

Review of: "The Eden Complex: Transgression and Transformation in the Bible, Freud and Jung"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This is an excellent foray into a revision of Freud's classic formulation of the Oedipus complex with an Abrahamic myth. The discussion of key facets of psychotherapy as a discipline is concise but clear. The suggestion of the Eden complex, however, may benefit from a more culturally sensitive approach. One known issue, for example, is the translation of 'rib' from the Aramaic language. Another significant cultural aspect that may offer some further inroads is the mixed gendering of the term 'Yahweh' and the longer cultural heritage of term as the name of a warrior-storm god of Levantine populations in the Eastern Mediterranean. Where the myth of Oedipus questions the tragic fate that awaits the hero, it also asserts this through a three-play cycle, concluding with Antigone's being-toward-death that was thoroughly discussed by psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan as an ethical attitude. The Eden myth, however, does not benefit from knowledge of a dramatic structure, and therefore abides an allegorical reading in a markedly different way as there is little to compare with the traditions of Hellenic dramaturgy that may give further clues to the structure of the myth beyond an allegorical-metaphysical reading. The turn to Jung and the Kabbalist tradition makes some headway here, but leaves aside some weighty topics. In closing, one thing to take away from the discussion of transgression is that the law, a symbolic limit, incites the desire of its own transgression. To put this another way, without the law there is no desire to transgress. Herein, for the discussion of the Eden myth, I suspect there is a deeper question to be asked beyond the injunction to not eat the fruit. The invention of Eden-based immorality seems a key aspect here, especially as Oedipus blinds himself as his punishment for his transgression but punishment in the Eden myth is delivered externally.