

The penultimate chapter discusses individuation and the ethics of creativity in depth. The law always has a social character and is the expression of herd morality, it knows nothing of the inner man. The primitive tribal participation mystique is where the individual remains entirely dissolved within the group. Thus, the Freudian superego can relate to the ethics of law as an intra-psychic executioner. Although, the Freudian approach is incapable of understanding the psychology of schizophrenia. Both Jung's and Berdyaev's understanding of the person refer to a larger personality born in the process of individuation. The awakened heart will apprehend the spiritual beyond its objectifications in the collective social domain. Be sure not to create a distorted, phantasmagorical world; make good the creative, spiritual struggle, that should never seem dull, and commonplace. Berdyaev wishes to free us from our condition of inner dividedness via divinely human ethics, and then make good the human separation from the Divine.

This is the passage to superconsciousness, possible only by divine grace, which for Berdyaev takes the form of the creative struggle for a universal apocathastasis because everyone is responsible for everyone else

(Nicolaus,G., 2011: p 195)

For the existential practitioner this is a complicated book, written in a very scholarly, academic style, with content which is highly original. The book would be useful for Slavic clientele, Russian speakers, and sophisticated bohemians. So, the text targets a specific audience, but certainly has the potential of becoming a classic title as a precise spiritual exploration for serious readers, concerned with the mysteries of the person.

As a graduate from the 'Centre for International Education', Moscow State University I was delighted by this work, and I think that culture not only from Russia, but also Central Asia could provide inspiration for practitioners. Perhaps, for instance one day, a scholarly, psychotherapeutic book will be written about the passion and consciousness of Uzbek and Tajik qalandars.

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Moving Images: Psychoanalytic Reflections On Film

Andrea Sabbadini. (2014). Hove, East Sussex: Routledge.

With his edited books *The Couch and The Silver Screen* (2003) and *Projected Shadows* (2007), both, like this latest offering, published by Routledge, and, just as impressive, his directorship since 2001 of the European Psychoanalytic Film Festival, Sabbadini may justifiably be regarded as

a major authority on psychoanalysis and the 'movies'. My choice of the popular, originally North American, term for film is intentional, since it is clear to me on reading this latest offering that Sabbadini's aim is not to essay, as he describes it, 'a systematic, scholarly approach to film criticism, nor' to propose via a new general theoretical model for film interpretation 'a better understanding of psychoanalytic models of the mind.' Instead, he sets out to achieve something which I think is rather more difficult, and that is to venture beyond the confined circle of psychoanalytic film analysis to engage a wider audience – those who are interested in both film and therapy, albeit primarily psychoanalytic therapy. The main title 'Moving Images' seems to me to be significant too, since it points up both the technical nature of film and also its impact upon the viewer.

As someone who studied for a Diploma in Film at the BFI back in the 1990s, and who, over the three years I was taken up with this found myself regularly kicking against what frequently felt then like the straightjacket of psychoanalytic film analysis – often it seemed to me more arid and convoluted than it was illuminating – I immediately appreciated the vernacular, demystificatory, style of this book. Sabbadini is clear about what he wishes to do, sets out to do it (and for me at least largely achieves his goals), and then reminds us what he has done. This is a refreshing approach, and one which I suspect is natural for him since, having a fund of knowledge on his topic and a passion to communicate this to the reader, he has no interest in becoming derailed by displays of theoretical fireworks or technical culs-de-sac.

So what, exactly, does Sabbadini set out to do? He says relatively little directly regarding the potential of film in the consulting room, and I would have been interested to read about his position on this as I am aware of a number of texts which advocate – perhaps in rather simplistic and directive ways – something akin to the prescription of particular films for particular 'presenting problems'. These texts, I suspect, dilute the possible therapeutic function of film rather as bibliotherapy based on 'bookscriptions' from short lists of approved self-help texts may be said to disregard a broader and deeper engagement with what is therapeutic in the activity of reading. Certainly the successful North American series of books which includes *Rent Two Films And Let's Talk in the Morning*, *The Motion Picture Prescription: Watch This Movie And Call Me In The Morning*, and *Reel Therapy: How Movies Inspire You To Overcome Life's Problems*, advocate a pragmatic position on the relationship between cinema and therapy. Of course these reflect only a limited perspective, and are examples of popular psychology. Sabbadini takes a rather more satisfying, exploratory, direction, discussing twenty-five important feature films using a psychoanalytic interpretative approach to consider them as 'the artistic vehicles of new, unsuspected

meanings.’ The link to existentialism comes with Sabbadini’s recognition that practitioners in the separate cultural phenomenon of film and therapy share a common goal of engaging with profound truths about the human condition, and creating a language with which to do so. It seems to me that a respectful but rigorously pursued curiosity about the nature of Being, and about how Being unfolds in individual lives is the *sine qua non* of existential therapy; as Sabbadini writes ‘It is indeed curiosity which motivates people to make films, and others to watch them. It is curiosity that motivates some individuals to become psychoanalysts, and others to lie on their couches. And again because of their curiosity that some are drawn to write down their reflections on the complex and fascinating relationship between psychoanalysis and cinema, and others may be drawn to read them.’ (p 117).

I found this psychoanalytically informed exploration of cinema rewarded my curiosity to a great extent: I came away from the book, thanks to the accessibility and clarity of Sabbadini’s writing, with a greater appreciation of the contribution of psychoanalytic insight to the analysis of the twenty-five films discussed. (An equally rewarding text focusing more explicitly on existential insight would make fascinating reading). It also piqued my curiosity since I finished the book with a hunger to read further, and in particular to read more about the way in which Sabbadini’s very evident knowledge and appreciation of film informs his own therapeutic practice. I suspect the connection between the two phenomena – film and therapy – is a subtle one, certainly more subtle than the explicit connections exhorted by much ‘movie therapy’. The (probably quite unoriginal) thought which comes to me, on reaching the end of the book, is that film can offer the viewer an opportunity to be, as indicated in the title of the book, ‘moved’ – reconnected in often a quite visceral manner with some aspect of what it means to be human, and it is this reconnection which enriches us as both individuals and individual viewers and therapists. And in the meantime, I am moved to read Sabbadini’s two previous books on film and therapy...

References

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