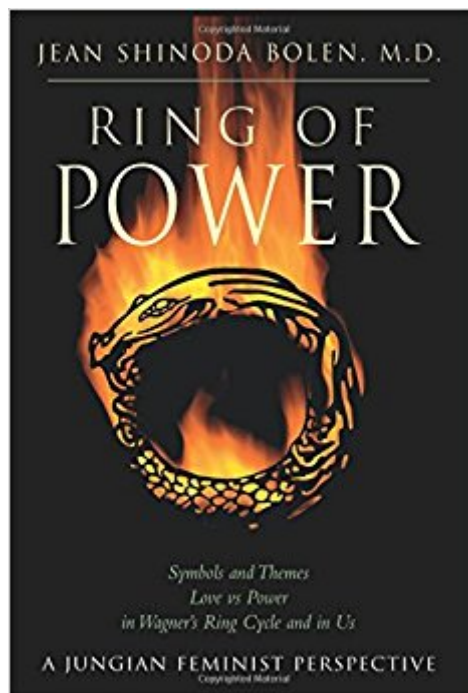


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Ring Of Power: Symbols And Themes Love Vs. Power In Wagner's Ring Cycle And In Us- A Jungian-Feminist Perspective (Jung On The Hudson Book Series)



Synopsis

A vivid grasp of the story and the characters in "The Ring of Niebelung" brings Richard Wagner's mythic four-opera cycle to life. The Ring Cycle has a hold on our imagination like no other operatic work because it is archetypal and has the power of myth as well as music to reverberate in the psyche. Bolen shows how myth illuminates psychology, and more - Ring of Power goes beyond the psychology of the individual, revealing dysfunctional families and patriarchal institutions.

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Customer Reviews

"This is a very readable, useful book for those working on self-examination and change, and is highly recommended for collections of both scholarly and popular psychology." --Marilyn E. Schafer, Library Journal
"Intriguing and illuminating." --Alix Madrigal, San Francisco Chronicle Review
"Thank goodness for this book! Jean Shinoda Bolen draws attention to a surprisingly neglected theme in our culture--given its seeming attraction to Jung's work--the mid-life transformation of our transcendent symbols of man as hero and patriarch, and to the role of femininity as a catalyst to this process." --Janet Sayers, San Francisco Jung Institute Library Journal
"Rich in revelations. Each chapter is a fascinating journey into our psychic world and into the story of our relationships."
--Isabel Allende

Best-selling author and Jungian analyst Jean Shinoda Bolen's vivid grasp of the story and the characters in The Ring of the Nibelung brings Richard Wagner's mythic four-opera cycle to life. The

Ring Cycle has a hold on our imagination like no other operatic work, because it is archetypal, and has the power of myth as well as music, to reverberate in the psyche. As in her acclaimed *Goddesses in Everywoman* and *Gods in Everyman*, Bolen shows how myth illuminates psychology, and more -- *Ring of Power* goes beyond the psychology of the individual, to examine dysfunctional families and patriarchal institutions. In "The Rhinegold", "The Valkyrie", "Siegfried", and "Twilight of the Gods", we see how the pursuit of power can be destructive to the personality and relationships. In "Freeing Ourselves from the Ring Cycle", Bolen describes how seeing the truth and acting upon what we know can liberate us, and lead to authenticity and individuation. "Beyond Valhalla: A Post-Patriarchal World?" provides a provocative and hopeful speculation on the possibilities of the return of the repressed feminine into society that is a millennial potential.

For first-timers the gods and demi-gods may, at first, be unfamiliar, but their situations are not, and the reader quickly begins to recognize them as old acquaintances. Bolen's book is a great starting place for someone approaching "The Ring" for the first time. She successfully reveals what Fischer Diskeau called the "domestic tragedy" that underlies all the philosophical layers of Wagner's trilogy. It's very easy to follow her delineation of the all-too-familiar family dynamics of husband/wife; father/son; father/ daughter (and so on), and the opposing dynamics of power and love that manifest themselves in the internal conflicts of this family and to some degree in all families. What she says here can be applied to many other great classics, as well, but most importantly for me, is the reasonable extrapolation that can be made from her book that we are living in a world in which patriarchal dominance has run amok and has us in the same morass in which Wotan finds himself as he struggles to end the mess he has caused because of the excessive wielding of the power of the sword (or spear) and the renunciation of love and compassion. I think Wagner was more prescient than he is given credit for being when he crafted this miraculous vision of (Western) civilization gone wrong, and its demise. No wonder "The Ring" is more popular now than ever before.

I had to read this for a class. A quick read and a good introduction to Jungian concepts and an analysis of the Ring. However, as the title suggests she is a Jungian feminist and this certainly colors her interpretations of the symbols. I would recommend reading it with Richard Donington's "Wagner's Ring and its symbols"

Very good book to read

This is a great book for a psycho-analytic approach to Wagner's "Ring" operas. Of course no one single interpretation does the Ring justice, but I found this author's views enlightening. It's also a fun introduction to Jungian psychology if you are a Wagner "Ring-head" (author's term.) Some of the sentences in the book are awkward and may take rereading a few times to understand, so the book should have been edited better. Also, the last two chapters in the book "Freeing ourselves from the Ring Cycle" and "Beyond Valhalla" were interesting, but it also seemed to be a lengthy summary of the Ring commentaries. There is no musical analysis of Wagner's work in this book, so readers expecting a discussion of leitmotifs should look elsewhere.

The author, Jean Shinoda Bolen, MD, delivers on the titles promise and then some. It gives not as much a new prospective, but more in-depth. It is like being told your shoe is untied. The story become more clear and personal this adds to its enjoyment. I found it too fascinating to tie it back to some old dry psychology. It helps to have individual views version anagrigation. One can still pick and chose their own ideas. But you have to be exposed befor you can pick and chose. I have put "Gods in Everyman: Archetypes That Shape Men's Lives" on my reading list.

This is a very personal take on Der Ring. She states that she specifically avoided reading other books about the ring before completing her's so that the analysis would come from her and not be influenced by other sources. The analysis is based upon her training as a Jungian analyst and her experience with patients over the years. On the plus side, we get a direct look at how a modern day Jungian sees the story and the symbols and how she relates them to her particular world view. There are headings like "Siglinde as Victim: The Psychology of Abuse" and "The Authoritarian Father and the Dysfunctional Family". She uses the characters and plot as a jumping off point to discuss particular aspects her brand of psychology. It is fairly stimulating and interesting. However, because she makes no attempt to contextualize the story or to understand what Wagner's intentions were I don't feel the book actually illuminated the Operas for me. It's kind of like having a Catholic priest explaining Buddhist iconography according to Catholic doctrine. No matter how great the analysis is, the original intent behind the work is lost because the artist and his mental world are not considered. Decontextualizing an artistic work might be a valid method of analysis of art, but for me it isn't a very satisfying one. The other drawback to the book is the music isn't examined. Wagner made a point of telling people that half of the message was contained in the music. In summary then,

if you would like an interesting read about how a modern Jungian explains Der Ring without reference to Wagner or his time, then this book is for you. If you are looking to understand what Wagner was trying to communicate with Der Ring, then you should look elsewhere.

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