



Transformation: Understanding the Three Levels of Masculine Consciousness

Robert A. Johnson

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Presenting an original and vital model for psychological development, the brilliant and pioneering author of *He, She, and We* offers a new understanding of the stages of personal growth through which maturity and wholeness can be achieved. Using quintessential figures from classical literature--Don Quixote, Hamlet, and Faust--Robert Johnson shows us three clearly defined stages of consciousness development. He demonstrates how the true work of maturity is to grow through these levels to the self-realized state of completion and harmony.

In Johnson's view, we all reach the stages depicted by Don Quixote, Hamlet, and Faust at various times of our lives. The three represent levels of consciousness within us, each vying for dominance. Don Quixote portrays the innocent child, while Hamlet stands for our self-conscious need to act and feel in control though we have no real connection to our inner selves. Faust embodies the master of the true self, who has gained awareness by working through the stages.

Transformation: Understanding the Three Levels of Masculine Consciousness Details

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Lynn Wilson says

I love all of this author's books. He makes depth psychology very accessible to the lay person. This particular book is very timely, as we are in such a period of transformation individually and as a culture. Johnson uses the myths of Don Quixote, Hamlet and Faust to illuminate the stages of growth on the path to psychological wholeness.

Karson says

This was a really insightful easy to read book. Briefly, the author describes three levels of consciousness and uses examples from literature to illustrate each level. Each level is a development upon the previous level. Don Quixote is the example of the first level (called two dimensional-consciousness). He simply loves life and thinks he is the best thing since sliced bread. His own perception of himself is false however and anything he experiences that doesn't jive with the way he sees himself (as a total hero), he simply ignores. He also holds close ideals about the world that don't necessarily have to correspond with reality, yet he resiliently holds them close. Hamlet is the example of three-dimensional consciousness.

Hamlet knows he is not the center of the universe, which is true. He is courageous enough to admit truths about himself and other people, but he doesn't know what to do with the truth he is brave enough to admit. As a result he is a total neurotic, and hard to live with or relate to. He's a buzzkill.

Faust is Johnson's example of four-dimensional consciousness. Faust lives most of his life jiving with the devil (he sold his soul.) Johnson's interpretation of this is psychological and Jungian. He takes this to mean he has "incorporated his shadow." Basically, he was courageous enough, like Hamlet, to see the truth about himself and others, but, unlike Hamlet, he has learned how to live with this truth.

According to Johnson, most people stay stuck in third level consciousness nowadays - the Hamlet stage. It is difficult to be a Quixote today. In a sense we have all become too complicated, and been exposed to too much of the world to live day in and day out thinking we're awesome, life rules, I rule, what's up, what the crap, and not ask questions of the world and ourselves that are not simply answered by one system of thought.

Something I really liked about this book was how much I fit the Hamlet stage. Not that that is a good thing, but it is a development, and I could see that there is something good ahead if I keep on trucking, and being honest with myself. I'll end with a great quote from the book about the glimpses of hope you get while struggling from 3d to 4d:

"When the dark night begins to lift, one morning there is an unaccountable touch of joy in the air. It is the tiniest trickle of energy, light and hope, but it is enough to keep you alive. This is the first contact with the four-dimensional consciousness, and one can begin to live from that energy."

Kirtida Gautam says

I didn't like it as much as He and She. It was okay.

Sonya says

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Melanie says

"...happiness is to be found simply from observing what happens." and so much more

Amir H says

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Chris Searles says

puts forward the idea that male psychological health is contingent on having a good relationship with your inner mephistopheles.

i agree.

Susana Pierce says

This book came to my hands via my mother-in-law. It is a short read, though it purports to present the human striving for enlightenment through three famous literary characters: Don Quixote, Hamlet, and Faust. While the author occasionally strikes some sour notes, most of the chords of his thesis hang together, though they would require significantly more development to complete the piece of music.

Victoria says

This is a fascinating look at how our consciousness evolves by Jungian psychologist Robert A. Johnson. He uses the character of Don Quixote, Hamlet and Faust to show how we make the move from two-dimensional or very primitive and simplistic humans to three-dimensional humans, where we usually remain stuck. But, as the work done by Carl Jung at the end of his life shows, we have the ability to move beyond the third-dimension of consciousness to the fourth or enlightened dimension.

This is a growing faculty within humans, which is at the earliest and most fragile stage of development. But, as more and more humans strive toward achieving this dimension it will become an ability not unlike seeing the color blue or hearing the harmonic structure in music. Not all people reach that "Dark Night of the Soul" moment in their lives, and not everyone who survives it, but for those who do, that fourth dimension can be there for them to tap into as needed.

Donna says

No one can be anything but a partial being, ravaged by doubt and loneliness, unless he has close contact with his shadow.

I underlined that on page 59. Really for me Jung (and Johnson) are all about searching in our closets for our shadows.

Sherif Nagib says

[illegible]

Parisa says

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Kajah says

A Jungian uses Don Quixote, Hamlet, and Dr Faustus to illustrate the simple mind, the complex mind, and the enlightened mind. The crux of the book focuses on the idea that the difference between the simple mind and the enlightened mind is simply stillness in ones sense of awareness, but often the conflicted, burdened mind is needed as a latter to reach this peace. Sort of. A quick read and, even if you can't stomach the broad generalizations, its interesting to see how the author uses these characters to illustrate his point.

Liz Wright says

Johnson is one of my favorite authors. He's a Jungian analyst who writes about myths and how they can tell us a lot about our life experiences and why we do what we do and why things happen to us. In this (short) book (105 pages) he writes about the three levels of consciousness of men and gives a literary example of each. Don Quixote is Two-Dimensional Man (or simple man), Hamlet is Three-Dimensional Man (or complex man), and Faust is Four-Dimensional Man (or enlightened man). Johnson describes how men go through these stages, but sometimes become stuck at complex man because they have become so educated that they cannot give up their knowledge and return to the simplicity that can be seen in enlightened man. Although there are some interesting statements made in this text, there isn't much new and different here from Johnson's other work, and what is new and different is not "fleshed out" to give the reader a feeling of fully understanding what is being discussed. Although I'll continue to read Johnson, this is not one of his best works.

Brian Fagan says

A small, but incredibly powerful book on evolving into full masculinity.
