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Alberto Moravia , ??? ?????? (Translator) , ?????? ???????

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??? ??? Details

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Ahmed says

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yes says

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Hend AlEssa says

From the very first page I've been intrigued to read the rest of this Italian tragicomedy novel with unparalleled curiosity, the theme was just strikingly unique and psychologically revealing.

The novel covers different topics, but the most prevailing and dominant thought is the idea of Sublimation. As what Freud have discussed it, sublimation is a sign of maturity or civilization, a kind of defense mechanism to deflect sexual desires or instincts into higher acts of valuation and culturally approved activities. Apparently, Moravia have read much of Freud, and he mainly have used this theme in the book.

The main character Federico that represents the Ego, is trying to avert his sexual desires, and rid of its demands and needs by focusing on an intellectually sublime idea, through trying to have a directing opportunity of a movie about a group of youthful political rebels, which in his opinion, will make him “superior” giving him a noble purpose in the burgoaise world he contempts and a reason of existence, conquering his “Id” that is represented by his “genitals”.

The nature had endowed Federico, with a “huge genitals” he has a peculiar kind of internal struggle that resulted from a kind of schizophrenic relation with his genitals that burdened him literally to satisfy the needs and whims of that entity” he gave him a name, Federico Rex The King, and all throughout the novel we see endless arguments and monologues but not with himself apparently but with “Him”, portraying the psychological turmoil and predicament that he is going through, trying in all ways to overcome this powerful presence and dominance of his genitals, his repressed sexual instincts and animal desires, the untamed self that wants everything and wants it right now. You cannot but laugh loudly when “He” implores Federico to do something with his childish selfish voice, putting poor Federico in a very obstructive awkward situations.

Federico’s eternal struggle to elevate himself and be “a superior” person over his sexual desires, was an obsessive idea that draws our sympathy and compassion, while he sees himself as an “inferior” human being a decadent unappreciated intellectual screen writer, who have been plagued by his huge genitals that controls him, possesses him and forcibly drives him to do all kinds of shameful impulsive immoral acts. At times appealing to his masochistic instinct making him relishing in the hits and blows of pain, and in others a sadistic animal who enjoys torturing others. He blames “him” for all his foolery and irrationality for putting him in unenvious troubles and torments.

He has this love hate relation with “Him”, at times he is exalting and bragging about Him telling everyone that he has this magnificent genitals as a Latin god like Facinus, or Siva or Priapo, obeying Him timidly and listening to “Him” while he is gloating about his entitlement to be worshiped, sculpted and hung on a necklace like Christ and worn by virgins. Demanding to be unzipped and set free to be seen unashamedly and blatantly by everyone “because he is the beauty of the world” because without “him” there is no world, there is no life, he is THE god deserved to be worshiped. In other times, we see Federico calling “Him” names frustratingly fights with Him, and desperately in his lowest level of self-loathing states holding the blade threatening and shouting to kill “Him” and rid himself off that Epicurus pleasure as a punishment for “Him” but not directly to himself as Federico!

The surface and most shallow interpretation of the novel will be that is a pornographic novel. I’m pretty sure that is not what Moravia has intended it to be, it doesn’t have a certain structure or style, it’s basically divided into chapters, that each chapter holds a special title that reflects the psychological torment Federico feels about himself such as (exposed, alienated abused, schizophrenic, and so on) in introspection, everyone can relate to this novel projecting the inner most psychological desires or drives.

Federico basically divides people into two groups, those who are “superior” by money, power, social status, and those who are “inferior” by born, and ethically weak, morally defeated, and culturally illiterates. The only way to be superior in Federico’s opinion is through art and love. We see his miserable struggle to achieve these two. While he is on his way to do that, he commits all kinds of “inferior” acts, and he degrades himself to a lot of people, knowingly and consciously blames “Him” for his failure and misfortune, while his “id” is

laughingly mocking him. He is aware when he is in a position of weakness of his vileness, seeing himself a “repulsive fat, bold and unfortunate man with a huge genitals” and he tries to compensate his degeneration by boosting his ego through making his wife – who formerly was a bell girl or a prostitute- feeling unscrupulously low and unworthy. Being aware of her inferiority, ignorance and highly indebted to Federico, his wife doesn’t show resistance, to her husband’s contempt, and only in these moments Federico regains some of his pride, feeling strong but not very pleased with his behavior. While “Him” always nags Federico to sleep with whomever, Federico shows a pathetic resistance to “Him” rationalizing his rejection by desiring to live a life of abstinence to focus on the highly and the good, dedicating himself to a life of intellect, creativity and writing, which at the end leads to no avail but the superiority of his sexual repressed desires.

His only attempt to reach the sublime and elevated love was with Erne'. Erne' manifests the unreachable woman that he couldn't have, the elevated lust-less emotions, where to a certain point at the end of the novel, he thought that he surpassed "Him" "and he was able to conquer" Him" when "He" retreated to utmost silence, and we sympathize with Federico when he panicked at the thought of losing "Him" the one and only true friend he has, and he started to bargain with Him, making small gesture of reconciliation, till "He" betrayed Federico and implored him to attempt raping Erne's daughter. The thought of being a pedophile was the moment when Federico realized his defeat, and Moravia had concluded his idea of the superior and the inferior, but that is for everyone to interpret it on its own.

Natalie says

Amazing book! There is nothing vulgar neither in subject nor in plot. The style somewhat reminds me of T. Fischer's "Collector, collector". Read a copy in Russian- excellent translation!

Reem Meshkawi says

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Aveugle Vogel says

"a sort of sacristan with bent shoulders"

Richa says

I was intrigued by the synopsis on the back jacket of this book. I guess, that could be one of the reasons why the author wrote this.

Although this book has been at times slotted as pornography ("A highly professional job... a delightful essay in light-hearted pornography"- *Books and Bookmen*), and also, it does have nudity in liberal amount; I would not call it pornography for pornography's sake.

I do not know if the last sentence made sense... maybe if you read again, it will. I am sorry, I don't know how best to put it...

I found the book to be a funny social commentary, even philosophical in its approach. If Moravia intended to show the inherent hypocrisy of the various segments in labeling themselves as they do (revolutionary, psychologist...), he has ably achieved it through this book.

It is like a thread of philosophy is woven in the cloth made majorly by more frivolous stuff (porn or humour). It is markedly profound and clear where it deals with philosophy. There is no mincing of words.

Infact, at the very end, Moravia gives a very apt reason for all the comic porn. After reading which, I feel, all men need read this book...

A small note for the translator. Very well done! Nowhere does the narrative lose sense. It seems like it was originally written in English! I have read translations and I have been tempted to give up on them midway, but this book has a very good flow in narrative.

Kholoud says

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Angelika says

It's a mixed bag, this one. Certainly too long with a rushed ending that didn't really do credit to the story if you ask me - but highly enjoyable (long) passages in between and VERY intelligent.

Moravia definitely can write - he is a master when it comes to describing people in grotesque detail - nobody gets off the hook, especially not the main character Rico, a script writer whose obsession is to become a "sublimated" person in order to be able to create true art (as a director) that is not a product of his primitive drives. The fact that Moravia is not holding back in general is the only reason why it's kind of possible to overlook the passages that come off as downright misogynistic - the men are also portrayed in a very unfavorable light.

In the end it's all clowns in "the Two of us", some, like Rico for example are aware of it, others (most it seems) are not...it's kind of a hell on earth.

Moravia said himself that he wanted to write a book that sounds as if you take psychoanalysis seriously, which is what creates the humor here, but is also extremely painful - Rico always seems to take the worst decision he can, when his penis is not deciding for him, that is. Concerning the sex: It is explicit, but spoiler alert - there is no actual intercourse or any other overtly sexual activity - the actual explicit descriptions do not register as pornography with me because they are exaggerated in a literary way, just bizarre and not really arousing. Some may differ with me on this point ;-)

Slowly but surely you get the feeling that what Rico is trying to achieve, namely becoming a sublimated person, is not at all worthwhile since the sublimated characters in the book are all extremely unlikable ;-)
more so than Rico himself actually although he is also not exactly an appealing figure.

Wavering between 3 and 4 stars.

Mohamed Nossirat says

Muhannad Jajo says

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Rina Dasler says

Nothing special but interesting reading :)

miledi says

[proprio un libro del cazzo (hide spoiler)]