

The Future That Brought Her Here: a Memoir Of A Call To Awaken.

By Deborah DeNicola.

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Review by Hugh Fox

OK, so the core of the book is a call for women to feminize themselves by going back to the theology of the Magna Mater/Great Mother, before God was macho-ized, and learn how to face the world using their dreams, intuitions, their whole inner mental-spiritual powers. Which is a stirring and masterful thesis....but the real fun in the book is when DeNicola goes back to the places where the churches devoted to this feminism still exists, and doesn't just theorize about traditional Catholicism versus the Cathars and Albigensians, heretics versus orthodoxy, or even goes back to the ancient pre-Christian, pre-Judaic times when the center of theology wasn't God the Father but God the Mother, and actually goes into the places where the images of the ancient woman-centered theology still exist.

In Marseille, for example, she first goes to see the giant golden Madonna that stands over the city over Notre Dame de la Garde, and then she and her friend, Deborah Rose go to the shrine that tells the real, ancient, authentic story about what the Madonna is all about: "We had come to see the old city and to visit the Abbey Saint Victor to commune with an important Black Madonna known as Notre Dame de la Confession...." This Madonna does not resemble the one that presides over the city from the hilltop at all. Far from glamorous or soft, she is plain and authoritative. Deborah told us that, in earlier times, a Demeter/Persephone ritual took place on this spot. Begg tells of the Candlemas procession that has replaced the Demeter/Persephone ritual in Marsaille since the year 600 A.D. On February 2nd...the point between the winter solstice and spring equinox....this Black Madonna, Notre Dame de Confession, is dressed in a greencape and lifted from her crypt to parade through town followed by a crowd carrying green candles. The celebration is one of cyclic renewal. The color green, also the color sacred to the Egyptian goddess Isis, is a representation of the coming spring....I was overwhelmed by Deborah's statement that the Anatolian Mother Goddess lineage was probably the oldest known -- reaching back to 6800 B.C.E....In Deborah's words, "Mary is the most recent in the long succession of mother goddesses from Anatolia." There is a connection between Ephesus and Marseille, since Marseille was discovered by Greeks who held the Anatolian Artemis sacred... (pp.=20274-275)

You don't want to stop reading, do you? And that's the way the whole book is, an inspired examination into the ancient female-goddess centered world that highly influenced early Christianity but eventually was cen-

Wilderness House Literary Review 4/3

sored out of existence, putting both Mary Magdalen and the Virgin Mary in minor roles overshadowed by God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But the pre-Christian goddess-centrism is still amazingly visible in the ancient churches of France. Like in Arles in the Eglise Saint Trophime where the doorway is in the shape of a mandorla, an ancient symbol of the vulva, where Christ seated right in the middle, symbolizing his subordination to female power: as we enter the church, we enter the body of the sacred. The Black Madonnas, whose postures are straight and empowered, hold the child Jesus on their laps with a strong and stiff authority, like that of Isis' throne holding Pharaoh. Compared to the late medieval and Renaissance Marys, whose bodies curve, whose skin is lightened, and whose figures show soft vulnerability, the Black Madonnas are formidable in their appearance of strength...The early Christians took these older goddess forms and images of Isis and Horus and their pagan past to keep the fertility of Christ and the Magdalen's marriage alive, despite its having been erased by the Patriarchs. (p.262)

And what really saves the authenticity of DeNicola's contentions, is the total depth of her research. There's a staggering bibliography at the end. At the same time, though, the book is filled with Denicola's magnifique poetry, her dreams, her intuitions, her own personal life, her distrust of men, so that what you have here is a profound theological study of the influence of the Power Goddess in the ancient and beginning-Christian world plus a personal confessional account that turns it all into something able to be related to. One of the few-few books I've seen in the last twenty years that I couldn't, couldn't put down.