

Rational conscious vs irrational unconscious essay



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The intellectual concerns of late nineteenth century Europe was built around the notions such as rational and irrational or as Nietzsche states, Apollonian and Dionysian. Europe was entering a new intellectual phase of questioning logic and imagination. Controversial topics such as religion and science were now being targeted in the Apollonian and Dionysian theories.

Sigmund Freud constructs his own myths on the topic of logic and imagination when referring to dreams. Philologist Friedrich Nietzsche and psychologist Sigmund Freud both analyzed the theory of the conscious rational and the unconscious irrational theory. While Nietzsche revels in the Dionysian theory, Freud approaches the topic strategically. Freud and Nietzsche both agree that rational cannot exist without irrational, and human nature fundamentally balances them. Dreams are rational and irrational just as human nature but both reach their arguments through different tactics, Nietzsche through mythology while Freud through psychological means.

Nietzsche uses the mythology of Apollo and Dionysus to redefine art in "The Birth of Tragedy". Apollo and Dionysus are sons of Zeus. Apollo is the God of the Sun, which represents rationality and reason. Dionysus is the God of wine which represents drunkenness and ecstasy. Both are the oppositions of each other. Nietzsche definition of aesthetics is conducted on new terms, and tries to structure the art and its process through imposing views of Apollo and Dionysus.

This dichotomy of Apollonian and Dionysian is what surrounds his argument about the two realms of art. He engulfs himself in the theory and "continuous evolution" to the "Apollonian-Dionysian duality" or the rational

and irrational duality (Nietzsche, 19). He saw both concepts, Apollonian and Dionysian, as art realms and compares them to the “two physiological phenomenon’s”, which are “dream(s) and intoxication” (Nietzsche, 19). It was dreams were Greek Mythology begin, “marvelous gods, and goddesses first presented themselves to the minds of men” (Nietzsche, 19).

Dreams for Nietzsche represent a beauty, and the appearance of light and order. And when he speaks of drunkenness he’s talking about beastly desires that see no real line between oneself and another. For him dreams were an “appearance”. He explains that a dreamer “sees life before him” but not “like mere shadows on the wall” because the dreamer does “live(s)”, “suffers”, and has a “fleeing sensation of appearance” (Nietzsche, 84). These are experience through appearance and reality is just underling it. He also concludes that a dreamer always knows that he is dreaming and feeling the Apollonian beauty or the rational beauty.

But it’s when the individual is completely engulfed in their dream who reach Dionysian happiness. His idea of this duality is completely abstract. He sees rationality in dreams, and irrationality through music. Nietzsche also perceives them as equally important.

He believed that before Dionysus the Greek art was raw. The presence of Apollo was shielding, while the entrance of Dionysus shook the senses. Dionysian is what underlined Greek tragedy. Dionysian is internal so, true redemption could not be found without it.

Dionysian rises beyond the consciousness, and engrossing in Dionysian one reaches Primordial Unity. Nietzsche does indicate that both concepts are

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intertwined. That without Apollo's revelation the essence of Dionysus can't be obtained. When both these concepts are entwined, that's the occurrence of real tragic art. Mythology runs Nietzsche's theories and arguments; rather Freud concerns himself with psychological aspect. Sigmund Freud, "On Dreams", discusses the same concept.

What are the underlying motives of dreams? Are dreams appearances of our will, or they merely appearances that occurred in our daily activities. Freud had a strategized approach when discussing what dreams. He two discusses the illogical with logical, or rational with irrational. Like Nietzsche he sees dreams as a visual experience.

He states that dreams "think" in perception and appearance (Freud, 6). He also assesses the "significance of dreams" and if dreams declare "liberation of the spirit from the power of external nature" (Freud, 6). But unlike Nietzsche Freud doesn't engulf himself in just the mythologies of dreams, he goes through analysis of the "psychical significance" of a dream and its "relation" to the "mental" process (Freud, 6). He targets the dynamic of the dreaming and waking state, the conscious and unconscious mind. He's battling the same concept that Nietzsche was the rational and irrational. However for Nietzsche dreams were rational concept.

For Freud, dreams are rational and irrational in themselves. He goes on further explaining dreams have an "ulterior motive" and that the appearance of a dream is only the surface, just as Nietzsche discusses as well. Dreams have "thoughts" of their own, and desires. That is the dreamer's unconscious mind.

Freud also discusses a balance of both, just Nietzsche does. The conscious mind when put to sleep surrenders itself, and allows the unconscious mind to do what it feels. However knowing that the unconscious mind has self-interests the conscious allows images to appear as defense mechanism to the unconscious part of one's mind. The appearance of dreams are not just "shadow" like Nietzsche says but they are actual "feeling sensation", and Freud discusses that same concept in his unconscious and conscious theory (Nietzsche, 84). The concepts underline the same argument, and persisting question of the irrational or rational mind.

Dreams are both discussed as poetry with logic of their own. They have a thoughts, appearance and wish fulfillments of their own. Nietzsche philosophies are all based on mythological theories and comparisons. He dealt with the metaphysics of nature.

Freud applied the scientific method to defend his argument. Freud used myths as symbols and used economic, topographical, and developmental models to support his argument on the unconscious and conscious mind. Nietzsche argument was primarily based on mythological explanations and that's why it lacked in understanding. Both fascinating men discussed the same underlying theme, the balance of rational and irrational.

There seem to be a check and balance of the conscious and unconscious. Freud and Nietzsche respective interpretations suggest that during the late nineteenth century, Europe's intellectual concerns had to do with the constant struggle of science and religion. There seems to be a struggle to

understand the rational and irrational thoughts and behaviors. Simply stating it as God's will was no longer sufficient.

There was a new emphasis on the irrational and spiritual notions and people were no longer subject to them. It was harder to swallow logic and imagination together. Nietzsche argues for Dionysian to be better way to receive redemption than the salvation Christianity offers. Freud tries to battle the concept of dreams, whether it is a "spiritual liberation" or just "mental impulses" (Freud, 6). During this period Europe is going through a transformation. Questioning is occurring which are bringing up feelings of doubts, but it's also bring new thought process and glimpse of intellectual rebirth.

The theories which Freud and Nietzsche discuss are all questions regarding religion as well. When speaking of the rational and irrational, conscious and unconscious topics such as God arise. Religion is on a chopping block. The more Freud breaks down the physical and mental capabilities of the mind the more irrational God becomes. And when Nietzsche speaks of other forms of redemption other religious questions arise.

This European period is filled with doubts but also enlightenment. People are concerning themselves beyond self-interest needs. Real situations and concerns are rising about each other and human nature. This is an enlightenment period for Europe because it's going beyond the basic human needs.

Industrialization occurring and Darwinism's theory about evolution by natural selection are in the background pulling the strings of Nietzsche and Freud's

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theories. Europe is at a turning point and concepts such as nationalism, imperialism and racism are fueling this new mass culture, and creating more intellectual concerns. These writings are depicting the depth of confusion, intellectual, and material growth in Europe during the late nineteenth century. Europe is intellectually, economically, and socially maturing; its intellectual concerns are not of self-interest, but of human nature.