisable globally. Phil Goss uses controversial discussions of gender to try to parse out problematics of power distinctions in gender politics – how to identify yourself, if you need to do so at all – and draws on different psychosocial theses to orient such exploration.

Opening up the next section, ‘Stories’: Catriona Miller, co-editor of this volume, explores narrative sequences of ‘becoming a queen’ in a contemporary story –

House of Cards (Netflix, 2013–2019) – and contrasting that with the ancient Sumerian myth of Inanna and her political rise to power; the differences and similarities are illuminating. Terence Dawson proposes a fresh narrative analysis of the Antigone story as told by Sophocles – her radical departures reflect an attitude to hierarchy that has changed over the many years since her story was told. Sulagna Sengupta brings the ecological concerns she finds in Jungian psychology to light exploring Indian earth narratives that lean on feminist action in ancient tales. Gayle Certeza-Narcida uses the story of the ‘modern ancients’ in her home in the Philippines to disclose an underlying cultural foundational originary myth – with characteristic gender equality as building blocks toward implementing feminist precepts. Huan Wang uses tales of the Great Mother especially as revealed in the Chinese classic opera ‘The Peony Pavilion’ to show the way female desire is deployed as powerful jolt into action for romance and cultural equanimity. Emma Buchanan looks at similar foundations revealed in the contemporary American television series, *The Walking Dead* (AMC, 2010–on-going), hunting for female redemption in a fiercely apocalyptic tale of the living dead.

And, finally, the ‘Voices’ section includes distinctive pleas in affective essays: first, Heba Zaphiriou-Zarifi recounts stories of female survivors of war, and their heroic and metaphoric approaches, such as a re-enactment of Aristophanes play *Lysistrata*, to overcoming difficulties in violent ways that a female might use, including silence. MJ Maher issues a colourful, deeply humane exposure of that wholly vital person in female life – the mother of your mother – calling on the before-your-own-past to find yourself. Then philosopher Frances Gray’s deeply moving voice, reflecting the earth and its tortures and relationship to women world over, before we finish with excerpts from the online discussion ‘Let’s talk about our mothers’, which functions as a robust sign-off.

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Part I

Gender in politics/politics in gender



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Empowered by myth

Persona, politics, and Texas women

Betty Sue Flowers

A personal (persona-l?) note to the reader

I wanted to write something about what a true act of the self it is to consciously create a persona and the bravery of women who do this in public ... especially a couple of decades ago. The three Texas women I focus on here were very different from each other. But what they all had in common was a *beautiful* sense of humor. By 'beautiful,' I mean that it operated in that higher level where you only make fun of the powerful – or of yourself ... where you look down on the whole human comedy without bitterness, although often with indignation. So even though I'm talking about political personas, I wanted you to know from the very beginning that these were large-souled women whom I feel grateful to have known.

The Texas myth

As a girl growing up in Texas, I knew that Texans were different – that is, they thought of themselves as different from folks in other states. We were the only state that had formerly been an independent nation. We had the Texas rangers, and we had our own navy (well, sort of), and the terms of our entry into the United States allowed us to choose, at any time in the future, to break into five states. We started the school day singing 'Texas, Our Texas,' not 'The Star-Spangled Banner.' And every Texas schoolchild had to spend a whole year of history class learning Texas history. We had that much history. Heck, we didn't just have a history – we had a *myth* (see Flowers, 2003).

Basically, the Texas myth is the hero myth on steroids. 'One riot, one ranger,' as the saying goes. 'Can do,' as anyone who worked for President Johnson learned to say in response to any request. We were equally proud of the Alamo hero Davy Crockett saying that Texas was "the garden spot of the earth" and the Yankee General Sheridan saying, "If I owned Texas and Hell, I would rent out Texas and live in Hell." And we quoted John Wayne, the quintessential Texan (that he was named 'Marion' and born in Iowa was a nonessential detail), who said, "Courage is being scared to death but saddling up anyway," and "A man's gotta do what a