



Imaginary Existences: A psychoanalytic exploration of phantasy, fiction, dreams and daydreams (The New Library of Psychoanalysis)

By Ignês Sodré

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Imaginary Existences: A psychoanalytic exploration of phantasy, fiction, dreams and daydreams interweaves scholarly psychoanalytic knowledge and extensive clinical experience with insights derived from close readings of great literature in a uniquely imaginative and creative manner, convincingly demonstrating how these two ways of thinking – psychoanalysis and literary criticism – organically relate to each other. This is simultaneously a psychoanalytic book and a book about literature, illuminating the imaginative possibilities present within both the psychoanalytic encounter and the act of reading fiction. Scholarly and well researched, the psychoanalytic ideas presented have their basis in the work of Freud and Klein and some of their followers; the extensive and innovative writing about the great authors in Western literature is equally scholarly and lucent.

Here, Ignês Sodré explores creativity itself and, specifically, the impediments to creative thinking: defences, mostly narcissistic, against dependency, guilt and loss, and the mis-use of imagination to deny reality. In her studies of the characters created by authors such as George Eliot, Cervantes, Flaubert, Thomas Mann, Proust and Shakespeare, Sodré examines the way great writers create characters who mis-use their imagination, twisting reality into romantic daydreams or sado-masochistic enactments, which petrify experience and freeze the fluidity of thought. Her clinical studies continue and expand this theme, broadening the field and lending verification and weight to the arguments.

These two poles of Sodré's thinking – psychoanalysis and literature – interact seamlessly in *Imaginary Existences*; the two disciplines work together, each an intimate part of a learned exploration of the human condition: our desires, our fears and our delusions. This convergence pays tribute to the great depth of the fictional work being studied and to the psychological validity of the

psychoanalytic ideas. This book will be of interest to psychoanalysts, psychologists, psychotherapists, literary critics, and those interested in literature and literary criticism.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This is a great book by a superb observer of both psychoanalysis and literature. Ignes Sodre evidently loves the richness that psychoanalysis brings to our clinical understanding and she can apply the same approach to the authors and to the characters of literature. Inspired by her sensitive, intelligent and humorous accounts, we can find surprising new pleasures in much loved classics." - John Steiner, Training Analyst, British Psychoanalytical Society,
Author of *Psychic Retreats*, *Seeing and Being Seen*

"This is the work of a subtle clinician with a passion for literature. Ignes Sodre has a deep interest in the vicissitudes of human character and the varieties of story telling. She has memorable things to say about the pains and pleasures of psychic life, as glimpsed in the novel and encountered in the consulting room. In these pages, she deftly explores dreams and defences, disappointments and desires, in the company of George Eliot, Flaubert, Freud, Klein, and others. *Imaginary Existences* deserves a wide readership." – Professor Daniel Pick, Birkbeck College, University of London

"In this book, Ignês Sodré has successfully brought together literature and psychoanalysis in a creative and insightful dialogue that enriches both. Sodré has extended her skilful psychoanalytic listening form the clinic to the development of an impressive psychoanalytic reading of literary works. An inspired, inspiring achievement."- Gregorio Kohon, *Fellow, Training Analyst*, The British Psychoanalytic Society

About the Author

Ignês Sodré was born in Brazil, where she qualified as a clinical psychologist before coming to London in 1969 to train at the British Institute of Psychoanalysis. She is a Fellow and a Training and Supervising Analyst of the British Psychoanalytical Society. She has taught extensively in London and abroad, and was the first visiting professorial Fellow in Psychoanalysis at Birkbeck College. She has published many papers on psychoanalysis and on literature; this is her second book.

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