

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

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Shedding a new light on the psychologically radical dynamic of prohibition-transgression is what I found fascinating in this article. Here, I just write down my inner dialogue with the author, with no claim of truth, and I hope the author finds some of them useful in refining the arguments and the rhetoric.

I acknowledge that the exploration of the origin of this dynamic in the sexual drive and the son's incestuous desire for the mother, as posited in the Oedipus complex, is controversial. However, the presumed superior position of the father, or its symbolic surrogate as "the name of the father" or the "Other," proves to be a valuable device for comprehending power relations that permeate all facets of life. Consequently, I question the author's assumption, as presented in p.6, that Freud's theory exclusively operates within parent-child relationships.

The author's portrayal of the Eden Complex as a "model for" self-actualization or individuation steers the discourse toward a normative rather than an analytical approach. Considering the potentially tragic nature of the human condition, Freud's non-normative, descriptive theory on prohibition/transgression (Oedipus Complex) prompts contemplation. Couldn't liberation, individuation, and actualization be construed as yet other delusions? Freudian psychoanalysis embraces a humble compromise with the human condition that involves understanding and accepting the human condition through disillusionment. The Freudian analysis leads to deconstruction, advocating observation and disillusionment. Encouraging transgression as a means of individuation poses the risk of succumbing to another fantasy to escape reality. Does the desire for redemption, self-actualization, and liberation guarantee true self-actualization and individuation? What if individuals are ensnared in another archetype and fantasy that necessitates disillusionment?

Here comes the important issue of the "end of analysis." According to Lacanian view, the aim of therapy is to enable the analysand to articulate his "desire," that is, to unveil the genuine desire beneath. This seems to me more radical than the following desire for liberation, which can entail another fantasy. The myth of Eden relates the basic binary opposition of prohibition/transgression but does not provide an insight into the kernel of this opposition, that is, the desire behind it. This is a point that the writer also recounts on pages 6-7 of the article, albeit leading to different conclusions.

The analytical process, in my interpretation, necessitates the analysand constructing their symbolic order (including values) to make sense of their existence and evade sheer perversion, aligning with Jung's quotation on p. 7.

It seems to me that there is confusion between "reality" and "Real" in the article when the author claims, "Reality, in this sense, disrupts and shatters the "symbolic convention" of ruling discourse" (pp. 10-11). This view is also echoed on page

11, where the author draws an analogy between the emergence of Lacanian Real and the crack of scientific discourse that eventually could lead to the scientific paradigm shift. Maybe I didn't get the writer's argument properly, but as I understand of Lacanian "Real" is that it doesn't shatter the symbolic "convention" but "the Symbolic Order" in general. There is no meaning in Real, and in fact, Real is the absence of the meaning. The Real is unmediated and beyond or before symbolic constructs. In contrast, scientific paradigms are discourses within the symbolic order, and their change follows the discourse changes occurring within this realm. The dominant scientific paradigm suppresses incompatible facts until its exhaustion, prompting a paradigm shift that meaningfully incorporates previously ignored facts. Consequently, the entire process operates within the symbolic order.