



Medea: Myth and Unconscious Fantasy (Psychoanalysis and Women Series)

Esa Roos

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This book takes Euripides tragedy of Medea as its starting point. Our unconscious fantasies can be embedded in age-old myths, and many modern works about Medea reflect our ever-present interest in such myths. The Danish film director T.H. Dreyer had plans to produce a film about the story of Medea, while his countryman Lars von Trier did in fact make his own version of Medea, based on Dreyer's previous work on the theme. In this remarkable new book the 'Medea fantasy is introduced as an unconscious determinant of psychogenic sterility, a fantasy that may form an unrecognized and dissociated part of the self-representation. The book describes how this can lead women to believe that their lovers (like Jason in the original myth) will deceive and abandon them, and that this anxiety might cause them to react violently towards their children. For such women it is imperative to forgo any creative femininity. The carefully written chapters study the so called 'dark continent' - hidden or unknown areas of womanhood, that are often felt to be difficult to approach, understand, or conceptualise. The areas covered in the book include pregnancy, abortion, maternal ambivalence, loving and hating the baby, shame, ideals and idealisation of motherhood, as well as such issues as sister fantasy, sisterly and lesbian love, the problems between mother and daughter, and female destructiveness, as reflected in fairy-tales. The book also examines a particular type of female masochism that has a strong influence on the life of couples, often destroying the possibility of genuine mutuality between spouses. This masochistic element can be manifested in the way the woman abandons her own world and possibilities of creativity, in order to immerse herself in her partner's world. Lastly, it studies what factors might lead to happy and satisfactory relationships, and what factors may lead to failure in establishing such lasting and mutually beneficial relationships in life.



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