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Review of the Volume „ Dante, Freud and Dalí: what they might have in common? Psychoanalytic Reflections on Dante's Inferno", author: Marius Dumitrescu, Lumen Publishing, 2022

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Abstract: The volume "Dante, Freud and Dalí: what they might have in common? Psychoanalytic Reflections on Dante's Inferno", authored by PhD Prof. Univ. Marius Dumitrescu, and published in 2022 by Lumen Publishing House from Iasi, Romania took me into a world of questions about reality, about my own mind and my own morality. The author' challenge for the reader is an invitation into a very deep journey to explore his/hers own reality based on Freud's work and analyzing the influence of Dante in the developing of psychoanalyzes theory of interpreting the dreams. The books takes also the reader in a short ride through Dali's work, and his way of seeing the reality. The link between Dante, Freud and Dali is the hidden reality, which is also hidden between the challenging the pages of this book.

Keywords: *Psychoanalyzes; hidden reality; Dante, Freud, Dali; healing.*

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Marius Dumitrescu is a PhD Professor at the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Philosophy and Social-Political Sciences, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iaşi, Romania since 1990 and his carrier and also his professional confessions proved an interest to many domains like art, psychoanalysis, being also involved in many didactic activities like courses, seminars, evaluations, coordination of bachelor's, master's and doctoral theses and also being involved in many competition commissions in the field of education. His interest took him to study Philosophy, Philosophical Anthropology, Psychoanalysis of Art, Philosophy and Cinematographic art he made his doctoral studies in Theories of Argumentation and Interpretation.

As he wrote about *Dante, Freud and Dali: what they might have in common? Psychoanalytic Reflections on Dante's Inferno*, published at LUMEN in 2022, this book is the culmination of a project he had been working on for several years and it was based on the book *Psychoanalysis Applied to Philosophy and Art*, published in 2014. The book was brought to an end in the year dedicated to Dante, marking 700 years since his passing into immortality. Dumitrescu (2022) also explain his interest to philosophical psychoanalysis starting from the anniversary context of the year 2010 which pointed out the centenary since the International Psychoanalytical Association was founded, at Nuremberg in March 1910. In this anniversary context, given my preoccupations in the field of psychoanalysis. Writing the book in English was a way to bring his ideas closer to universality and brings together three of the most important figures from the universal culture: Freud, Dante and Dali, being seen by the author linked through their genious.

The author of the book is inviting the reader to a journey which reveals the concept of inferno from many perspectives (Vlad, 2019) as a way to get the meaning and understanding of the human existence strongly imprinted individually and also culturally by the sin and also the road from hell to paradise.

Marius Dumitrescu is looking for the link between Dantes' inferno and the Freud's interpretation of the dreams, but also the wider influence of Dante's work on interpreting the dreams, proposing a captivating psychoanalysis of Dante's work, but also the way that echo of Dante and Freud's work constructed a unique form in Dali's representation.

Freud considers the dream a way to reveal the unconscious and he managed to treat the patients with some psychiatric disorders like hysteria and neuroses, starting from the idea that the psychology disorders are more or less hiding some actions or some thoughts which are in conflict with the morality and solving these issues by bringing the hidden to the „surface" can

cure the patient. What is interesting is the way that the disorder is internalized by the author, using words like hysteric and neurotic people. So, if the issue is internalized the person can be strongly identified with it, and in this context, the psychoanalyst is the one who can fix the person by bringing the missing pieces from the puzzle to the surface using the person's dreams, but, in the same time, the role of the person in this process is not denied. So, the dream is like the unconsciousness expression, of the wishes denied or disputed by the community. One of the most disputed desire is the sexual instinct and Freud appreciated it like the „base" for many of the psychiatric disorders.

Dumitrescu considers that because of the times Freud lived in, when sexuality was suppressed, „he brought to the scene the idea that everything that appears in dreams has something to do with sexual drive, insisting that any representation and symbol that appear in dreams have a sexual connotation", and that the most repressed and fought by morality and civilization tendencies are sexual tendencies, so repressed desires can be the base for the psychological disorders. In this context, what is repressed during the day can be brought to the surface in a symbolistic way in dreams and fulfilling repressed desires like ambition, the need for power and control (Apostu, 2016), unfulfilled love, aggression etc., becomes possible during the dream. What the author mentions is the important role of the person who dreams, being considered the best one to do it, helped by the psychoanalyst, who supports the person to reconnect with those aspects that the „dreamer" usually forgets when is awake.

The author describes the Freud's course in psychoanalyses and he offers some ideas from the Freud's first book, where Freud considers that the dream state is an internally generated phenomenon and is linked to the person's past. He mentions that at the first publication Freud's book was not very successful, but with small changes, the following editions have won more and more readers, being richer in illustrations and brought more additions on the side of symbolism. What is interesting is that although the unconscious seems to be the master of our sleep, even during the dreams, the repressed desires, according to Freud, do not manifest directly, they seem to have no meaning, but the interpretation of the dream can lead to finding the meaning, for which the skills of the psychoanalyst are needed to reach the "latent" content of the dream, the interpretation of the dream being given artistic valences, considered to be a poetic endeavor, because it uses metaphors and symbols.

And the reason why repressed desires are not expressed directly, would be that they would be disruptive to the person and would be

repressed immediately. In this context, the unconscious finds a symbolic way to externalize that desire, in a form that is socially desirable, but which makes interpretation more difficult for the person.

Dumitrescu (2022) presents the topography of the mind, in Freud's conception as the most important in interpreting the dreams recognizing the value of the unconscious mind, which doesn't give direct access to its content. But the unconscious' content becomes possible though analyzing the dreams, because its dynamic, as a result of the repression exerted by the conscious mind; the conscious mind is about the conscious content meaning the things that people a consciously linked at some point and the preconscious mind with the things that are not necessarily repressed, but becoming unconscious at some point. This way of mapping the mind is the base for a personality structure with three correspondent levels like the Id, the instinctive part of the mind linked to the unconscious and concerning the sexuality, aggressivity and hidden memories (Freud, 2018); the Superego, controlling the Ego and run by the moral consciousness; and the Ego, like a mediator between the Id and Superego representing the "real external world" in the persons' mind. In Dante's work, this mapping of the human mind, where the unconsciousness is the one which dictates the instincts and which, when the conscious is asleep, can express what otherwise is forbidden in the society makes from the Superego a Paradise where God can be found if His authority is respected (Huidu, 2018).

It is believed that Freud, inspired by Nietzsche's ideas, sees in the unconscious mind its own determinism, a reservoir of repressed ideas that have their own determinism, independent of the conscious mind, which makes him see the dream as a scenario masterfully created by the unconscious through processes of condensation, symbolization and transfer, which somehow makes the unconscious very conscious of its goals, so that what it produces is, in the end, put into a form acceptable to the conscious. In this way, during the sleep, the Self becomes free and willing to meet the real Id, recognised and understood in the most intimate way, proposing in fact, a kind of reconciliation between the instinct and morality, what can make it more acceptable, more integrated to have meaning for the inner human personality.

Even if you are familiar with the Freud's work, what is challenging in this book is the cultural trip offered by the author, who creates a space for a better understanding of these ideas. Before Freud, Decartes considered that the only person able to interpret a dream is the dreamer himself, Descartes being able to interpret by himself what his unconscious mind offered to him.

Dumitrescu recognize the Freud's quality to open the way to a better understanding of the unconscious mind, underlying the role of the dreams in the psychic life in order to externalize what cannot be easily socially accepted, but also admitting that the dreams are not the only way of expression for the unconscious mind, because artistic expressions like subtle jokes, writing or any form of art represents also an individual but also collective compensation of the long term unfulfilled unconscious desires, what can bring us, in author's opinion to Jung's ideas about collective unconsciousness and archetypes, which are changing the face of Freud's psychoanalyzes. But even so, he underlies the importance of Freud's work which opened, however the way to a cultural movement whose amplitude not even Freud himself had anticipated.

The idea that if the Ego is sleeping during the sleep, the Super Ego has some influence on the dreams is not accepted by the Canadian psychoanalyst Dan Merkur who considers that all the dreams are starting from the repressed consciousness (the Id), the unconsciousness being the one to code these desires making them symbols which people cannot understand easily.

Starting from Freud's ideas, the author moves on to Dante's work, which he likens to the rise from the dark catacombs to the light, of Gothic cathedrals, contributing to the understanding of the world as a great comedy.

Dante's Divine Comedy begins with a traumatic experience having a happy ending, making the transition from Hell towards Heaven, where the Hell is the lowest place where people can decay, to accessing the darkest and repressed spaces of the unconscious, seen as a condition to understand how frail civilization is, and how wild and deep the instinct. Starting from a collective, non-individualized guilt of sins that are ranked according to their gravity, placed in a spiral that gives the feeling of a vicious circle, that catches you and carries you through all the stages necessary to save your own self, like in a vertigo from which you can no longer escape, being put as a witness before the final judgment, the moment when sins are paid, as a kind of reminder of the meaning of life, of searching and keeping what is called the right path (Barbu, 2016a; 2016b).

Dante's journey, in Dumitrescu's opinion, focuses on the vertical axis that corresponds to the two locations of Jerusalem: the terrestrial one - which is lost, and the heavenly one - which is to be discovered. Hell being the abyss that opens beneath the earthly Jerusalem, being the prison place of the proud fallen Angel, Lucifer. On the other side of the Earth rises Purgatory, as a place of absolution of sins, at the top of which the Heavens

open leading to Jerusalem or the heavenly Paradise. Besides, isn't Heaven promised to those who suffer and are persecuted on Earth?

What can be seen as the Freud's hidden unconscious is in the Dante's work the forest, which generates the primordial fear, the mother of all evils born from the abyss of instincts, the experience of hell being in fact the dream, which opens the gates of the unconscious mind.

Dante, who lost the straight path in the forest, wandering in the direction of evil, of perdition, suggests a structuralist vision of the world, divided into straight and crooked. Does the fear or anger come from what the superego demands, or from the inability to resist impulses that lead to perdition and that erode the identity into its socially desirable form?

Dumitrescu explains Dali's work through his neurosis, which was assumed in a comical manner expressing it in sur-real paintings based on the idea that what is hidden under the surface, even if it cannot be seen is changing our sense of reality and it can be expressed evading any conscious control of the mind so it can be seen as another way then the dream to express the repressed desires (Dali, 1964). So, this kind of art is recognised as being influenced by Freud's ideas "about the unconscious mind and the world of dreams, cantered on the role of sexuality as the driving force behind human experiences" (Dumitrescu, 2022, p. 136). This way of expressing for the surrealists created a context for integrating the irrational association into their work, as the author mentions.

In this way a pathology is no longer rejected but used to a better understanding of reality, because Dali saw in the "paranoid critical method" a way to doubt reality, making people wonder that what is seen can be different then it was seen. The author emphasize the dependence of this kind of art on hidden associations and meanings considering that "the paranoid critical method" was influenced by "Freud's understanding of the dream as an expression of unconscious desire, in which an object can mean another" (Dumitrescu, 2022, p. 145). He goes even far with idea, considering that being too familiar with reality people can no longer see it and the only way to see reality would be through irrationality, actually out of the conscious mind.

Punishment in hell is based on the principle of saturation, in the sense that the desires of the soul are fulfilled in hell, to the point of saturation, which can lead to the rejection of the same behavior seen before Hell as pleasure, and the mystery of desire is completely exhausted. As such, Hell is a place from which the mystery has disappeared, where "boredom sets in and which, through the lack of novelty, leads desperately to a repetition that becomes mechanical, deadly for the soul, where any change is

forbidden, without even receiving the right to forget" (Dumitrescu, 2022, p.61).

There were many moments which made me wonder if I am reading a book with the description of our days or if, the shadows of the past or of a collective unconscious, anchored in the past are not somehow the same old sins. Especially if we think about the claims of evolution that contemporary man has, in a world that speaks too easily of love, which, however, often remains a declared form, impalpable and submerged somehow in an unconscious from where no one can really save it. And I am referring here to the sin of material orientation, where the difficulties, which were a sign of power in the earthly world that crush in the world beyond, to those related to sexuality, aggression, hatred, greed, killing relatives, guests, doing harm to those who once helped you, etc.

To betray a guest is to disrespect him and yourself. Not valuing the identity of the other means not valuing yourself. This brings you to think about your values, at your own morality, making you ready to find answers which you might not like at some point and I mean the lack of involvement, for example, which can be also be seen as a sin, because not doing anything let the evil happen.

Conclusion

After you close this book, you won't stop, because you will start searching, you might try to understand even more, to hope that you will find answers, but in the same time, knowing that your answers might me buried somewhere so deep, in a collective unconscious or in your own unconscious. And then you can wait for a dream which could someday reveal the magic and the real joy of your life.

If the sins are personal identity traits is this justifying the eternal sufferance? I wonder how a person who is able to change would look like? How would her/his punishments look like?

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