

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.

When I finished reading this well written and intellectually stimulating article, I wished Sanford Drob would write a book on transgression. I wanted more as the writing draws one in to query what transgression means personally and collectively, psychologically and physically. It is a fascinating and intriguing topic as Sanford Drob elucidates through numerous examples. Jung commented that individuation is becoming who one is and the becoming aspect is ongoing. One must continually transgress tradition and the old patterns to grow.

I thought about the transgressions we are currently witnessing in war, boundaries violated, personally, culturally, collectively. The concept of transgression brought to mind Winnicott's concept of ruthlessness as transgression, envy, incest and many other psychological and physical manifestations. In addition, James Hillman, archetypal psychologist wrote an essay on betrayal as part of individuation. He highlights the importance of betrayal to grow and separate from what has been the known. Transgressions also can hurt while they change the shape of our inner and outer lives. And, many analytical perspectives are in support of transgression, in one form or another, as part of personality development.

Sanford Drob as usual in his writings brings in a wealth of thoughtful material, cohesive thematically from the Eden story to the Kabbalah to Freud. He questions the primacy of the oedipal complex as Jung did and in fact many psychoanalysts do now. These perspectives lead to the need to transgress Freud. Sanford Drob illustrates the process of recollection in the Kabbalistic breaking and coalescing of the vessels in the Luria tradition. This is another parallel to the analytic process and the Kabbalah with its symbolism. It also was acknowledged by Jung as verifying the process of individuation.

The fact that transgression spurs growth is also part of the Eden story of the significance of transgression, sin, even evil. The developing self is challenging and fits with the Jungian approach to have the courage to establish oneself. It does not mean being lawless but to act with consciousness and awareness.

Throughout the article is the interweaving of the spiritual, symbolic and psychological. The depth of Jungian thought and the meaning in so many traditions expresses the intricate process of interior work. It is a tapestry of the psyche. Sanford Drob is a master at this. He skillfully makes the mythology live, the symbolic have meaning and the personal benefit from exposure to these layers of the psyche. He respectfully and consciously portrays the differences between Freud and Jung. Both had to transgress, and we also have to do so if we are not to be robotic. The article encourages us to get onto our path, find our myth and be as conscious of its impact as possible. We have this responsibility reaching back and forward from the Eden story to enrich the present day.

