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0521433401 - Psyche and Eros: Mind and Gender in the Life Course

Gisela Labouvie-Vief

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In *Psyche and Eros*, Gisela Labouvie-Vief describes historical and current concepts of mind and development, drawing from disciplines as diverse as philosophy, mythology, religion, literature, and psychology. She then presents a powerful theory of the maturing of mind, which brings together her empirical work and her exploration into mythology. The classical Greek myth of the gods Psyche and Eros serves as an evocative illustration of the author's theory.

In most developmental theories, the mind is seen as rational, opposed to imagination and emotion. The author claims that we are taught to develop our rational capabilities to the exclusion of imagination, but that in later life affect and imagination are brought back to the fore. This is often seen as decline and a regression to childhood, but the author views it as a natural developmental stage, in which mythos (imagination and feeling) and logos (rationality) are integrated.

Psyche and Eros asserts that the core experience of development differs along gender lines. Rationality is regarded as masculine, whereas imagination is viewed as feminine. Competition between so-called masculine and feminine parts of the mind has limited our ability to describe the mind and its development over the life course. The author suggests that we overcome the dualistic way of thinking about mind and see how rationality and imagination can complement each other.

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Mind and gender in the life course

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For Alois, Elisabeth, and Irmgard

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