

## A Philosophical Interpretation of the Foundations of "Feminine Spirituality" in the Thought of Clarissa Pinkola Estés

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### Abstract

Feminine spirituality can be understood as a paradigm encompassing norms and prohibitions aimed at the existential transcendence of womanhood. Thus arises the question: how, by considering the religious–mythological components in Estés’ thought, can one attain a philosophical–existential reading of feminine spirituality? This reading is founded upon a core vision and two key components. The foundational vision holds that feminine spirituality, entirely based on the affirmation of woman’s unique existence, seeks to realize authentic femininity in an individualistic manner. It is grounded in the idea that each woman is a unique type—regarded as both the first and the last—and that existential transcendence in feminine spirituality, through this lens, forms a spirituality oriented toward existential understanding. The two components are as follows: first, the primacy of the Dionysian approach, meaning that the woman’s individuality triumphantly transcends the wearying aspects of life, manifested as suffering, and joyfully affirms life, thereby initiating a vital transformation. Second, feminine spirituality, as existential mode of being, functions in the search for self-meaning, self-flourishing, the articulation and stabilization of a feminine life-philosophy, and the offering of a metaphysical vision for commitment to the Dionysian way of life. Attaining such a stance, however, requires practice and discipline—hence Estés’ emphasis that understanding the nature of the wild woman is not a ritual, but a practice.

**Keywords:** Woman and Femininity, Inner Self, Individuality, Spirituality, De Beauvoir, Nietzsche.

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