

fering is glorified.

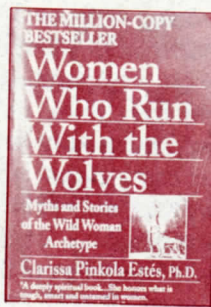
The statement sounds blasphemous, but look again at the crucifixion story. Why would a father send his child to torture for sins not of his own making? Why would a father refuse to save his son, even when he has the power to do so? Why did God need the catastrophe of his son's death to become close to his creation and join in their suffering? *Christianity, Patriarchy and Abuse* answers these questions, and more.

One of the book's strong points is that it goes beyond critiquing what exists to suggesting new ways forward, both within and outside the christian tradition. Mary Hunt's biting, beautiful "Theological Pornography: From Corporate to Communal Ethics" talks of the dominant theology that objectifies persons, trivializes sexuality and leads to violence. She calls this theological pornography, and suggests in its stead a model for 'theological erotica,' where agency, inclusivity and diversity are honored. Others talk of reclaiming the child as divine, a real image within the gospels, and replacing the glorification of suffering with a commitment to living.

Christianity, Patriarchy and Abuse is a powerful book, and a necessary one. The christian ideology, replete with "benevolent" (and not-so-benevolent) abuse, as well as the sanctification of suffering, undergirds many cultures. By understanding this, we may also understand much of the injustice in society. Then it may not be surprising that a man like Sanchez can torture and destroy a human sacrifice given by "children" who wish to please him, and remain confident of his own faith. He is imitating the central story of conventional christianity.

THE ART OF REDISCOVERING ONE'S SOUL

by Seann R. Tan



Women Who Run With the Wolves:
Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype
by Clarissa Pinkola Estés
New York: Ballantine Books, 1992

There is an old woman who lives in a hidden place that everyone knows but few have ever seen. She is called by many names: Bone Woman; The Gatherer; and La Loba, Wolf Woman. The sole work of La Loba is collecting bones of desert creatures in danger of being lost to the world. But her specialty is said to be wolves. When she has assembled an entire skeleton, she sits by the fire, raises her arms over the creature and sings out. That is when the skeleton of the wolf begins to flesh out. La Loba sings some more, and more of the creature comes into being, and the wolf creature begins to breathe. As she continues to sing the wolf opens its eyes, leaps up and runs away down the canyon. Somewhere in its running, the wolf is suddenly transformed into a laughing woman, running free toward the horizon.

Through the story of La Loba, we learn to look for the indestructible life force—the bones. This story promises that if we sing the deep song, if we howl with our soul-voice, we can call up the psychic remains of the Wild Woman soul and sing her into vital shape again.

Women Who Run With the Wolves is a treasure trove of powerful healing stories—myths and folk tales and fairy tales from different parts of the world. A *cantadora* (storyteller) and Jungian analyst, Estés unravels the threads of each story, mines its potent images for nuggets of deep knowing for women who longing to return to their instinctual self. Her insightful interpretations inspire, instruct and empower women to be true to their own nature, and to reconnect with their fount of creativity, intuition, laughter, passion and strength.

BOOK REVIEWS

In the course of spinning the story, she touches her life more on the lives of other women—grandmothers, mothers, daughters, storytellers, analysts they have been hounded, harassed, marginalized, pushed down, entrapped, and how they have been able to survive, and even thrive, getting their strength and wisdom from sources deep in the underground. Thus, with her passionate, mythopoetic language, Estes moves the reader to reflect on her own experience and go deep down to the yearnings of her soul.

The book contains more than a dozen stories which a receptive woman, one whose soul is ready for Wild Woman, can relate with “Bluebeard,” Estes warns us of the “predator” in our psyche that preys on us by destroying our good instincts. She shows us how to recognize this predator to protect ourselves from its devastations and ultimately, to deprive it of its murderous energy so that they can start healing wounds that will not heal.

“Vasalisa the Wise,” an old Russian tale, teaches us to reclaim our lost womanly instincts—to trust our intuition, which serve as lanterns as we search in the darkness of the forest. The Inuit story “Skeleton Woman” introduces readers to the Life/Death/Life cycle integral to love in its various phases. It shows how a shared living together through all endings and beginnings allows us to participate in the dance of life, death and rebirth.

Most of us are familiar with the story of “The Ugly Duckling,” and the sad process that the ugly duckling had to undergo before she discovers her true nature. Women who live true to their wild self may have been treated as “outsiders” within their own family. This story calls out to all such “exile” to hold on and find their own spiritual family—a circle of nurturing friends—and their own way of acceptance of their uniqueness.

“Red Shoes” takes us down the path of the twirling, dancing red shoes that can ensnare women into addiction or excessiveness—drugs, alcohol, poor relationships, abusive situations, negative thinking because they were captured and became overly domesticated, their instincts deadened.

“Sealskin, Soulskin”, an Icelandic story urges us to use our instincts and find our way back home where we can have our soul-healing. Home, as Estes defines it, is a sustained mood

or sense that allows the sublime such as wonder, vision, peace, freedom. The story suggest the way home—through solitude, music, art, forest, mountain, ocean and sunrise.

“La Llorona” is a Mexican tale that weeps over the poisoning of women’s wild soul of women when given no nourishment of their creative life. To create means to produce, to make life that flows—in art, family, friendship, work, and in the environment.

The Japanese story “The Crescent Moon Bear” touches on women’s rage and forgiveness, guiding readers through the cycle of rage and the stages of forgiveness.

The book ends the circle of stories with “The Handless Maiden,” which is about women’s initiation into the underground forest through the rite of endurance. The maiden in the tale masters several descents into the underworld of female knowing and achieves transformation. The descent, loss, finding and strengthening portrays women’s lifelong initiation into the renewal of the wild.

Reading *Women Who Run with Wolves* is akin to a profound journey with the author as a wise old woman gently reminding us of broken glass along the path, prickly bushes on the side, predators lurking somewhere, delicious morsels wrapped in wolf traps. At the same time, Estes leaves the readers space to make their own choices, foolish or wise, because she alone can undertake this journey and go through initiations that will draw her back to her own wild and soulful healing.

Estes has created in *Women Who Run with Wolves* a psychology of women driven at knowing of the soul. Her stories, work as markers along the path, reminding readers of Wild Woman, who will bring them back to the ways of the wild. To be wild, Estes suggests, is to establish territory, to find one’s pack, to be in one’s body with certainty and pride, regardless of this body’s gifts and limitations, to speak and act on one’s behalf, to draw on the innate feminine powers of intuition and sense, to come into one’s cycles, to rise with dignity, to retain as much consciousness as we can.

The book provides a bibliography for “soul nutrition” as well as some general wolf rules for life. Howl often, for she who cannot howl, will not find her own pack.