



Essay

## WILD Feminine Futures

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### Abstract

*This article examines the WILD (Wild-Interconnected-Liminal-Deep Futures) woman as a transformative framework for feminist futures. Drawing from feminist theory, futures studies and ecological thought, it argues that re-wilding the inner landscape is a necessary step in fostering futures that embrace equity, justice, and interconnectedness. The WILD woman transcends the limitations of WEIRD (Western-Educated-Industrialised-Rich-Democratic) paradigms, embodying a perspective that prioritises relationality, navigating the liminal and deep transformative futures thinking. Utilising Causal Layered Analysis (CLA), decolonized systems thinking, indigenous ways of knowing, and embodied practices this article explores how feminist futures can challenge patriarchal, capitalist, and colonial narratives. The findings suggest that by reclaiming the maternal voice as a post-gender voice of love and care for all, the WILD Feminine Futurist serves as a Futures Doula, guiding the transition towards more equitable, interconnected and regenerative futures.*

### Keywords

Feminist Futures, Re-wilding, WILD Woman, Causal Layered Analysis (CLA), Embodied Feminine

### Introduction

To enable and birth futures that can hold and sustain “equity and justice across all divides, thereby enriching our collective human experience” (p. 63), which Milojevic (2024) describes as feminism’s foundational goal, there is some key groundwork that needs to be done. Given that the main aim of feminism is to enrich our human experience and build better futures, I propose that we, as futurists, must first continue to create a fertile and creative inner ecology/landscape within ourselves.

I was recently taken with Claire Marshall and Nicole Smede’s live performance *How to get capitalism out of your head* (If Labs, 2024), in which Marshall introduces herself as a WEIRD (Western-Educated-Industrial-Rich-Democratic) woman as first defined by Joseph Henrich in his book *The WEIRDest people in the world: How the West became psychologically peculiar and particularly prosperous* (2020). I too identify as a weird woman, but I am also in transition; I am also a WILD (Wild-Interconnected-Liminal-Deep Futures) Woman. Let me explain who she is:

W – re-Wild the inner psyche and imagination to unleash new possibilities and diversity in our ecosystems.

I – Interconnection with all of life and living systems through curious exploration of interrelations, interdependency and interconnectedness.

L – Liminal: trust in the unknown, uncertainty, emergence. Illuminating the path in times of chaos and metamorphous.

D – Deep Futures – Transformative, Conscious, Planetary, Visionary and Embodied.

First let us reclaim the word WILD for good! A word once used during colonial times to refer to those spaces that were untameable, or those unable to be subdued (Bregman, 2020) and not able to be bought under control. ‘To

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run wild’ means to grow unrestrained, undisciplined, like a wild animal, or is said of an imagination that is not held back by rules. For the purposes of this article, in response to the provocation of the Hesitant Feminists Futures call, I discuss the WILD woman, though this acronym is relevant across the gender/non-gender spectrum (Strand, S. 2022).

## Unpacking the WILD

### Wild

The WILD woman (Estes, 2008) welcomes the process of re-wilding her inner landscape. ‘Inner re-wilding’ is the process of breaking down the internal walls of constraint and control to awaken the fertile and untamed inner self in partnership with the natural, non-human world (Monbiot, 2014). Re-wilding is an opportunity to inhabit all of ourselves in our full, wild, unexplored feminine/human capacities.

As Klisanin (2023) points out, rewilding has its origins in conservation but can also be understood as a narrative with application across human systems, the human psyche, and to planetary futures. Just as our external ecosystems thrive on diversity and wildness, so too do our inner landscapes. We are not separate from the natural, non-human world, and an ever-increasing number of voices and evidence echo this loudly (Louv, 2008; Monbiot, 2014; Nisbet et al., 2011). In fact, our cognitive health, well-being and existence depend on it. As Klisanin (2023) says: “One of our many roles as futurists is helping people see possibilities. Through rewilding, we can help others recognize the intimate relationship that exists between the exterior landscape and the human psyche.”

And we are all more inclined to take care of which we are connected. Through rewilding the inner landscape, connecting deeply with nature itself, we have the potential to free the mind, unleash imagination and creativity, and guide others to do the same.

Allowing opportunities in nature to listen, observe and to sense the spaces in between is an important step to breaking free from our internal prisms of control, constraint and domestication. As Monbiot (2013) writes, “My mind blew empty... I freed myself from knowing...” Wild and open spaces invite receptivity, an emptying, and through exposure to diversity and observation of endless creative processes in nature, we can start to ignite our senses. New possibilities emerge:

**UNTAMED**  
Senses  
Hardly met,  
New languages hardly spoken,  
The descriptions still mostly unmade,  
The texture unsmelled  
The unseen submerging is a world of—  
Gaps,  
Not empty,  
But,  
So full of possible possibles.  
There is no time to despair,  
The discovery has hardly begun. (Bateson, 2023, p. 144)

We can begin to observe natural cycles that exist beyond the pushing and forcefulness of our often overflowing, constrained and busy lives in the WEIRD world. From the spaces and pauses, new possibilities and imaginations may arise to disrupt the ‘ruins of the future’ (Bussey, 2024, “Abstract” section), and the dystopic Anthropocene images that are pushing up against us. From the place of receptivity and spaciousness, it is easier to ‘drop’ into the body, where we can start to disrupt the traditional, well-trodden paths that exist within.

One practice I suggest is entering a forest—or even a park, if that is what is available (Park et al., 2010)—as if you are greeting a lover, friend, kin. Invite your breath to slow down in synergy with the natural environment. From

there, bring your awareness to your senses; allow the sounds of the natural world to penetrate you, the smell of the landscape to intoxicate you and the elements to enliven your skin. Next, allow your being to expand into the space around you, unconstrained, to connect with the natural world. Then, take a moment to experience the felt sense of being in your body—the aliveness. Let WILD excite you, ignite you into aliveness.

### **Interconnected**

*Interconnection with all of life and living systems through curious exploration of interrelations, interdependency and interconnectedness.*

The WILD woman intimately understands the need and imperative for us to collectively facilitate the shift from a Dominator Model and androcratic society to the Partnership Model with a focus on caring technologies that sustain and enhance life, creating a more equitable, peaceful and ecologically sustainable world (Eisler, R., 1997, pp. 146-149), a world premised on interconnection and interdependence.

The return to not just knowing this intellectually but knowing it through the body, the land and spiritually is a vital step towards leading and enabling women's empowerment. Bussey (2014) talks of our fractured modern human experience as being the wound upon which our greatness as an industrial civilisation is based.

Yunkaporta (2021, pp. 2-3) expands on this:

...all humans have evolved within complex land-based cultures over deep time ... most of us have been displaced from those cultures of origin, a global diaspora of refugees severed not only from land but from the sheer genius that comes from belonging in symbiotic relation to it.

Indigenous ways of knowing and being have acknowledged this sacred interconnected web of life that we are fortunate enough to exist within since the beginning of time. There lie knowing and ways of being that are indispensable if we are to find new ways of understanding complex systems beyond silos, individualism and reductionism. Bateson (2017) calls upon us to dive into the world of 'warm data' to awaken to the interrelationships that integrate elements of every complex system: abandon linear, dehumanised ways of being, doing and seeing the world, and instead embrace and be curious about the process of 'symmathesy'—the forming of an entity over time by transcontextual mutual learning through interaction (Bateson, 2016, p. 169), through its innate interdependency.

Here the work of the WILD feminine futurist lies: the decolonising of systems thinking, the knowing of the senses and awareness so that we may sense and occupy what Boroft calls the living authentic whole (Goodchild, 2021, p. 93). I believe that embodied presence is a powerful tool to experience the living authentic whole and to foster a deeper sense of our true interconnected and interdependent nature. Embodied processes release us from the grip of socialised dominance of the corporeal (Bussey, 2024). Cherishing our body and perceiving its wisdom leads to a powerful reverence for all bodies and, indeed, for all creation (Pudelek, S.M., 2020, p. 170).

So, what is embodied presence and how do you access this wisdom, available to you as a WILD feminine futurist? van Ruth (2020) describes being embodied as being in touch with your felt sense of a situation/concept/object/person, where this felt sense is experienced as a way of knowing. There are many pathways to explore embodiment—as I have done over the years through practices from breathwork to embodied dance to singing—but to start, a simple exercise can be to, in this moment, find flow in your breath and movement. To slow time down. To awaken to the aliveness and joy accessible within your body. This is a form of activism in itself: pleasure activism (Brown, 2019). Explore experiencing a felt sense of your womb and your spine as a gateway to the ancestors who stand behind us and for those yet to come to awaken to your spiritual and embodied knowing.

Further, as Milojevic (2024, p. 74) states, feminism can never simply be a belief system: it is a call to action. As we do this, we disrupt the scripts of socialisation and normalisation, the habitus of the capitalist, isolated ego-self (Scheer, 2012).

### **Liminal**

The WILD woman knows that to navigate the liminal requires a deep love and devotion to the process of emergence, the birthing, the dying, the transforming, the swimming in the ocean of uncertainty. The magic of the liminal lies in the unformed, the uncertain, the fog, as Frank Spencer refers to it. We can better navigate this fog, perhaps even

find joy and pleasure in it, if we are deeply embodied, trusting in the metamorphous; we can cross the bridge of the liminal. The WILD feminine futurist has been there, with one foot in the land of the ancestors and one foot in the future, listening, sensing, feeling, retrieving wisdom so that we can both honour the ancestors of the past but also be good ancestors to those of the future. The liminal is intergenerational in nature. The liminal can ignite longing—the sense that calls us into the world and fundamentally involves a spiritual urge towards connection (Bussey, 2024). Here is a small gift I bought back from my own journey into the liminal:

What if...  
 What if I let go of my knowing  
 What if I let go of the hardness of certainty  
 To stretch into uncertainty  
 For new senses to unfurl  
 Knowing to unravel  
 And new possibilities to emerge  
 I sense the voices of the past, my ancestors whispering on the edges of the wild  
 Inviting me into the unknown  
 But not disconnected  
 Not separate  
 Messy and alive  
 Dripping with life and sensuality  
 An intricate and intimate web of life and living  
 Yet to be discovered  
 In fact, yearning

The butterfly offers a powerful transformational metaphor for these chaotic times. One of my own experiences of the liminal lies in the birth of my son five years ago. My son and I were comfortable, he in my belly and me in my waiting. It was time to stop eating, though—I was now a fat caterpillar that needed to go into the cocoon; I was 41 weeks and five days pregnant. A friend came to visit and offered to drum for me. As she drummed, I swayed, I sang, I laughed, I cried, I let go of that which I didn't need to take into this next chapter of my life. I came home to myself. That night, my body took over, my water broke, and I travelled down the foggy path of uncertainty, not knowing what to expect next. But I was home, I had trust in my body, I had prepared well for the journey and was comfortable in the unknown, allowing me to be at ease as the journey unfolded. My birthing journey was transformative, my son was born, and now I was bringing insights back from the liminal.

### **DEEP Futures**

DEEP Futures and Inayatullah's Six Pillars (Inayatullah, 2008) are the bedrock of transformation. Specifically, Causal Layered Analysis (CLA; Inayatullah, 1998) offers us a powerful cognitive framework to identify current systems and what we have inherited. As Milojevic (2024) said at the APFN Conference 2024, authenticity comes about when we challenge programmed knowledge. CLA provides the feminine futurist with a powerful tool to systematically question and critique her inner realms so that she frees herself of the isolation of individualism, the contamination of patriarchy and its bedfellow's colonialism and capitalism. As shown in Table 1 CLA is a powerful tool for deconstruction and transformation of narratives.

**Table 1.** Causal Layered Analysis of the WILD woman

Litany	Current WEIRD women suffocating in psychological prison	Transitioning The wildly alive womb-an, sowing and growing alternatives
Systems	Western Educated Industrialised Rich Democratic	<b>W</b> – <i>re-Wilding</i> the psyche through nature connection <b>I</b> – curious exploration of <b>Interconnected, Inter-relational, Interdependence</b> <b>L</b> – <b>Liminal</b> space holder <b>D</b> – <b>Deep Futures</b> deconstructing and transforming narratives
Worldview	I need to get things done at all costs Others know what is best for me I am dispensable My body is disconnected from me Constrained and controlled	Womb knowing <b>W</b> – I see the world from a place of <b>Wonder</b> <b>O</b> – I am <b>Open</b> to new possibilities <b>M</b> – I hear the voice of <b>Maternal</b> Wisdom, a voice of love and care for all <b>B</b> – I am a <b>Biological Being</b>
Metaphor	The Hanged Woman – suffocated by constraint, control, coercion	Womb-an of the World I sow and grow alternatives Connected to all of life through the womb

Through the process of CLA of the Self, we can also use mantras to integrate (Inayatullah, 2023). Additionally, while it can help to imagine a new future, utilising embodiments can assist in anchoring a felt sense of the new future. The wildly alive womb-an can not only overcome the conditioning to just follow the map, but as Bussey (2022, para. 4) suggests, to also play with it. To dance with the aliveness, the meaning making and the co-creation that this framework offers us as a path towards shedding old skins and liberation. A spiritual expansion, an expanded state of consciousness, can occur to embody the new future in the present (Gatmon, 2015).

**Discussion and elaboration**

Thus, the WILD woman is empowered and a crucial enabler if we are to reach the feminist goal of women’s empowerment and a richer collective human experience, able to navigate and illuminate these uncertain, complex times. Able to act as the Futures Doula, the feminine WILD embodies the love and care needed to hospice modernity as it dies and transforms (Machado de Oliveira, 2021), to support and guide the metamorphosis, the birthing, including the pain and the pleasure, as we sow seeds of a more regenerative, loving future.

The Futures Doula is a space holder, she is a seer in the dark, illuminating the path forward. From this place, the Futures Doula reclaims the word ‘doula’ from its Greek root meaning ‘female servant and transform it to mean a woman who serves greater humanity, similar to Sarkar’s Compassionate Servant leader (Inayatullah, S. 1997, p. 134). Through embodied presence with a focus on the womb, the WILD woman can connect with the potent WOMB space of unborn possibilities.

While Milojevic (2024, p. 52) says that, in her 40 years of studying feminism and working with women, she has yet to discover a significant desire for a matriarchal future, I propose that there is a strong call yet to be widely acknowledged for a post-gender Maternal Voice; a spiritual voice calling for Interbeing and for love and care for all life—human and non-human.

It is the voice of Earth Mother; it is the voice of the womb.

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