

The Gendered Unconscious

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Can Gender Discourses
Subvert Psychoanalysis?

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Women and Psychology

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Feminist interventions in psychoanalysis have often attempted either to subvert or re-frame the masculinist and phallocentric biases of Freud's psychoanalysis. This book investigates the nature of these interventions by comparing the status and treatment of women in two different psychoanalytic models: the Kleinian and the feminist models. It argues that, in fact, these interventions have historically tended to reinforce such biases by collapsing the distinction between the gendered minds of individuals and theories of gender. This investigation is framed by two steps. First, in assessing the position of women and the feminine in psychoanalysis, The Gendered Unconscious explores not only the ways they are represented in theory, but also how these representations function in practice. Secondly, this book uses a framework of a comparative dialogue to highlight the assumptions and values that underpin the theory and clinical practice in the two psychoanalytic models. This comparative critique concludes with the counter-intuitive claim that contemporary Kleinian theory may, in practice, hold more radical possibilities for the interests of women than the practices derived from contemporary psychoanalytic gender theory. This book is of significant interest to those studying the psychology of women, psychoanalytic studies, health psychology, sociology, gender studies and cultural studies. It will also be of interest to clinicians and candidates of professional psychotherapy and psychoanalytic training programmes.

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