

Psychological Perspectives

A Quarterly Journal of Jungian Thought

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/upyp20>

Wisdom Has Built Her House: Psychological Aspects of the Feminine. (2019). Edited by Andreas Schweizer and Regine Schweizer-Vüllers. Daimon Verlag.

Thomas Elsner

To cite this article: Thomas Elsner (2021) Wisdom Has Built Her House: Psychological Aspects of the Feminine. (2019). Edited by Andreas Schweizer and Regine Schweizer-Vüllers. Daimon Verlag., Psychological Perspectives, 64:1, 148-151, DOI: [10.1080/00332925.2021.1904739](https://doi.org/10.1080/00332925.2021.1904739)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00332925.2021.1904739>



Published online: 24 Aug 2021.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 13



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Book Review

WISDOM HAS BUILT HER HOUSE:
PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE FEMININE.
(2019). EDITED BY ANDREAS SCHWEIZER
AND REGINE SCHWEIZER-VÜLLERS.
DAIMON VERLAG.

Reviewed by Thomas Elsner

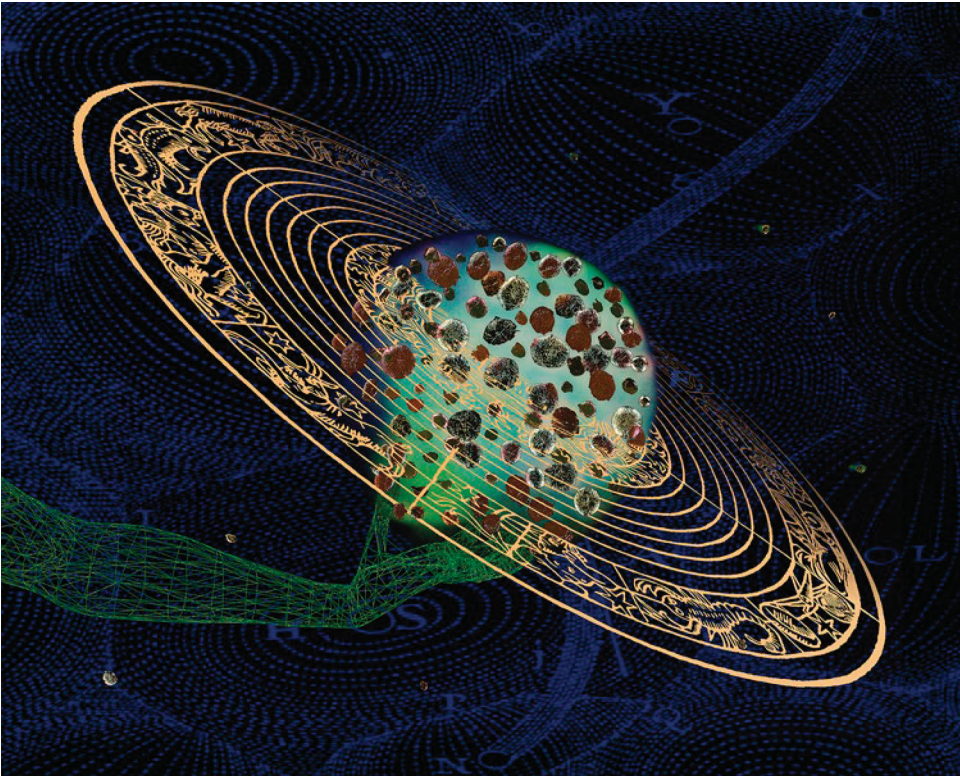
W*isdom Has Built Her House* is the 2nd volume in the most recent series of contributions to Jungian psychology by the Psychology Club of Zurich. Edited by Andreas Schweizer and Regine Schweizer-Vüllers, this volume includes an original contribution by Marie-Louise von Franz. The main focus of all the essays is the psychological dimensions of the feminine that the authors track throughout cultural history into our present day. From Rivkah Schärf Kluger's essay on "The Queen of Sheba in Bible and Legends," to Laurel Howe's "Redeeming Mary Magdalene," Von Franz's interpretation of the fairy tale "Rumpelstiltskin," and to Gotthilf Isler's work on "The Cursed Princess: The Redemption of the Feminine in Folk Tales," the theme of this book centers on the archetypal, cultural dimensions of the feminine as expressed in myths, legends, and folktales, and the

application of these dimensions to our contemporary world and psychology.

It is fascinating to track, through myths and stories that span thousands of years, themes that continue to concern many of us today, namely the redemption of the spirit of the divine in all of nature, the union of the feminine with the masculine (including dark dimensions), the acceptance of both the psychical and spiritual dimensions of Eros, and the ways in which the feminine has been devalued in a patriarchal world. Looking back on these stories through the lens of Jungian psychology, as these authors have done, gives one a feeling of liberating the feminine from its latent expression by making this archetypal dynamic more conscious than was possible centuries ago.

As was also the case with Volume 1 in this series, *Stone by Stone: Reflections on the Psychology of C. G. Jung* (2016), the essays in the present volume take one back in time and seat one down in the Psychology Club in Zürich to listen to classic presentations. This is true for all of the essays in this volume—the recently penned as well as the presentations originally given in 1955 and 1970—which all participate in the classical spirit of Jungian psychology coming out of Zürich: Each essay is carefully and devotedly researched in terms of historical background and archetypal amplification while zeroing in on the practical application of big, broad themes. The book also includes 17 beautiful, full-page color illustrations.

The emphasis here is on realizing projected psychological contents that appear as historical and mythological story. For instance, the Queen of Sheba



Victor Raphael & Clayton Spada, *By Design*, 2006.
Pigment inks on watercolor paper (inkjet print);
Dimensions: Image: 20 × 24.8 in.; Overall: 24 × 30 in.

in her meeting with King Solomon is seen as “the messenger from a remote land—the unconscious,” and the answer to her riddles “amounts to a conscious acknowledgment of the ways of nature” (Schweizer & Schweizer-Vüllers, 2017, pp. 40, 46). As “the spiritual side of the king was not yet ready to really integrate the pagan anima,” the meeting of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon is “a promise of future development” that blossoms “in its deepest form, namely in alchemy” (Schweizer & Schweizer-Vüllers, 2017, pp. 52–53). The feminine side of the archetype, as expressed in the figure of Mary Magdalene, “shows us the human experience that makes our relationship to the archetype so real—the individual, emotional intensity and the feeling of spiritual loss and renewal” (Schweizer & Schweizer-Vüllers, 2017, p. 92). Mary Magdalene keeps “spiritual and sexual Eros” together “even as the Christian attitude splits sexual and spiritual Eros apart, condemning one and glorifying the other” (Schweizer & Schweizer-Vüllers, 2017, p. 104).

The *Rumpelstiltskin* tale reveals how a cynical or cold masculine attitude—“a certain heartless intellectualism”—can endanger and devalue the feminine, and how the feminine is able to extricate itself from this situation (Schweizer & Schweizer-Vüllers, 2017, p. 148). Tracking this dynamic through the story leads to an insightful discussion both on the nature and role of the feminine in the lives of men and women today and our journey toward mature relationship with each other in that down-to-earth way that Marie-Louise von Franz was so gifted at conveying.

Similarly, the motif of “The Cursed Princess” in folklore reveals how “the feminine personification of the unconscious is rejected by the prevailing collective views” and how “the acceptance of this gift of deepest Nature, the wisdom of the serpent instinct, redeems the woman, the archetype of the feminine

and of love” (Schweizer & Schweizer-Vüllers, 2017, p. 174, 190). As with the figures of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, or Mary Magdalene and Christ, “the marriage with the anima” in the various fairy tales involving the redemption of a cursed princess “would have made possible the becoming-whole of the young man, a co-existing of consciousness and the unconscious instead of conflict” (Schweizer & Schweizer-Vüllers, 2017, p. 207). In following up this theme of the cursed princess in modern psychology, Isler describes Jung’s own encounter with the cursed princess, so to speak, in *The Red Book* (2009), what this meant in Jung’s life, and the agonizing struggle Jung went through in himself to redeem her—a struggle that “is not merely about the divinity of the woman or the transformation of the man’s anima, it is a matter of the redemption of the divine spirit in all of Nature” (Schweizer & Schweizer-Vüllers, 2017, p. 245).

The cover image of this volume is an extraordinarily moving and powerful painting from a 15th century Sicilian artist, Antonello da Messina, that depicts the Annunciation. In this painting we see only Mary’s face—not the angel announcing her destiny—as she becomes aware of the divine. It is an apt image for the contents in this book which similarly announce the presence of an archetypal reality making its way into conscious realization today. Those who are touched or gripped by the archetype of the feminine and sense the importance of relating to this dimension of life that has been traditionally devalued in patriarchal culture will find much of value here: a wellspring of deep, nourishing, and rich sources along with devoted and wise interpretations of these sources from the Zürich school of Jungian psychology. As with Volume 1 in this series, the editors give all of us the chance to become members of the Zürich Psychology Club. Ultimately, this volume is about the

coniunctio, or union, of the masculine and feminine principles—the germinating myth of our time.

Thomas Elsner is a certified Jungian analyst practicing in Santa Barbara. He completed his analytical training at the Centre for Depth Psychology according to C. G. Jung and Marie-Louise von Franz in Zürich, Switzerland, and was core faculty at Pacifica Graduate Institute for many years where he taught courses on depth psychology and literature. He also has lectured on this subject nationally and internationally. As a recipient of the annual Fay Lecture

series in analytical psychology, his book on Coleridge and Jung will be published by Texas A&M in Spring 2021. His review of Stone by Stone: Reflections on the Psychology of C. G. Jung (2016) appeared in Psychological Perspectives 61(1).

FURTHER READING

Jung, C. G. (2009). *The red book: Liber novus* (S. Shamdasani, Ed., Trans.). W. W. Norton & Co.

Schweizer, A., & Schweizer-Vüllers, R. (Eds.). (2017). *Stone by stone: Reflections on the psychology of C. G. Jung*. Daimon Verlag.