

PSYCHOANALYSIS & WOMEN SERIES
INTERNATIONAL PSYCHOANALYTICAL ASSOCIATION

MYTHS OF MIGHTY WOMEN

THEIR APPLICATION
IN PSYCHOANALYTIC PSYCHOTHERAPY



EDITED BY
ARLENE KRAMER RICHARDS
AND LUCILLE SPIRA

FOR THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND PSYCHOANALYSIS



MYTHS OF MIGHTY WOMEN

Psychoanalysis & Women Series

Series Editor: Frances Thomson-Salo

Feminine Sensuality

Alcira Mariam Alizade

The Embodied Female

Edited by Alcira Mariam Alizade

Studies on Femininity

Edited by Alcira Mariam Alizade

Masculine Scenarios

Edited by Alcira Mariam Alizade

On Incest: Psychoanalytic Perspectives

Edited by Giovanna Ambrosio

Motherhood in the Twenty-First Century

Edited by Alcira Mariam Alizade

Masculinity and Femininity Today

Edited by Ester Palerm Marí and Frances Thomson-Salo

*Women and Creativity: A Psychoanalytic Glimpse through Art,
Literature, and Social Structure*

Edited by Laura Tognoli-Pasquali and Frances Thomson-Salo

*Homosexualities: Psychogenesis, Polymorphism,
and Countertransference*

Edited by Elda Abrevaya and Frances Thomson-Salo

Medea: Myth and Unconscious Fantasy

Edited by Esa Roos

MYTHS OF MIGHTY WOMEN

Their Application in
Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy

edited by

*Arlene Kramer Richards
and Lucille Spira*

A volume in the Psychoanalysis & Women Series
for the Committee on Women and Psychoanalysis
of the International Psychoanalytical Association

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2015 by
Karnac Books Ltd.

Published 2018 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Copyright © 2015 to Arlene Kramer Richards and Lucille Spira for the edited collection, and to the individual authors for their contributions.

The rights of the contributors to be identified as the authors of this work have been asserted in accordance with §§ 77 and 78 of the Copyright Design and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Notice:

Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A C.I.P. for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 9781782203049 (pbk)

Edited, designed and produced by The Studio Publishing Services Ltd
www.publishingservicesuk.co.uk
e-mail: studio@publishingservicesuk.co.uk

CONTENTS

<i>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</i>	ix
<i>ABOUT THE EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS</i>	xiii
<i>SERIES EDITOR'S FOREWORD</i>	xvii
<i>PREFACE</i>	xix
<i>INTRODUCTION: Mighty Medea, or why female figures from Greco-Roman antiquity matter today</i> <i>Ronnie Ancona</i>	xxi
Ancona's introduction: implications for psychoanalytic psychotherapists <i>Arlene Kramer Richards and Lucille Spira</i>	xxv
PART I: THE POWER OF GODDESSES AND STRONG WOMEN	
CHAPTER ONE	
What do women want? Inanna and the might of women <i>Arlene Kramer Richards</i>	3

CHAPTER TWO	
Meng Jiangnü: reflections about a Chinese myth <i>Irmgard Dettbarn</i>	15
CHAPTER THREE	
Taiko, Japanese drumming: the light returns, our hearts beat, the body knows <i>Merle Molofsky</i>	27
CHAPTER FOUR	
Contributions Part I: implications for psychoanalytic psychotherapy <i>Arlene Kramer Richards and Lucille Spira</i>	41
PART II: THE POWER OF VICTIMS, AVENGERS, AND TRICKSTERS	
CHAPTER FIVE	
Three archetypes in myth: the goddess, the witch, and the mortal <i>Philip Matyszak</i>	47
CHAPTER SIX	
Helen of Troy knocks 'em dead: a story of kidnapping, rape, revenge, and the aftermath <i>Lucille Spira</i>	59
CHAPTER SEVEN	
Miriam the prophetess and others: biblical heroines lost and found <i>Alicia Ostriker</i>	73
CHAPTER EIGHT	
Contributions Part II: implications for psychoanalytic psychotherapy <i>Arlene Kramer Richards and Lucille Spira</i>	91

PART III: THE POWER OF MOTHERS
AND THE GODDESSES WITHIN

CHAPTER NINE	
Boadicea, warrior queen: a baby's perspective and an analysand's perspective	99
<i>Frances Thomson-Salo</i>	
CHAPTER TEN	
Medea, almighty mother	109
<i>Elina Reenkola</i>	
CHAPTER ELEVEN	
The mother of safety is the phantasied mother of power	123
<i>Patsy Turrini</i>	
CHAPTER TWELVE	
Contributions Part III: implications for psychoanalytic psychotherapy	137
<i>Arlene Kramer Richards and Lucille Spira</i>	
PART IV: THE POWER OF WOMEN'S SEXUALITY	
CHAPTER THIRTEEN	
The last word: Molly Bloom	145
<i>Paul Schwaber</i>	
CHAPTER FOURTEEN	
The old crone	161
<i>Elizabeth Haase</i>	
CHAPTER FIFTEEN	
Contributions Part IV: implications for psychoanalytic psychotherapy	173
<i>Arlene Kramer Richards and Lucille Spira</i>	

PART V: THE FATHER'S CONTRIBUTION
TO WOMEN'S POWER

CHAPTER SIXTEEN	
Athena, Antigone, and their modern avatars	179
<i>John Munder Ross</i>	
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN	
Heroines and mythology of contemporary girls	195
<i>Ellen Sinkman</i>	
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN	
Contributions Part V: implications for psychoanalytic psychotherapy	209
<i>Arlene Kramer Richards and Lucille Spira</i>	

PART VI

CHAPTER NINETEEN	
Conclusion	215
<i>Arlene Kramer Richards and Lucille Spira</i>	
EPILOGUE: A tribute to Helen Meyers, MD	219
<i>Donald and Andrew Meyers:</i>	
Interview by Henry Schwartz	
INDEX	235

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Chapters One, Two, Five, Seven, Nine, Sixteen, and Seventeen are versions of papers that were presented at a COWAP Conference, “Myths of the Mighty Woman: What Makes a Woman?”, held in New York City, 11–12 October 2014. We thank all those who participated in that conference, which became the basis for this work:

(Presenters): Cecile Bassen, Irmgard Dettbarn, Giselle Galdi, Philip Matyszak, Alicia Ostriker, Arlene Kramer Richards, John Munder Ross, Ellen Sinkman, Frances Thomson-Salo, and Arthur A. Lynch who moderated the programme.

(Discussion Group Leaders): Sandra Buechler, Paula Ellman, Deborah Green, Judith Logue, Margery Quackenbush, Lucille Spira, and Patsy Turrini.

There are many others to thank for their help and support: The International Psychoanalytical Association for their support throughout; Frances Thomson-Salo of the IPA Committee on Women and Psychoanalysis for her overall guidance, substantive help, and support; Tamar and Larry Schwartz and Steve Thierman for their help throughout the conference; Dr Kenneth Winarick of the Karen Horney Center for his support of the event.

Rod Tweedy, our Karnac editor, and Cecily Blench, who patiently responded to all our concerns, deserve special thanks, along with Merle Molofsky, colleague and friend, for her generous and delicate editorial help. We would also like to thank the team at The Studio, who produced the book. The wonderful psychoanalysts, literary scholars, and classicists who so generously contributed their work to create *Myths of Mighty Women: Their Application in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy* cannot be thanked enough.

This book is dedicated to Helen Meyers—an esteemed educator and enthusiastic exponent of psychoanalytic theory. She supported many women on their paths to becoming psychoanalysts, and she was a strong advocate for COWAP. We are grateful to Donald Meyers and Andrew Meyers for giving us permission for this dedication and for their beautiful tribute to her in this work.

Arlene Kramer Richards

I appreciate the inspiration and teaching of my friends, colleagues, family, and patients. My husband Arnold Richards has been my support, my audience and my muse. He helps me to feel powerful and appreciated. My children Tamar, Rebecca, and Stephen have given me the gift of time and space to do my own work from the dark days of writing a dissertation to the present. My daughter-in-law Carol has been a dear friend and my grandsons Joshua and Justin a source of joy. I would never have arrived where I am without all of them.

My colleague and friend Lucille Spira has worked loyally and fruitfully on the conference that gave rise to this book. From concept to detail, from the technical to the social she has been a true partner. I have felt lucky beyond my desserts all my life, but never as much as I feel now.

Lucille Spira

I am pleased to be part of a book dedicated to Dr Helen Meyers. Dr Meyers was the Medical Director of Riverdale Mental Health Association where I began my career as a psychotherapist. She was Riverdale's psychoanalytic mighty woman, admired by all. Stimulating and

sometimes intimidating, her teaching, derived from a broad range of psychoanalytic theory, was always to the point. She was her own person, an accomplished woman in all spheres. Furthermore, she drove a Jaguar, a clue that she had an Artemis side.

Without Arlene Kramer Richards, a special kind of mighty woman, who inspires all of those who know her, this book would not have happened. To many, she is the psychoanalyst, consultant, or friend who “gets it”. Athena is always at her side. I thank her so much for bringing me along on this project.

My patients, every day, as they say what is on their mind, teach me not only about themselves, but also about the vicissitudes of life. The NYSPP Board, led by Ed Fancher and Miriam Pierce, deserve recognition for helping to keep psychoanalytic psychotherapy in the forefront. I thank the NYSPP Psychoanalytic Socio-Cultural Literary Group members, E. Henschel, M. Razavi, S. Parness, R. Espie, and B. Hertzberg, who make the novels we read more interesting and relevant to our work as psychotherapists.

On a more personal note, I thank Bill Spira for the space and support that he gives me to disappear and pursue my interests. I am grateful to Carol Munter and my other colleagues and friends (Lillian Berman, Lynne Herbst, and Linda Halperin) who were so generous in supporting this effort.

Permissions

We are grateful for permission to reprint the following material:

Lines from *Whatever Happened to Miriam* by Arthur Strimling (published by agreement with the author).

Lines from *The Nakedness of the Fathers* by Alicia Ostriker (published by kind permission of the author).

“Meyers has her say” (interview by Henry Schwartz) is published with permission from the *Bulletin of the Association for Psychoanalytic Medicine* (Columbia University, Spring 2010).

We thank Henry Schwartz for allowing us to include his interview with Helen Meyers, in which she impressively describes how she understands and integrates psychoanalytic theory to the practice of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

ABOUT THE EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Ronnie Ancona, PhD, Professor of Classics at Hunter College and CUNY Graduate Center, is a Latin scholar, and author of *Time and the Erotic in Horace's Odes* (Duke University, 1994), co-editor of *Gendered Dynamics in Latin Love Poetry* (Johns Hopkins University, 2005), and, with Sarah Pomeroy, of the series *Women in Antiquity* (Oxford University Press). She has published works on Latin poetry and pedagogy.

Irmgard Dettbarn, DrPhil, is a psychologist and member of the International Psychoanalytical Association. A former teacher, since 2007 she has been an interim training analyst in Beijing, China. She has published on psychoanalysis and the media, and is in private practice in Berlin.

Elizabeth Haase, MD, trained with Columbia Center for Psychoanalysis and has written and taught in the areas of gender development, sexuality, and shame. She is on the boards of the Association for the Advancement of Psychodynamic Psychiatry, the Helix Center, and the journals of the Association for Psychoanalytic Medicine and the American Academy of Psychoanalysis and Dynamic Psychiatry.

Philip Matyszak, DPhil, has a BA Honours degree from the University of London and a Doctorate in Roman History from Oxford University. He has written extensively on the ancient world, both in the academic sphere and for the general reader. He currently teaches online courses for Madingley Hall, University of Cambridge.

Andrew Meyers, MA, MPhil, is proud to have grown up during what many consider to be the Golden Age of American psychoanalysis as the son of two influential psychoanalysts and teachers, one of whom was, indeed, a “mighty woman”. He is also the proud father of two very psychodynamically minded and mighty women. He is currently Director of Interdisciplinary Studies and the City Semester Program at the Ethical Culture Fieldston School.

Donald Meyers, MD, has served the Columbia Psychoanalytic Center for over fifty years in many capacities, including Organizer and First Director of the Child Psychoanalysis Program and as a training analyst and as a clinical professor of psychiatry at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University Medical Center NYC. He has also served as Secretary of the American Psychoanalytic Association.

Merle Molofsky, MFA, is a psychoanalyst, poet, and playwright. Recent publications include a novel, *Streets, 1970* (IP Books, 2015), and a chapter in *Living Moments: On the Work of Michael Eigen* (Karnac, 2015). She is a member of the Faculty, National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis, on the Advisory Board of the Harlem Family Institute and on the Editorial Board of *The Psychoanalytic Review*, and is a member of the Board of Directors, International Forum for Psychoanalytic Education.

Alicia Ostriker, PhD, is a poet and critic and the author of fifteen volumes of poetry, most recently *The Old Woman, the Tulip, and the Dog*. As a critic, she is author of *The Nakedness of the Fathers: Biblical Visions and Revisions* and other books on poetry and the bible. She is Distinguished Professor Emerita of English Literature at Rutgers. Her work won both a Paterson Poetry Award, and a William Carlos Williams Award of the Poetry Society of America, among other honours. She is Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets.

Elina Reenkola, MD, is a training analyst the Finnish Psychoanalytic Society in Helsinki. A former European COWAP co-chair, she has published four books on female psychology in Finnish: *Naisen verhottu sisin* (1997), also published in English, *The Veiled Female Core* (2002), *Intohimoinen nainen* (2008) (Female Desire), *Nainen ja viha* (2012) (Vicissitudes of Female Aggression), and *Nainen ja häpeä* (2014) (Female Shame). She has also written articles on pregnancy, breast-feeding, sister fantasy, and female revenge.

Arlene Kramer Richards, EdD, is a member of the International Psychoanalytical Association and COWAP, a Fellow, training and supervising analyst, IPTAR, and a training analyst at the New York Freudian Society. She is a member of the Faculty of Tonji Medical College, and has published numerous articles and books on topics including gender related issues and women's psychology, loneliness, and on literature and films.

John Munder Ross, PhD, is a training analyst at Columbia, has published eight books and numerous articles, many of them on gender related issues, fathers and children, and applied psychoanalysis. Dr Ross is in private practice in New York. He is a member of the International Psychoanalytical Association and the American Psychoanalytic Association.

Paul Schwaber, PhD, is Professor of Letters Emeritus at Wesleyan University and a psychoanalyst in private practice. He has written on relations of psychoanalysis and imaginative literature, most notably *The Cast of Characters: a Reading of 'Ulysses'* (Yale University Press, 1999). He and his wife, Rosemary Balsam, MD, edit the Book Review section of the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*.

Henry P. Schwartz, MD, is a former President of the Association for Psychoanalytic Medicine, and the former editor-in-chief of its publication, *The Bulletin*. A child and adolescent psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, he is a member of the Faculty of the Columbia Psychoanalytic Institute and the NYU-Langone School of Medicine. He has a private practice in New York City.

Ellen Sinkman, LCSW, is a training and supervising psychoanalyst and a member of the International Psychoanalytical Association, Contemporary Freudian Society, and the Institute for Psychoanalytic Training and Research. She has a private practice in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy in New York City and Westchester. She is the author of *The Psychology of Beauty: Creation of a Beautiful Self* (2013, Jason Aronson).

Lucille Spira, LCSW/PhD, is a member of the New York School for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis (NYSPP), and has delivered presentations on loneliness and literary works at NYSPP and the American Psychoanalytic Association, Division 39, etc. She is Co-Chair of the American Psychoanalytic Association's Loneliness Discussion Group, and has published in various psychoanalytic journals. She co-edited with A. K. Richards and A. A. Lynch *Encounters with Loneliness: Only the Lonely* (Best Anthology, Gradiva Award, 2014), and is in private practice in New York.

Frances Thomson-Salo, MD, is a professor trained with the British Psychoanalytical Society, and is immediate past President of the Australian Society, Overall Chair of the IPA Committee of Women and Psychoanalysis, a Board member of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, Honorary Principal Fellow, Department of Psychiatry, University of Melbourne, and Honorary Fellow of the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

Patsy Turrini, MSW, LCSW, is the co-author of *Separation-Individuation: Theory and Application*, and co-editor of *Inner World of the Mother*. She is a member of the NYSPP Adjunct Faculty and a supervisor on the Advanced Program in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy at the Derner Institute, Adelphi University. She has published a number of papers, and is the Originator of the Mothers Center Model: Motherscenters.org.

SERIES EDITOR'S FOREWORD

As the Overall Chair of the International Psychoanalytical Association's Committee on Women and Psychoanalysis (COWAP), I am very pleased to write the foreword for this book, which adds to the ever-growing stable of this series. Otto Kernberg, when he was President of the IPA, set up COWAP in 1998 to explore scientific and political issues about the differences between women and men, and a hallmark of COWAP has always been a willingness to engage with other organisations and ideas, and to benefit from opening up a reciprocal discussion.

The chapters in this book offer a multi-faceted experience of both scientific and creative interest with important results, as well as being fascinating in their range and reach, covering both current and long past worldwide issues.

On behalf of COWAP and its wider community, I would like to say how grateful we are to Arlene Kramer Richards and Lucille Spira for their unstinting and, above all, thoughtful hard work in enabling this book to come to fruition. The chapters' vibrancy indicates that as psychoanalytic thinking and work becomes more complex and we need to deepen our understanding of the analytic process, what comes with that is a greater awareness of shared ground and a clarity with respect to broader ways of understanding the field.

I am struck above all by the combined creativity that emerges with the fields studied and in the ways of studying them, and in that way much that is new has been created in this book.

Frances Thomson-Salo
Overall Chair,
Committee on Women and Psychoanalysis

PREFACE

Myths of Mighty Women: Their Application in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy began with a conference sponsored by the Committee on Women and Psychoanalysis (COWAP) of the International Psychoanalytical Association, held at the Karen Horney Center in New York City, October 2014.

We started with the premise that psychoanalytic psychotherapists and psychoanalysts empower women when they help them to connect with strong female figures who, throughout time, have transcended limits, barriers, and met challenges boldly. Myths of such mighty women can inspire both psychotherapists and their patients to persist in doing what is necessary to successfully fulfil their quests. In that process, we identify with the might of our ancestors, find strength within ourselves, and the “grandmothers” have their place at the table.

Here, through the voices of our esteemed contributors, some of whom presented at the conference, we present myths from eastern and western society that illustrate the various images and characteristics that have helped to shape values inherent in women’s roles.

As Campbell (2008) says about mythic characters, psychoanalytic psychotherapists and their patients engage in a journey, often with

some reluctance on the part of the patient, towards a particular end. Here, we show how the myths presented in this work are useful to us and to the patients whom we treat. Towards this end, after each section of our authors' contributions, we discuss how a particular myth, as it resonates with various views within psychoanalysis, can be used to better understand and help our women patients to develop their voices so that they can enrich both their lives and those of others.

References

Campbell, J. (2008). *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*. Novato, CA: New World Library.

Introduction: Mighty Medea, or why female figures from Greco-Roman antiquity matter today

Ronnie Ancona

Whether we are psychoanalysts, patients, classics professors, students, or members of today's culture occupying various other positions (and, of course, these positions can overlap), the pull of the myths of mighty women or of the lives of actual mighty women from the past is strong. Figures like Clytemnestra, Pandora, Helen of Troy, Antigone, Medea, Clodia, and Cleopatra from Greco-Roman antiquity continue to fascinate wide-ranging audiences.

The idea that myth can become incorporated into psychoanalysis is, of course, not new. Many today know of Oedipus primarily because of his appearance in Freud's Oedipus complex, while female figures in classical myth have been appropriated as well, as Elektra was by Jung, and, more recently, Psyche has been by Carol Gilligan (2002). This appropriation, though, can go both ways. I, for example, as a Latin scholar, utilised the psychoanalytic work of Jessica Benjamin (1980) when looking for a model to help explain dominance and separation issues in relation to gender in a first century BCE Latin poem by Horace (Ancona, 1989).

Thus, the fact that real world women's issues may be aided by a turn to images of mighty women from the past is a fascinating and welcome development within an already established nexus of connections

between psychoanalysis and the study of classical antiquity. The use of myths about mighty women from classical antiquity, specifically in a therapeutic setting, is, in fact, an exciting extension within the general area of classical reception, which examines how earlier Greco-Roman works are received in later times and how that later reception can, in turn, make us rethink those earlier works. (On classical reception, see Martindale (1993) and *Classical Receptions Journal*.)

These old stories (of mythic figures and real ones as well) are reinterpreted by each generation and by each individual and they take on new lives. Those reinterpretations can then make us see retrospectively the earlier versions anew. Thus, myth can contribute to psychoanalysis, but psychoanalysis then also contributes to the study of myth because the myth becomes new in each of its instantiations, including those in the therapeutic setting addressed in this volume.

I will share with you here a few brief reflections on my experience teaching about the figure of Medea to a group of students at Hunter College who had little or no background in the subject. My course is called “Medea: Ancient and Modern Figure in Literature and the Arts” and is offered in the Thomas Hunter Honors Program. Put briefly, Medea is the princess from Colchis on the Black Sea who helps the Greek hero Jason to get the magical Golden Fleece. After he leaves her to remarry, she kills the children she had with him. Students read the most famous version of Medea, that written by the Greek playwright Euripides in the fifth century BCE, but they experience many other Medeas as well.

While students are not the same as patients, they do share with patients a unique set of issues and interests. Just as a particular feature of a given myth may be useful for addressing a specific issue in therapy with a particular individual, so a given feature of the same myth may capture the imagination of a particular student. Students learn over the course of a term that Medea is a very hard figure to “pin down”, as they examine numerous works of literature, dance, film, and opera that contain a version of Medea.

While recognising a core to her myth, students see the great variation in how she is reinterpreted over time and over different genres. The myth contains potentially relatable material, but its appearance in a specific formal context (a given play or poem or film) that establishes boundaries for how we interpret her forces the student to see the

version of Medea that is there and not the one he or she might want to see there.

Here are some of the ways in which versions of her story may differ. They might provide varied motivations and justifications for the killing of her children. Some might emphasise her divinity (she is the granddaughter of Helios, the Sun). Others make her quite human. In some, her foreignness (she is not Greek) is emphasised. In others, that feature is less important. In some, the chorus sympathises with her; in others, they do not. For both Jason and Medea, the significance of love or sex can vary, as does that of the heroic code with which each can be associated. Finally, how each of them is depicted as a parent might change depending on the perspective presented in a given work. Thus, the student must really read, or view and respond to, the particular Medea and cannot make generalisations about her that the specific work cannot support.

Her story is so powerful that it almost automatically seems to produce emotional as well as intellectual connections with the students. This is part of why the course is so exciting to teach. The student most taken with Medea's jealousy of Jason's new wife and with her witchy powers to cause destruction might be especially drawn to Martha Graham's modern dance piece from the 1940s, "Cave of the Heart," which does not focus on the issue of infanticide, at least not directly. Another student, interested in the younger, more innocent Medea, might be more drawn to the version of her found in Apollonius of Rhodes' third century BCE Greek epic, *Argonautica*, which focuses on her early relationship with Jason. Another, interested in the feminist potential of Medea's story, would probably be excited by her speech to the chorus on the constraints of marriage for women in Euripides' version as well as by the 1970s depiction of her in the context of feminism found in Jules Dassin's film, *A Dream of Passion*.

Students, of course, must argue for their interpretations in an academic context based on the evidence of the particular work under examination, but that does not preclude divergence of points of view. This produces lively debate in class and provides many opportunities for critical writing. Medea, in the same work, can often be viewed as right or wrong, sympathetic or unsympathetic, caring for her children or not caring for her children, human or god-like, sane or crazy. Finally, as a composite figure, she is potentially all of these things and

that is why discussion and interpretation often hinges less on what she did than on why. Students become engaged with her motivation and her power. They are attracted to her fearlessness and her ability to take control of a situation, despite her horrific deed of infanticide.

Whether she is sane or crazy, loves her children or does not, loves Jason or hates him (and these are, in many ways, polarities that good art and literature deny), she is ultimately compelling. It is this compelling quality of Medea—she is something “out there” in the “separate” world of story and myth that almost forces us to react personally—that allows for a rich double experience of relatability and distance. When we teach literature and the arts, we want our students to react with passion as well as with critical acumen. In the clinical context, where brain and emotions are also engaged (and not always in synchronisation), I can imagine how myth might be a potentially liberating tool for clinician and patient alike.

References

- Ancona, R. (1989). The subterfuge of reason: Horace, *Odes* 1.23 and the construction of male desire. *Helios*, 16: 49–57
- Benjamin, J. (1980). The bonds of love: rational violence and erotic domination. In: H. Eisenstein & A. Jardine (Eds.), *The Future of Difference* (pp. 41–70). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers.
- Classical Receptions Journal*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gilligan, C. (2002). *The Birth of Pleasure: A New Map of Love*. New York: Knopf.
- Martindale, C. (1993). *Redeeming the Text: Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ancona's introduction: implications for psychoanalytic psychotherapists

Arlene Kramer Richards and Lucille Spira

Mighty Medea is an inspiring woman character and a frightening one. Her myth, and especially the way Ronnie Ancona teaches it, can inspire the clinician to:

- explore the patient's ambivalent feeling towards any mythological figure;
- elaborate the feelings about the mythological character at different ages so as to open the possibilities for change and development over time;
- help the patient develop awareness of the point of view of other people towards the mythological figure, to tolerate the differences and to appreciate the widening of her world when these alternative ways of understanding are explored.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

PART I
THE POWER OF GODDESSES
AND STRONG WOMEN