



Autumn
2014



Image:

Saturn Devouring One of His Sons, Francisco de Goya, 1819

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Index

Editor's Note

- Aggression and Narcissism

Icons of psychiatry

- *Saturn Devouring One of His Sons: Goya and The Painter's Madness*

Essays

- The History of Human Gesture

Articles

- Fake Accusations for Real Aggressions: The Blood Libel against The Jews in the Middle Ages
- Satan and The Puritan's Panic
- The Mysterious Disappearance of The Neanderthal Man

Cinema and psychiatry

- Psychology of Sexual Aggression in Hitchcock's Rear Window
- Aguirre: The Wrath of God or The Ego

Book Reviews

- The Last Jew
- The Book of Margery Kempe: Portrait of 14th Century Woman with a Personality Disorder

Free Text

- Mamma Chicago Addio!

Editor's note

Aggression And Narcissism

Aggression has been defined as a harmful act in the absence of provocation; however, from a psychiatric viewpoint this assumption contradicts the essence of psychological knowledge about human behavior. In general, most scholars specialized in mental health would agree that all behavior, including aggression, has at the end of the day a meaning and a purpose.

One of the major contributors to the psychology of aggression was Heinz Kohut. He was born in Vienna in 1913 and was still in medical school at the time the Nazis occupied Austria. After that, he moved to a refugee camp in Kent where he took a boat to Boston and from there, a bus to Chicago in 1940 where he stayed for the rest of his academic life. At the University of Chicago, he finished residency in neurology and psychiatry and became a lecturer. There, he gradually shifted away from a more Freudian traditional psychoanalysis and developed what later was called self-psychology. According to Kohut, a parent's failure to empathize with their children was the major cause of psychopathology. For him, most children need to receive enough attention, love, encouragement and admiration from their parents for the development of a cohesive self. In contrast, a lack of empathy from their caregivers may result in a non-cohesive self. In these scenarios, the major defenses against the trauma of not receiving adequate love will be grandiosity and lack of empathy, the core features of narcissism. While narcissism can somehow be adaptive for various aspects in people's lives, self-psychologists believe that for narcissistic individuals will suffer significant distress, as they may feel in



Heinz Kohut

continuous competition with the rest of the people who may threaten their narcissistic fantasies. In addition, narcissistic individuals may demand constant validation from partners, friends and colleagues, while rarely showing empathy for them. As a result, a failure to develop intimacy in their relationships is a frequent outcome.

From a self-psychology point of view, aggression will therefore be the result of a narcissistic rage. For Kohut, a narcissistic rage is related to narcissists' need for total control of their environment, including "the need for

revenge, for righting a wrong, for undoing a hurt by whatever means". At times, a narcissist may encounter people or situations that represent a threat to their own grandiose fantasies. These threats can vary depending on the person but some examples could be meeting a potentially same sex competitor, a more knowledgeable person in a particular topic, encountering an intelligent student or co-worker, seeing an ex-partner with someone new, and so on. In those settings, the lack of control may turn their sense of victimization toward giving pain to others, while at the same time attempting to rebuild their own (actually false) sense of self-worth. It can also involve self-protection and preservation, with rage serving to restore a sense of safety and power by destroying what had threatened the narcissistic person. In that case, the injured narcissist can become dangerous and at times will not stop until the threat is annihilated, which may involve aggression, including physical, psychological, hidden or legal aggression. Other common narcissistic defenses that can come across are splitting, projection and projective identification.

Examples of malignant narcissism are evident throughout history. For instance, Roman emperor Nero, whose father died at age two, ordered the murder of his mother Agrippina who was becoming a major obstacle in his path to power. Later he made his master Seneca commit suicide due to suspicion of conspiracy. Salvador Dalí, who was also known for his narcissistic statements, depicted his father as a cold and distant person. From a self-psychological point of view, that could have well explained his narcissistic traits.

Narcissism can be adaptive in some settings, as it is thought to be quite common among people who assume positions of leadership. In these settings, while they may dedicate their time and energy to the achievement of a position of power in order to validate their own grandiosity, their lack of empathy will allow them to make difficult decisions which may not always be good for their employees or subordinates. Nevertheless, even in these situations, a narcissistic leader will continue to live with a false sense of self worth and will have difficulties developing good quality relationships in both his or her professional and personal lives.

For the treatment of narcissism, Kohut proposed the use of "empathy", which involves deepening the therapist's empathic attunement to the patient. Through empathy, the therapist will make an attempt to put himself in the patient's shoes in order to help fulfill their fundamental human needs and provide the "love" for development of healthy narcissism which is the appearance of a strong, vital, cohesive self.

In our work and personal lives we frequently encounter patients, friends, lovers or supervisors who, victims of their own narcissistic struggles can potentially become aggressive.

To palliate narcissism from our society, firstly we all must make a better effort to gain insight about our own narcissistic maladaptive behaviors and address them appropriately. Secondly, following Kohut's advice, through empathic validation we may be able to provide narcissistic individuals with the care and nurturing they may be lacking and help them towards the development of a more healthy narcissism, that way, we may also be able to protect ourselves from their potential narcissistic rages. After all, at least for narcissism, love might be the answer.

Fernando Espi Forcen, M.D.

Icons of Psychiatry

Saturn Devouring One Of His Sons: Goya And The Painter's Madness

Fernando Espi Forcen, M.D., Department of Psychiatry, Memorial Sloan Kettering, New York, NY

Francisco Jose de Goya y Lucientes was one of the first artists to represent deformed human figures in his artwork in order to emphasize the expression of emotion. Goya's lifelong interest in mental illness is evident in his paintings. In fact, it is believed that an aunt and an uncle of the artist were admitted to the



psychiatric asylum of Saragossa. (1) Likely inspired by his visits to the institution, in 1793 he created the *Yard with Lunatics* and almost twenty years later, *The Madhouse*. In both paintings, Goya offers a tragic view of the way mental illness was treated at the time. Human isolation and chaos invade the scenes. Interestingly there is now evidence that Saragossa's asylum was one of the most advanced of its time and could have inspired Phillippe Pinel, the founder of moral treatment. (2) Between 1819 and 1823, Goya moved to a house in Madrid known as "La Quinta del Sordo" (Deaf Man's Villa). During his stay there, Goya painted murals on the walls. The images were transferred onto canvas after Goya's death and are popularly referred

as “The Black Paintings.” There is no evidence that Goya ever commented on these paintings, which are characterized by a rather horrific view of human nature. Though there are several hypotheses to explain Goya’s afflictions, scholars are now inclined to believe that the artist suffered from lead poisoning. (3) This disease, also known historically as saturnism, or painter’s madness, was common in painters throughout history. (4) Goya had three episodes of illness at ages 46, 51 and 55 with multiple symptoms including sadness, weight loss, difficulty writing, right-sided paralysis, forgetfulness and hallucinatory delirium. (1,3)

In *Saturn Devouring One of His Sons*, Saturn can be seen feasting one of his kids. While the head and the right arm have already been eaten, Saturn is about to give another bite to the remaining of left arm. In the tragic scene, the white color of Saturn’s eyes and the back of his son highlights the bright red blood. The father and the son stand out from obscurity adding more drama to the image. The eyes of Saturn reflect a state of absolute detachment from reality. *Saturn Devouring One of His Sons* is a depiction of human aggression at an almost psychotic level.

According to Greek and Roman mythology, Saturn (or Kronos) was the youngest of the children between Uranus and Gaia. Saturn castrated his father to prevent being imprisoned in Tartarus and casted his testicles into the sea. Much later, Saturn would devour each of his own children to prevent his father’s fate. This story likely served Sigmund Freud, who was fond of Greek mythology, as an inspiration to develop the “castration anxiety” concept. (5) In a more speculative manner, *Saturn Devouring One of His Sons* could also be interpreted as a depiction of the artist’s own struggles with his chronic affliction with saturnism and mental illness.

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Essays

The History Of Human Gesture

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Yes we all know what those words mean, certainly demonized by some circles, this tool may represent one of civilization's holy grail, the reason for our success, social that is.

It takes in average 13 years for society to raise a doctor, 10 for a teacher, a life time for a scientist, but what do they do for such a long time, how much time are we spending learning from each other and in synthesis, decoding how to feel, and react during certain circumstances, but most likely we are mimicking.

Though out med school I learned from great colleagues how to respond to social queues and how to interact with patients, from patient's I learned how they suffered, from teachers and preceptors how to carry a conversation "a doctor one" how to ask open ended and dichotomous questions at precise moments.

Basically for a few years you mimic books, then simulate a doctor for the rest, you graduate after your "acting internship" then you go through a series of years interpreting, analyzing and entrapping

as much as possible from attendings and discarding as much as you possibly can without in the process getting yourself fired, or jeopardizing others.

Why?

Because this is the practice of the ancient nature gave us to create social interaction.

It would be impossible to carry a conversation with a goal without the process of integrating your different responses, verbal and non-verbal into ones dialogue, when a man asks a female partner for a date, immediately our brain responds by following the women's queues, she smiles we smile, she is nervous and has a delayed response, we get very nervous, she

will gaze somewhere else, we do the same, pat on the table, cross our legs, even physiologic responses as sweating, tachycardia, dilated pupils, but wait how is all this process taking place?

Social interaction is ingrained deeply in our nature and nurture, we are born hardwired to imitation and simulation, if you see anybody with a baby in hands this person has great satisfaction when the newborn imitates the adult, and the newborn is astonished almost in trance when faced with the human facies. This duet serves to prove, ascertain, and develop the social brain, albeit unconscious mimicry. The ability to perfectly know ones feelings, know thyself, is directly proportional to our ability to understand others.

From an evolutionary stand point this ability “rather unconscious one” helped us blend with each other, imagine coming out of the woods, to be surrounded by

strangers this part of our brains will be acting at its highest and most efficient, anything you do, say or make will either foreshorten or extend your chances of living, the best way to do this is to mirror every single person and group as whole, portray the imago “I am like you, you are like me, I understand your frustration, pain, etc” Nietze’s theory the birth of the smile concurs in this point, it may be the single most universal signal of peace, warmth, and serenity. We all know what a great feeling when we laugh and smile in group with our family, friends or even strangers, by the way we even pay for one.

Believe it or not there is a neurobiology of social skills, and in particular the nature of the capacity to attribute mental states to others, is a young but significant field, I am thrilled to hear from.

Articles

Fake Accusations For Real Aggressions: The Blood Libel Against The Jews In The Late Middle Ages

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Ever since the Gospels were written Jews had been made guilty for the death of Christ. The new Christians did not dare to accuse Romans of killing their Messiah for fear of being punished. Instead they preferred to accuse only Jews: their rival creed in the expansion of Christianity throughout the empire. This idea is clearly explained by the fact that the canonical Gospels and the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus present the figure of the Roman governor Pilate unwilling to condemn Jesus and let Jews decide between the presumably innocent Christ and the famous prisoner Barabbas. Jews eagerly claim to liberate Barabbas and assume the guilt of Jesus' death over them and their children (Matthew 27: 21-25). The consequence was fatal for future Jewish generations: not only did the Jews of Jesus' become guilty for his death, but also their children and descendants.¹ This provoked the idea that later Jews would always have been ready to reinterpret the Passion of Jesus on available substitutes.

During the 8th century some Christians were against the cult of images in Byzantium – iconoclasts. Whereas another group of Christians were in favor of their cult and adoration – iconodules-. Emperor Leon III Isaurian decreed the prohibition of the worship of images in the first quarter of the 8th century. Many Christian icons and mosaics were destroyed, but the defenders of images fought to justify the presence of images in churches. In doing so, they created legends that had images performing miracles; thus, promoting the idea that images contained the presence of the divinity and could have the same powers of the person represented.² Many of the miracles involved someone attacking an image of Christ that bled as a result, since it was Christ himself who had been attacked through his depiction. Since Christian

¹ Kurt Schubert, "Gottesvolk- Teufelsvolk-Gottesvolk", in *Die Macht der Bilder. Antisemitische Vorurteile und Mythen*, Viena: Jüdisches Museum, 1995, p. 35; Gilbert Dahan, *Les intellectuels chrétiens et les juifs au Moyen Âge*, Paris: Cerf, 1999, pp. 562-563; Jeremy Cohen, "The Jews as the Killers of Christ in the Latin Tradition, from Augustine to the Friars", *Traditio* 39 (1983): 1-27; ídem, *Christ Killers. The Jews and the Passion. From the Bible to the Big Screen*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

² Ernst Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (1954): 83-150; André Grabar, *La iconoclastia bizantina*, Madrid: Akal, 1998 (1984), pp. 107-127.

iconoclasts had been destroying images for several decades, it was only normal that the enemies of images in these stories were Christian. Nevertheless, Christian iconodules aspired to convert iconoclasts of the real power of images, and chose thereby to present Jews, the prototype of wrongdoer, as the aggressor of Christian images. It was highly unlikely that a Jew had destroyed or attacked a Christian image in a Christian kingdom. Nevertheless, these legends allowed such an accusation and contributed to the misbelief that Jews reinterpreted the Passion of Christ on icons of Jesus and crucifixes.³

Probably the most popular of these stories was read by Peter of Nicodemia during the 2nd Council of Nicaea in 787: the *Passio Imaginis* legend. The story tells how a Christian of Beirut owned an icon of Christ that had been painted by Nicodemus after the Passion. It was therefore a real portrait of Christ, for Nicodemus had the purpose of depicting his suffering during the Passion. The Christian rented a house in the Jewish quarter, hid the icon and prayed before it every day. Misfortune made him forget it once he moved out of the house. The new dweller was Jewish. Right after moving he invited some coreligionists for dinner and they discovered the hidden image of Christ. They accused the Jew of practicing secretly the Christian religion. They beat him hardily and decided to reinterpret the Passion of Christ on the crucifix: they spat on the image, fixed nails on its hands and feet, offered it vinegar with a sponge and lacerated it with a spear. At this moment the image performed the miracle of bleeding and Jews decided to adopt the Christian faith.⁴

On the one hand, the story had the purpose of convincing Christians that icons contained the real presence of the person depicted and the adoration of images. On the other hand, it reinforced the idea that Jews hated Jesus and would take profit of any opportunity to reinterpret the Passion on any substitute available. This last consequence entailed that Jews could be accused of attacking Christian images and crucifixes during the Middle Ages. In fact, in 1062 some Jews were accused in Aterno (Pescara, Italy) of re-enacting the Passion of Christ by shooting arrows against a waxen image of Jesus. Jews were tortured so that they admitted the

³ Leopold Kretzenbacher, *Das verletzte Kultbild: Voraussetzungen, Zeitschichten und Aussagewandel eines abendländischen Legendentypus*, Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1977; Jean-Marie Sansterre, "L'image blessée, l'image souffrante", in *Les images dans les sociétés médiévales. Pour une histoire comparée. Actes du colloque international organisé par l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome et l'Université Libre de Bruxelles (Rome, Academia Belgica, 19-20 juin 1998)*, Brussels & Rome, 1999, pp. 113-130.

⁴ Michele Bacci, "Quel bello miracolo onde si fa la festa del santo Salvatore: studio sulle metamorfosi di una leggenda", en Gabriella Rossetti, ed. *Santa Croce e Santo Volto: Contributi allo studio dell'origine e della fortuna del culto del Salvatore (secoli IX-XV)*, Pisa: Gisem, 2002, pp. 7-86; Carlos Espí Forcén, *Recrucificando a Cristo. Los judíos de la 'Passio Imaginis' en la isla de Mallorca*, Palma de Mallorca: Objeto Perdido, 2009, pp. 43-47, 60-63; István M. Bugár, "Images of Jews and Christians in the Seventh Century: The *Narratio de Imagine in Beryto* and its Context", en *Studia Patristica*, vol. XLIV, Leuven: Peeters, 2010, pp. 36-38.

alleged crime, their properties were confiscated and their synagogue was turned into a church.⁵ It was not an isolated case: Alfonso X, the wise of Castille decreed in his mid 13th century civil code *Las Siete Partidas* what follows:

“And because we have heard it said that in some places Jews made and make the day of Good Friday remembrance of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in a scornful way, stealing children and putting them on a cross or making waxen images and crucifying them when they cannot have the children, we order that if from now on we hear that in any place of our jurisdiction such a thing be done, if it could be verified, that all those who are involved in the deed be captured and taken and adjudicated before the king and after the truth be known, he must kill them in a vile way, as many as they may be [...]”⁶

We have no news that Jews were actually accused of desecrating crucifixes in Castille during the Late Middle Ages. Nonetheless, by the time the Alfonsine civil code was being written, Jahuda de la Caballeria, the Jewish counselor of the king of Aragon James I the conqueror was imputed for hiding a crucifix and a bronze cross to mistreat them in order to mock and despise the Christian religion.⁷ Alfonso



Fig. 1. *Las Cantigas de Santa María*, Jews reinterpreting the tortures of Christ in a waxen image, Alfonso X

⁵ For the case of Aterno see, Laurent Feller, *Les Abruzzes médiévales: territoire, économie et société en Italie centrale du IX au XII siècle*, Rome: École française de Rome, 1998, pp. 708-720.

⁶ Dwayne E. Carpenter, *Alfonso X and the Jews. An Edition of and Commentary on Siete Partidas 7.24 “De los judios”*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986, p. 29.

⁷ Archivo de la Corona de Aragón. Cancillería Real. 15, fol. 36v. (Montpellier, 17 de diciembre de 1266). See also, Jean Regné, *History of the Jews in Aragón. Regesta and Documents 1213-1327*.

Hispania Judaica 1, Heim Beinart, ed. Jerusalem: The Magness Press, 1978, p. 24. Crucifix desecration accusations were particularly prominent during the 15th century in Spain against *conversos*, see Yitzhak Baer, *Die Juden im Christlichen Spanien: Urkunden und Regesten*, Berlin: Akademie, vol. 2, pp. 447-448, 464-466, 519-528.

included such a scene in his major work *Las Cantigas de Santa María*. Cantiga number 12 tells a miracle of the Virgin that involves the Jews of Toledo reinterpreting the tortures of Christ on a waxen image, similarly to the Jews in Aterno. The reaction of Christians is brutal: they mercilessly massacre all Jews with their swords (fig. 1).

Another way that Jews may have had to mock the passion of the Saviour, according to the Alfonsine code, was to kidnap and crucify a Christian child. This is known in historiography as the blood libel legend or ritual murder accusation. Allegedly Jews tortured and crucified Christian children to drink their blood and commemorate the killing of Christ of their ancestors. The ritual murder accusation was much more successful in the massacre of Jews during the Middle Ages than the image desecration accusation. The first known case was that of William of Norwich in 1144 and it seems that from the British Isles it was spread all over Central Europe already in the 12th century.⁸ Every time a Christian child disappeared, Jews were suspicious of having stolen him and killed him. There are many accusations in England, Germany, France, Italy and Spain during the Late Middle Ages. Generally Jews were tortured until they confessed what the inquisitors wanted, i.e. that they had kidnapped a Christian child (or even an entire family), killed him, drank the blood and crucified him to re-interpret the Passion of Christ. An engraving in the *Nuremberg Chronicle* graphically illustrates one of the most relevant cases: that of Simon of Trent in 1465 (fig. 2). Jews are nailing the child, slicing his genitals and gathering his blood. In almost all cases of ritual murder

Fig 2. Jews interpreting the Passion of Christ on a child, *Nuremberg Chronicle*



⁸ Gavin I. Langmuir, "Thomas of Monmouth: Detector of Ritual Murder", *Speculum* 59 (1984): 820-846; Israel Jacob Yuval, "Vengeance and Damnation, Blood and Defamation: From Jewish Martyrdom to Blood Libel Accusations." (en hebreo) *Zion* 58 (1993): 33-90; idem, *Two Nations in your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006, pp. 161-190; John MacCulloh, "Jewish Ritual Murder: William of Norwich, Thomas of Monmouth, and the Early Dissemination of the Myth", *Speculum* 72.3 (1997): 698-740; Friedrich Lotter, "Innocens Virgo et Martyr: Thomas von Monmouth und die Verbreitung der Ritualmordlegende im Hochmittelalter", en Rainer Erb, ed. *Die Legende vom Ritualmord: zur Geschichte der Blutbeschuldigung gegen Juden*, Berlin: Metropol, 1993, pp. 698-740.

accusations, innocent Jews were killed or expelled from the Christian kingdoms where they were living. The supposed criminals were therefore the victims of such libels and Christians took profit of keeping their properties and avoid paying debts.

After the dogma of transubstantiation was proclaimed in the early 13th century, Jews could also be accused of desecrating a Eucharist to be able to attack the body of Christ.⁹ This accusation proved to be likewise successful and Jews were again killed for stealing and torturing hosts. The idea that Jews desecrated consecrated wafers was also promoted in late medieval art. Some altarpieces dedicated to the iconography of the Eucharist in the Kingdom of Aragon included Eucharistic miracles that presented Jews stabbing a host (fig. 3). As a result, the host bled and, for Christian eyes, it proved that it really contained the body of Christ. Unfortunately for Jews, Christians accepted the idea that Jews would desecrate a host if they had the opportunity. In fact, by the time these altarpieces were painted Jews were accused of desecrating hosts four times in the Kingdom of Aragon. The host desecration accusation caused likewise the death of Jews in many other parts of Europe during the Late Middle Ages.¹⁰

The role Jews played as tax collectors, physicians, king's counselors and other prestigious positions during the Late Middle Ages put them in a very delicate and dangerous situation. Christians had many times the opportunity of accusing them of horrible crimes against their religion. Their feeble status as a religious minority permitted that such accusations were successful, what unfortunately caused continuous massacres of Jews throughout Europe over the centuries.

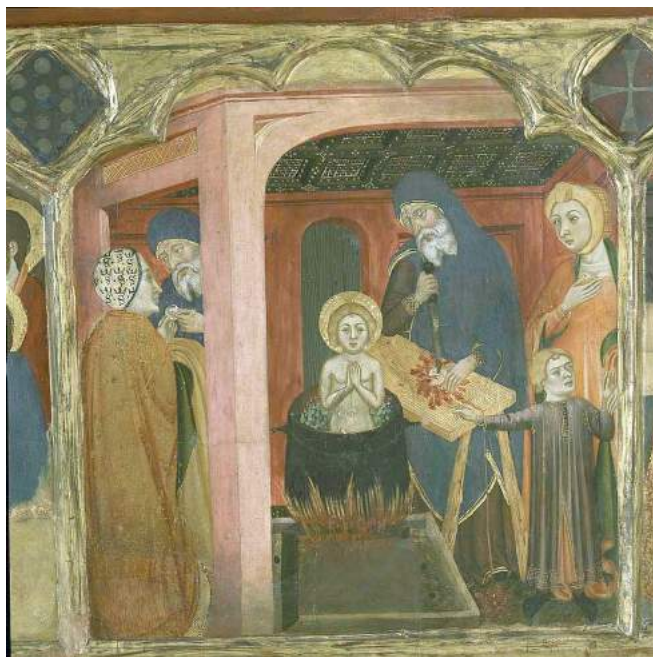


Fig. 3. Jews stabbing a host, Altarpiece

⁹ For the Eucharist in the Middle Ages see above all, Gary Macy, *The Theologies of the Eucharist in the Early Scholastic Period*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984; idem, *Treasures from the Storeroom: Medieval Religion and the Eucharist*, Collegeville: A Pueblo Book, 1999; Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

¹⁰ Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1999.

Satan And The Puritan's Panic

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In 1988 a peculiar wave of rumor and panic spread across large swaths of the United States. It struck small rural towns and large municipalities alike. In school hallways, church pews, workplaces, and police precincts the whispered stories went something like this: vast networks of organized Satanists were everywhere and were snatching children and animals for sacrificial rituals. It would come to a head on Halloween, only five days after Geraldo Rivera's infamous NBC special *Devil Worship: Exposing Satan's Underground*. Instead of watching *ALF* and *The Cosby Show*, American viewers learned about the breeding of babies for sacrifice in Satanic rituals which Rivera stated, "may really be happening." (1) On Rivera's show the previous year on secret cults, he said, "estimates are that there are over 1 million Satanists in the United States." (2)

In the days leading up to Oct. 31st, newspaper reports in dozens of cities reported that Satanists were planning to kidnap blonde-haired blue-eyed virgins on All Hallows Eve. Parents kept their children home from school, vigilante groups roamed the streets, and police conducted fruitless raids. In the aftermath, no children were kidnapped and no evidence of a Satanic network were ever uncovered. (3)

The 1988 incidents were only the peak of a general moral panic that had slowly bore its way into the consciousness of American society since the start of the decade. It coalesced into a toxic mix between McCarthyism and the Salem Witch Trials and would eventually claim hundreds of innocent victims. Was it something unique in America's cultural DNA that lies dormant and emerges during certain seismic shifts in our cultural landscape?

To understand how one of the world's most advanced and educated countries could devolve into an atmosphere that more resembled the 1680's one must look at the cultural upheavals of the previous thirty years. America in the 1950's was a place of remarkable conformity where traditional values and Christianity shaped the fabric of society. The following decades brought enormous changes in the fundamental outlook of mainstream America. Countercultural youth-driven movements arose through the tumult of the 60's and were firmly entrenched in the collective consciousness by the 1970's. The cultural changes were stark, from popular media, music, and fashion to an emerging sexual revolution. Americans no longer uniformly believed that their institutions and government were inherently benevolent. They were also becoming more secularized with a growing New Age outlook on spirituality, free from the strictures of traditional religion.

A backlash began to grow amongst Evangelical Christians against this growing counterculture and what they saw as America's burgeoning moral relativism. These Fundamentalists also had a firm belief that Satan's influence on society, especially the youth, was palpable and very real. Americans in general felt a growing sense that the family unit was fracturing and that they were losing control of their children.

Fundamentalists had little political motivation initially, simply a desire for the country to return to its biblical principles. That changed, however, in 1976 when Newsweek declared it to be "The Year of the Evangelical." Most evangelicals had supported the election of Born-Again Christian Jimmy Carter but quickly soured on what they saw as his inaction on key issues such as abortion. With Jerry Falwell's 1979 creation of the Moral Majority, a political-action group for religious conservatives, Evangelicals had positioned themselves as a united political force.

It was conservative America's nostalgia for a more traditional and God-fearing era that led to the groundswell of support for Ronald Reagan in 1980. They saw in Reagan a man who would return the country to its Christian roots, someone who was strong on law and order and a vehement anti-communist who shared their worldview. Reagan openly courted Falwell and the Evangelical vote and was swept into office in 1980. This cemented the Evangelicals as a powerful political force hell-bent on changing the cultural landscape.

Organized communists were rare in the 1980s but secular humanists were ubiquitous. Fundamentalists were convinced that moral relativism and secular humanism were bleeding into every crack of our cultural base and threatening American liberties. The era's most prominent Evangelical writer and theorist, Francis Schaeffer, echoed these sentiments a year later in his book *A Christian Manifesto*. He stated, "I believe that pluralistic secularism, in the long run, is more deadly a poison than straightforward persecution." It was a call to arms of sorts in which he implored Christians to choose sides in this emerging spiritual warfare. Schaeffer called for Christians to use civil disobedience to bring about biblical morality. (4)

The year of Reagan's election saw the publishing of the book *Michelle Remembers*, co-written by Canadian psychiatrist Lawrence Pazder and his psychiatric patient (and eventual wife) Michelle Smith. It detailed Michelle's alleged recovered memories of suffering ritual abuse and witnessing child sacrifices by a coven of Satanists. Although it was the first popular book claiming recovered memories of ritual abuse, it was not the first to speak of widespread Satanic activity. Vietnam veteran Mike Warnke's sensational 1973 book *The Satan Seller*, detailed his supposed rise to High Priest of a Satanic cult. It quickly became a religious bestseller.

Emerging from this atmosphere were the first salient cases in what would come to be called SRA (Satanic Ritual Abuse). Informed by the best-selling *Michelle Remembers* (which was used as a sort of guidebook for recovered memory therapy of ritual abuse), so-called

experts on the occult and Satanism began to pop up in the law enforcement and psychotherapy communities. Police officers depended on special workshops to train them how to investigate cult crimes and social workers attended training seminars that focused on SRA. Specially “trained” police Satanist hunters were soon scouring the country.

Although fundamentalists made no traction with the abortion issue, they seemed to have found a different group of endangered children. In 1984, the same year that saw Reagan’s second landslide Presidential victory, the McMartin Preschool trials began in Manhattan Beach, CA. Starting in 1982, a series of ritual abuse claims embroiled conservative Kern County, California for years. In both cases a similar drama played out: a single abuse accusation from an estranged mentally ill family member quickly blossomed into a dragnet of dozens of suspects and hundreds of alleged child victims. Teams of therapists and specialists used suggestive and speculative interviewing techniques on the children to elicit baseless accusations. Once this “evidence” found its way to the District Attorney, the prosecutors ran with it unquestioned.

Two members of the McMartin family and four teachers were eventually charged with 321 counts of child abuse involving 48 children. In the Kern County cases the District Attorney was especially aggressive. As many as 60 children testified (many against their own parents or relatives) and 36 people were convicted, making it the largest prosecution of child molesters in American history. Sheriff’s deputies and social workers grilled young children for hours until they heard what they wanted.⁽⁵⁾ These two cases were just the beginning as dozens of similar SRA cases that would pop up through the 80’s and early 90’s. Parallels to the Salem Witch Trials, almost exactly 300 years before, were stark. A credulous society, informed by a Puritan law and order ethic, became enraptured by the outrageous accusations of children.

Media coverage tended to be uncritical of the prosecutions and sensationalist in tone. Throughout the decade’s hysteria, “experts” on the occult were quoted in the media. A 1985 20/20 expose on Satanic cults that included Lawrence Pazder and Mike Warnke, among other stalwart occult “experts”, did much to legitimize the growing hysteria. Other media figures like Larry King, Oprah Winfrey, and Sally Jesse Rafael trotted out these so-called experts and survivors of ritual abuse, fanning the flames of the panic. Americans, and especially white conservatives, seemed to have an insatiable appetite for stories of Satanic baby killing and ritualistic abuse.

By the early 1990’s, much of the panic had subsided. Hucksters such as Lawrence Pazder, Michelle Smith, Mike Warnke and others were thoroughly debunked early in the decade by journalists, many of them Christians. The FBI released a report in 1992 stating they were unable to identify even one documented satanic murder in the United States. A 1996 inquiry into over 12,000 cases of alleged satanic ritual involvement produced no cases that were considered factual. ⁽⁶⁾ The media, of course, were not nearly as aggressive in reporting the debunking and baseless nature of the panics as they were in promoting them.

The McMartin trials, which had become a national cause célèbre, ended in 1990 after 7 years and resulted in no convictions. It was the longest and most expensive criminal trial in U.S. history. (7) David Shaw, of the Los Angeles Times, won a Pulitzer Prize for his expose on the media's failure (including his own newspaper) to adequately cover the McMartin case. The Kern cases unraveled fairly quickly with 34 of the 36 convictions eventually overturned on appeal by the mid 90's. Two others died in prison before they were able to clear their names. Hundreds of lives were ruined, some having spent years in prison. Others had their reputations irrevocably marred. Many children were left having to come to grips with the damage done by their false testimony.

Two decades removed, a lingering shame about the era is inherent in the dearth of popular knowledge and reportage about the subject. It's hard to imagine a similar hysteria gripping the consciousness of America today. The internet can help debunk a hoax or rumor as quickly as it springs up. Awareness of the nebulous quality of memory, confessions, and child witness testimony has improved police techniques tremendously. One must be aware, though, of the capacity for America to repeat its mistakes. The hysteria may have just been driven deeper into the collective consciousness only to emerge at the next major existential threat to our cultural unity.

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The Mysterious Dissappearance Of The Neanderthal Man

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Among all ancestral human species, the Neanderthal most resembles us today. Both *Homo Neanderthalensis* and *Sapiens* possibly originated from a common ancestor, the *Homo Heidelbergensis*. The Neanderthals lived between two hundred thousand and thirty-nine thousand years ago in what is today known as Eurasia. While the first *Homo Sapiens* skulls in Europe date between forty-five and forty-three thousand years old, the *Homo Neanderthalensis* is thought to have become extinct between forty-one and thirty-nine thousand years ago, indicating likelihood that for at least a couple thousand years, *Homo Sapiens* and *Neanderthalensis* co-existed in Europe.

The first skull of this human species was discovered in 1829 in Engis (present day Belgium) and the first adult skull was found in 1848 in Gibraltar. Originally the skulls were thought to be ancient human and not differentiated as a separate species. The following decade, in 1856, Johann Karl Fuhlrott coined the term *Homo Neanderthalensis* after the discovery of a fossilized skull in a valley in Neanderthal, present day Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. Six years later, George Bisk and Hugh Falconer traveled to Gibraltar and examined the skull found there. Their report to the British Association for the advancement of Science claimed a new human species that should be called *Homo Calpicus* (derived from the latin name of Gibraltar). Upon further research however, they determined that the Gibraltar and Engis skulls were indeed similar to Fuhlrott's named species *Homo Neanderthalensis*, and this name prevailed. (1,2)

Anatomically, Neanderthals had a more prominent jaw and forehead, a bigger cranium and a hypothetically bigger brain than *Homo Sapiens*. They were similar in height but were more robust and stronger. Contrary to early opinions, recent genetic analysis suggest Neanderthals did not have more hair than



Fig 1, **Homo Neanderthalensis**, Source: nationalgeographic.com

modern humans. The most common hair colors were red and blonde, and their skin was fair. (Figure 1) (3)

Neanderthals lived in groups and were able to make tools for hunting and cutting prey. Recent findings suggest that they had significant cognitive abilities, including capacity for abstract and artistic expression. A group of scientists who analyzed eleven caves in Spain with uranium based testing, dated prehistoric paintings in el Castillo Cave to forty-one thousand years ago. Presently these remain the oldest paintings ever found and the scientists have proposed that these paintings could have been made by Neanderthals. Their hypothesis, however, has not been confirmed by evidence such as the existence of Neanderthal tools in the Castillo cave area. (Figure 2) (4).



Some corroborating evidence does exist that Neanderthals in other area's had the ability for abstract symbolism. In September 2014, a hashtag made by Neanderthals was

El Castillo Cave paintings, to date, the oldest known human paintings date from forty one thousands years ago which has led scientists to speculate whether they were made by Neanderthals.



Hashtag, made by Neanderthals found in Gibraltar in September 2014

found on a stone in Gorham's cave in Gibraltar. This piece probably required at least 317 coordinated strokes on the stone, supporting intentional artwork. The hashtag was found next to other Neanderthal tools and dates from thirty nine thousand years ago. (Figure 3) (5)

The foregoing and other recent findings about Neanderthals has given rise to revisiting existing theories around the extinction of the Neanderthal human specie. Following are the most accepted ones by the scientific community.

Climate Change Theory:

Roughly fifty-five thousand years ago, the climate in Europe became warmer. This impacted the flora and fauna and possibly led to food scarcity or changes in potential food sources. Neanderthals were thought to need more dietary calories a day on average than modern humans. This could have played a role in their extinction in times of food scarcity. According to this theory, modern humans would have replaced the Neanderthals by competitive exclusion. (6)

Interbreeding or Partial Extinction theory:

When Neanderthal DNA was sequenced at the Max Plank Institute, it was found that modern Humans may have between one to three percent of Neanderthal DNA. However mitochondrial Neanderthal DNA, which is only passed maternally, has not been found in modern humans. Some scholars propose that while male Neanderthals could have been able to fecund female Homo Sapiens, the mating of female Neanderthals and male Homo Sapiens would have had a sterile outcome. The finding of Neanderthal genes in our own genome has also led to the proposal of a partial extinction theory, in which, the relatively inferior numbers of Neanderthal men would have been gradually assimilated in our own. Therefore, modern humans would be the result of a hybrid between Cro-Magnon (The first Homo Sapiens in Europe) and Homo Neanderthalensis. (7)

Germs and Genocide theory:

Before writing his most popular book “Guns, Germs and Steel,” about the factors that may have played a role in the rapid conquering of America by a relatively small population of Spaniards, author Jared Diamond wrote “The Third Chimpanzee: The Evolution and Future of The Human Animal”. Diamond essentially draws a parallel between ancient changes in human species and the genetic shift in humans which occurred during the early settling of European Homo Sapiens in the New World, much more recently. He proposed that a violent scenario took place between Homo Sapiens and Neanderthalensis, leading to the extinction of the potentially less sophisticated or less numerous group, in this case, the Homo Neanderthalensis. In addition, similarly to the varizela epidemics in America with the arrival of the Spaniards, Homo Sapiens may have carried new germs and parasites for which Neanderthals were not immune, which could have accelerated their extinction. (8,9)

Discussion of all extinction theories

Any or all of these theories could well explain the extinction of the Neanderthal man. However, despite all these findings, to date there is still no archeological evidence that socialization between Neanderthals and modern humans took place. Researchers agree that multiple factors rather than a single factor likely caused the extinction of the Neanderthals.

A recent review article by Villa and Roebroeks suggest that contrary to what has been assumed for decades, Homo Sapiens were not necessarily superior to the Neanderthals as they also had created sophisticated tools, controlled fire and displayed abstract expression, characteristics that were thought to be a modern human attribute. (10) Researches now believe that Neanderthals also used language for communication and were not less intelligent than modern humans.

Following the theses of Jared Diamond, one could hypothesize that while not less intelligent, still Neanderthal culture could have been at least less sophisticated. In that case, Homo Sapiens could have essentially conquered the Neanderthals and interbreeding might have happened in a context of oppression rather than by free mating. After all, it might me a little naïve to believe that Neanderthals and Homo Sapiens formed families and lived happily ever after. We cannot be so sure. A contrary hypothesis to Diamond's theory could be that Neanderthals were in fact more advanced at the time of Homo Sapiens arrival in Europe. When it is considered that presumably Neanderthals may have been the authors of the earliest known human paintings and the first humans to show capacity for abstract symbolism, indeed one could even hypothesize that Homo Sapiens would have learned all these skills from the Neanderthals. Further, perhaps rather than the conquering of America by the Spaniards, the displacement scenario would have resembled more the conquering of Rome by the Barbarians. History is usually written by the winners and this may have impacted our assumptions about Homo Neanderthalensis.

The more we continue to learn about Homo Neanderthalensis, the more that current day Homo Sapiens may begin to realize how similar we are. Perhaps it might not be fair to call ourselves the "Sapiens" any more. Perhaps, a more accurate nomenclature would be Homo Sapiens Cro-Magnonesis (us) in contrast to Homo Sapiens Neanderthalensis. Perhaps the first "Sapien" was our common ancestor, Homo Heidelbergensis, who is now believed to have set fires, bury their dead and handle tools. Perhaps, we should reconsider the way we think about our extinct brothers and start making a better effort to honor their memory.

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Source of figures:

Figure 1: National Geographic

Figure 2: wikipedia.org

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Cinema and Psychiatry

Psychology Of Human Aggression In Hitchcock's Rear Window

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Chronicling the voyeuristic experience of a temporarily wheelchair bound photographer, Hitchcock introduces the viewer to a Greenwich Village apartment complex in the midst of a summer heat wave via the protagonist's rear apartment window. The apartment's complex's varied occupants include a single middle-aged woman, "Miss Lonely Hearts," a single female dancer, "Miss Torso," and the narrative focus of the film—Mr. and Mrs. Lars Thorwald. Based on his observations of the Thorwald apartment activities, the protagonist obsessively pursues justice, believing that Mr. Thorwald murdered his bed-ridden wife. However, juxtaposed against this pursuit, Hitchcock displays the conjoined romantic endeavors of Miss Torso and Miss Lonely Hearts.



Amidst the backdrop of uxoricide, the viewer witnesses Miss Torso entertaining a roomful of men openly making sexual advances but ultimately spending her nights alone. Simultaneously, in a separate apartment, Miss Lonely Hearts is shown to be miserably isolated, pantomiming a date with her imaginary suitor in her empty apartment. When Miss Lonely Hearts finally brings home a suitor, the viewer witnesses her excitement in finally fulfilling her fantasied romantic companionship, only to be crushed by his ensuing assault. Given the concurrence of a wife's brutal murder at the hand of her husband paralleled by supporting plot lines of unreciprocated sexual advances and attempted rape, Hitchcock appears to comment on the role of male sexual aggression in romantic love as a form of conquest.

This apparent gradient from sexual advances to spousal murder delineates a continuum of unchecked male sexual aggression. Of note, the romantic relationship of the film's protagonist only appears to evolve in intensity when his paramour becomes similarly obsessed with the "rear window ethics" assigned to a witness of assault. In doing so, Hitchcock ties both the protagonist and his partner to the continuum of sexual aggression, validating their relationship when they both become deeply involved with the spectacle of violence. Thus, as portrayed by *Rear Window*, aggression appears to be closely tied to sex. From an evolutionary perspective, instrumental, goal-seeking aggression appears to have gained traction as a competitive advantage to recruit resources and manipulate one's social environment. In *Rear Window*, the primary "resource" is sexual, extrapolated to the evolutionary imperative supporting male reproductive fitness.

In the case of harm-seeking behaviors unimpaired by the recognition of social cues, the danger of unchecked, impulsive aggression can be pathological. Pathologic neurobiological vulnerability appears to be rooted in abnormal activity of a "social behavior network," a circuitry which involves the pre-cortical brain, including the medial amygdala, hypothalamic nuclei, and the periaqueductal gray (Nelson & Trainor, 2007). Potentially, this circuitry becomes deranged in the absence of inhibitory feedback from prefrontal cortex, the biological equivalent of a symbolic super ego controlling the impulses of an unchecked id. This pathology is presented in *Rear Window* as the gruesome murder of Mrs. Thorwald and the attempted rape of Miss Lonely Hearts. Through this portrayal, viewing male sexual aggression as an insurmountable biological destiny is not only hopelessly reductionist, it ultimately becomes a permissive means to control female sexuality.

Through Hitchcock's gradient of unmasking the unchecked id in male sexual aggression, *Rear Window* appears to inexorably intertwine sex with violence. In doing so, the "rear window ethics" of neighborhood voyeurism becomes less focused on the resolution of justice for murder, but instead, places the viewer in a position of responsibility as a witness on the spectrum of sexual violence. The film's neighborhood setting appears to underscore the commonality of male sexual coercion, and in turn, allow the viewer to reassess their own life experiences.

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Source of movie poster IMD

Aguirre: The Wrath Of God Or The Ego

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I was lucky to see Werner Herzog's classic film *Aguirre: The Wrath of God* for the first time at the Music Box Theatre in Chicago, a theatre that to date still retains its original open air Tuscan Palazzo architecture of 1929 with a dark blue ceiling of twinkling stars. For the last two decades, this theater has been the premiere venue in Chicago for independent and foreign films. For me, this theatre was the perfect haunt for a Friday or Sunday evening, while other times it was a perfect stop when I was returning to downtown Chicago from Evanston Bridges Clinic on Thursdays. In the main room, an organist usually enlightens the spectators



before the film starts. After a good film one could finish the night a few steps away with a wonderful and pretty affordable Argentinean parrilla at Tango Sur with a bottle of wine from the nearby supermarket. The ghost of “Whitey”, the manager of the theatre from its opening in 1977, is still believed to be pacing aisle 4 providing comfort to the audience.

As I was saying, during the years I lived in Chicago, I had the privilege to see great classic films in that wonderful relic of a cinema. In September 2013, the theatre scheduled a series titled “Werner Herzog: Feats of Madness” and among the movies projected, one of them was *Aguirre: The Wrath of God* (1972). The film is loosely based on the story of a Spanish conquistador from Basque Country, Lope de Aguirre, who led a group of conquistadors down the Orinoco River and Amazon River in search of the gold city of “El Dorado”. The historical Lope de Aguirre, nicknamed *El Loco*, was reputed for his famous saying “I am the Wrath of God, the Prince of Freedom, Lord of Tierra Firme and Provinces of Chile”. He has traditionally been depicted in the arts as an example of the antihero, a symbol of cruelty and treachery in

colonial Spanish America. During his years in America, Aguirre refused to respect the *enmiendas* (laws that protected the indigenous people) and killed and oppressed anyone that became an obstacle in his path defying any authority including the crown of Spain. Before he was captured and shot to death, he killed his own daughter, Elvira and several of his own followers that he thought were running against him.

Herzog's Aguirre was filmed in a remote district in the jungle, where the crew was at risk for fever and starvation. During the making of the movie, Klaus Kinski, the actor portraying the Spanish conquistador had several outbursts and on several occasions threatened to abandon the film. Kinski was

actually famous for his outbursts, difficult personality, and psychiatric problems, and during the 1950's was hospitalized in a psychiatric ward with a preliminary diagnosis of schizophrenia. Legend says that Herzog pulled



a gun on Kinski to force him to continue acting when he threatened to

Herzog and Kinski exchange differences during the making of a film, Source: jackfilmreviews.blogspot.com

leave, something that was later denied by Kinski who stated that he actually had the only gun.

In Herzog's film, Francisco Pizarro, feeling that his expedition to "El Dorado" was not going anywhere, orders a small group of men led by Pedro de Ursúa to continue down the river for one more week. Among these men was Lope de Aguirre. After a week and having failed to reach their destiny, Ursúa decides to return following Pizarro's directions. Aguirre, inspired by Hernán Cortés who conquered Mexico disobeying orders, starts a mutiny against Ursúa and arranges Fernando de Guzmán to be the new leader. Aguirre uses fear and intimidation to carry out his plans and kills anyone who disagrees with him. As a counterpoint, indigenous people from the jungle throw arrows that kill the crew silently and slowly. After everyone is dead, alone and already insane, Aguirre states to the monkeys who invade the boat "I, the Wrath of God, will marry my own daughter and with her I will found the purest dynasty

the world has ever seen. Together, we shall rule this entire continent. We shall endure. I am the Wrath of God! Who else is with me?"



After everyone is dead, a crazed Aguirre attempts to validate his grandiosity with a monkey.

source film-grab.com

After its release, Aguirre became almost instantaneously a cult classic film that later influenced many directors. Perhaps the most clear influence is seen in Francis Ford Coppola's film, *Apocalypse Now*. For Roger Ebert, Aguirre was a film in his top ten. From a psychiatric point of view, Aguirre can be seen as a beautiful depiction of malignant narcissism, depicting a man who annihilates and removes every threat to his sense of self worth, including his own daughter.

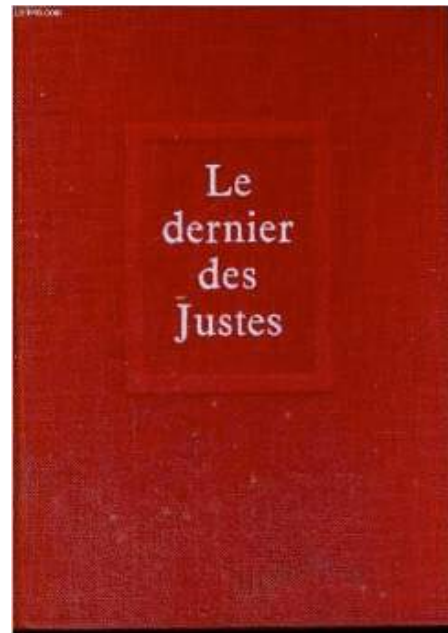
Source of movies posters: IMD

Book Reviews

The Last Jew

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Certain books live with me, ingrained in memory such that when I see the book on a shelf I immediately recall a particular and colourful memory. Just as a perfume can remind one of a face or a circumstance so can a phrase of words. Trawling second-hand bookshops can consume hours lost in meditation along the rows of books. Now and again I will find a book I have been searching for some time. I never grab the tome immediately, rather pass over it with feint control to exaggerate the pleasure, to savour it, before returning in a moment (not too long lest someone else has a similar notion) and then indulge. Often I will buy second and third copies of books that have given me such pleasure.



Last week I found just such a book.

In 1959 a book was published in France that went on to win the Prix Goncourt in the same year (1). The author was also awarded the Jerusalem Prize in 1967 (2). It was written by a previously unknown author whose parents had migrated to France from Poland at the outbreak of World War I. Born in France in 1928 Andre Schwarz-Bart learnt French in the alleys and markets of Paris. In 1941 his parents and two brothers were killed in the German concentration camps because they were Jewish. The book that I found, 'The Last of the Just' (3) ('*Le Dernier des Justes*') sold an astonishing 400,000 copies in the first six months of publication.

In my opinion this, his first book, was his last book. Actually, this is technically not correct. He wrote another novel some years later called 'A Women Named Solitude' ('*La Mulatresse Solitude*') (4). And in 1967 Andre and his wife Simone, collaborated to write an historical novel called 'A Dish of Pork with Green Bananas' ('*Un Plat de Porc aux Bananes Vertes*'), which explored the fate of black women in their diaspora. More recently he co-published a series of books ('In Praise of Black Women') with his wife. Both 'A Woman of

Solitude' and the books co-written with Simone, record the injustice black African female slaves experienced in the French West Indies, in particular, Guadeloupe, Simone Schwarz-Bart's birthplace. Andre, whose parents and two brothers died in German-European gas chambers because they were Jewish, deceased in Guadeloupe 30 September 2006, aged 78.

I maintain however that his first book 'The Last of the Just' was his 'only' book. And I claim he never wrote another book of worth again.

The title, 'The Last of the Just' is derived from the Jewish myth that in every generation, there are 36 righteous (just) people on the earth, called 'the *Lamed Vov*', whose righteousness and suffering impels G-d to have mercy on mankind, and to keep His promise to Noah of the rainbow.

'According to [a Chasidic tradition], the world reposes upon thirty-six Just Men, the Lamed-Vov, indistinguishable from simple mortals; often they are unaware of their station. But if just one of them were lacking, the sufferings of mankind would poison even the souls of the newborn, and humanity would suffocate with a single cry. For the Lamed-Vov are the hearts of the world multiplied, and into them, as into one receptacle, are poured all our griefs... When an Unknown Just rises to Heaven, he is so frozen that G-d must warm him for a thousand years between His fingers, before his soul can open itself to Paradise. And it is known that some remain forever inconsolable at human woe; so that even G-d Himself cannot warm them. So from time to time the Creator, Blessed be His Name, sets the clock of the Last Judgement forward by one minute.' (3)

Questions present themselves. Why should Just Men suffer? What did Schwarz-Bart see as the moral connection of the Just Man to the Holocaust? Why did Schwarz-Bart entitle his book the *Last of the Just*? If there are no more Just Men then the world would 'suffocate with a single cry' – what is meant by this?

Can we learn anything else about the author, beyond the paltry few biographical facts we know? At age 13 he lost his parents and two brothers; he married a non-Jewish woman in the 1950s; Ellie Wiesel was counted amongst his friends; his only son became a well-known Jazz musician in New York, and he co-wrote a number of books about African refugees.

Maybe his writing can reveal aspects other than facts.

The enormity of 'The Last of the Just' is its ability to detail the traumatic history of the Jews of Europe without flinching and without becoming sentimental. He tirelessly listed,

generation after generation, the suffering of the Just Men. He explores the universal themes through his pre-conscious protagonists: justice, meaning, suffering and love. He builds the tension relentlessly. Even though we know what will happen – we are drawn, as a moth to a light, to follow the tragic fate that awaited our brethren. Its straightforward, understated storytelling – its almost tedious narration albeit of a history of brutality is phototropic. His palette and canvas are relentlessly and fearlessly tackled. His writing is splendid - lyrical, poetic, poignant. His imagery and phraseology is not too heavy and is always deft. At times he allows the faintest of irony to slip in, as a way of coping with the pain and providing a small window into his political mind. However when the scene is tragic he faces it fearlessly without flinching.

It is a story about eternal Jewish suffering, about unquenchable anti-Semitism, of a farewell to Judaism, of ambivalence, of myth-making; and finally an ode to his parents.

Isaac Bashevis Singer won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1978 (5). He only ever wrote in Yiddish – his *momma loshen*, his mother tongue – even though he had lived in America for decades. Once during an interview, he was challenged on this point. Isaac, in his inimitable way, pointed out that a writer to be a writer must return to his source. “I keep going back to 10 Krochmalna Street in my writing," he once said in an interview – to my childhood. Yiddish could not be Americanized. He only knew about Jewish life in his father’s court (who was a prominent rabbi in Warsaw) at 10 Krochmalna Street. To write about modern American Jews in Yiddish was impossible. In fact, until he understood this, he stopped writing fiction. The source had to fuel the fire. When he returned to his spiritual source the creativity flourished. He summarized: by writing about the particular and sectarian only then will universal truths come out; if I try to write as someone else (an American in Yiddish) I will surely fail.

Andre Schwarz-Bart did not understand this and, except for his masterpiece ‘The Last of the Just’, he is lost to literary history. This book was a creation from the source, from his formative years, his family, their history, and their death.

When the layers of gas had covered everything, there was silence in the dark sky of the room for perhaps a minute, broken only by shrill, racking coughs and the gasps of those too far gone in their agonies to offer a devotion. And first as a stream, then a cascade, then an irrepressible, majestic torrent, the poem which, through the smoke of fires and above the funeral pyres of history, the Jews - who for two thousand years never bore arms and never had either missionary empires or coloured slaves - the old love poem which the Jews traced in letters of blood on the earth's hard crust unfurled in the gas chamber, surrounded it, dominated its dark, abysmal sneer: SHEMA ISRAEL...Hear O Israel, the Eternal Our God, the Eternal is One. O Lord by your grace you nourish the

living, and by your great pity you resurrect the dead; and you uphold the weak, cure the sick, break the chains of slaves; and faithfully you keep your promises to those who sleep in the dust. Who is like unto you, O merciful Father, and who could be like unto you? ..." (3)

Andre knew the *shema*. The six words that can be said to encompass everything in Jewish liturgy. Organically he acknowledged the pain as his, as he thought of his parents and brothers and their forbears. This excerpt contains a little of everything – of irony, sarcasm, bitterness and that disarming Jewish ability to challenge God by His own standards. If He is merciful, then why didn't He show us mercy?, and yet we continue, even at death's door, to shower praises upon Him.

Andre at some point struggled with his Jewish identity. He was orphaned at age 13 and left to fend for himself in the chaos of war and its aftermath. He revealed a formidable understanding of a stiff-necked people who refused to surrender during 2,000 years of exile. A people subjugated, humiliated but still enthral to their covenant with the Creator. Outrageously, the Jews rebuilt their ancient homeland and revived a silent language, after a 1,900 year exile – 11 years before Andre published his book.

How the mighty have fallen. Did he reject his Jewish heritage? The 'last' of the book's title becomes both a metaphor and a solution for Jewish suffering. Andre had one child with Simone whom he knew would not be counted amongst the faithful. To my knowledge he never wrote of his Jewish consciousness again. It is as if he excised that portion of his identity that was too painful, too atavistic, and instead allowed himself to be seduced - mixed in good measure with psychic pragmatism - by the ideal of Universalism. He was thus able to move on.

Whilst Andre might have exorcised the demons, others, in thrall to post-traumatic distress, required a life-long process of ongoing repair. A book may be a triumphant start for some in repressing the pain, but what do we do when the nightmares start again? When the headaches won't leave you? When inexplicably you start smoking more Gauloises? More cathartic therapy is needed. It is no simple party-trick to throw off an identity that had been stamped into a young mind. Did Andre succeed? In the book Andre devotionally described his parents' love with poignancy and passion. From the eyes of his childhood, he imagines his parents' love will continue forever. Andre resolved his pain in 'symbolic immortality' (6). However the brutal truth of Jewish history precludes sentimentality.

The voices died one by one along the unfinished poem; the dying children had already dug their nails into Ernie's thighs, and Golda's embrace was already weaker, her kisses

were blurred, when suddenly she clung fiercely to her beloved's neck and whispered hoarsely: "Then I'll never see you again? Never again?"
Ernie managed to spit up the needle of fire jabbing at his throat and, as the girl's body slumped against him, its eyes wide in the opaque night, he shouted against her unconscious ear, "In a little while I swear it!..." (3)

How else could a 13 year old who lost his parents conceive of their death – other than as a love story? The father protecting the mother, and before that the children. The father strong, but above all heroic, thereby denying death. And by identifying with the heroic father-figure, Andre (and the readers) overcome the unspeakable, if only for a time. The heroism allows us, through psychic sorcery to be able to stand apart and separate from the common fate of man, and for a few moments imagine we are immortal and of primary value in the universe. And thereby nullify nothingness. Becker succinctly sums up: ‘heroism is first and foremost a reflex of the terror of death’ (7). Heroism begets courage, and maybe meaning.

Andre understood all this with a piercing insight. He knew with a preternatural knowing. But in the end he made a value judgement and we do not judge the moral worth of that decision. He discarded his heritage and possibly his identity. He continued to hope with Jewish conviction for Universal Justice having seen that the Era of the Particular had run its course. Did he believe in the idealism of International Brotherhood of Man? How could someone who had documented with clinical accuracy 1000s of years of pogroms against the Jews still believe in the essential goodness of man? With what Hope? Or did he conclude it was preferable to stop belonging, to stop believing and to end the suffering of the Just Men?

Andre fled into the arms of another refugee, from another diaspora, from a different historical narrative. And Andre took on her identity. And now wrote about black African slaves of the French empire in the West Indies, and about pork and bananas. It is true these people suffered terribly and unjustly – but they were not his core experience. They were not his mother’s milk. Nor his *mamma loschen*. They did not speak to his ancestors - nor he to theirs. Although we are not permitted to judge Andre, we are permitted to judge his writing which he has chosen to display to the world.

‘A Woman of Solitude’ (8), a novel based loosely on historical events, is written without inspiration, and is in its way, soulless. It is however beautifully written with his characteristic clear and breathless lyrical prose. It opens with a garbled description of child-marriage-sex-abuse in an African village and it continues without moral conviction to a tepid close. Andre does not convince me of the relevance and the ‘fit’ of the child-marriage with Solitude’s culture and journey. It is wooden. I suggest that this is the case because it is a reflection of another

people's life and history. It is not organically his own. In the epilogue, Andre ghoulishly creates a moral and cultural equivalence between his Jewish heritage and other. Whilst describing the ruins of a violent insurrection of African slaves in Guadeloupe 200 years previously, he perversely appends an analogy in the Epilogue: 'just as the phantoms that wander about the humiliated ruins of the Warsaw ghetto are said to rise up before the eyes of other travellers' (8). It is a forced, clumsy and confused effort at universalizing the particular - or at saying that everything is equal to everything else.

The 'Last of the Just' is not a Holocaust story, per se. It is a spiritual obituary whose resolution is at once eternally beautiful and achingly wretched. The Old Testament has 613 commandments. The last, commands us to write a copy of the bible, or by extrapolation a book about one's reflection of G-d (since we are made in His image). Andre wrote this one book and completed his (and the) last commandment. For this I am grateful and stand in deep respect.

Notwithstanding his judgement against G-d and rejection of the covenant between Him and the Jewish people, could Andre, as with the prophets of yester-year, only resolve the anguish by acknowledging the inexplicable truth of the Eternal?

'At times, it is true, one's heart could break in sorrow. But often too, preferably in the evening, I cannot help thinking that Ernie Levy, dead six million times, is still alive, somewhere, I don't know where. Yesterday, as I stood in the street trembling in despair, rooted to the spot, a drop of pity fell from above my face; but there was no breeze in the air, no cloud in the sky. ... there was only a presence.' (3)

Andre Schwartz-Bart chose not to continue his linkage and association with a people and history that created the myth of the *lamed vov*. I sense that his book cathartically enabled him to achieve a closure and he chose his own path, free of the weight and obligations of Jewish history.

Andre was the last of his lineage.

1. The Goncourt jury meets each year at the Drouant restaurant in Paris to select the book it deems to be the best new work in French literature. Although the prize comes with a nominal purse of only \$10, it guarantees a blitz of media attention and soaring book sales. Winners include Marcel Proust and Andre Malraux.
2. The Jerusalem Prize is a biennial award worth \$10,000 USD, given to the author whose work expresses and promotes the idea of the 'freedom of the individual in society'. Winners include Stefan Heym and Susan Sontag.

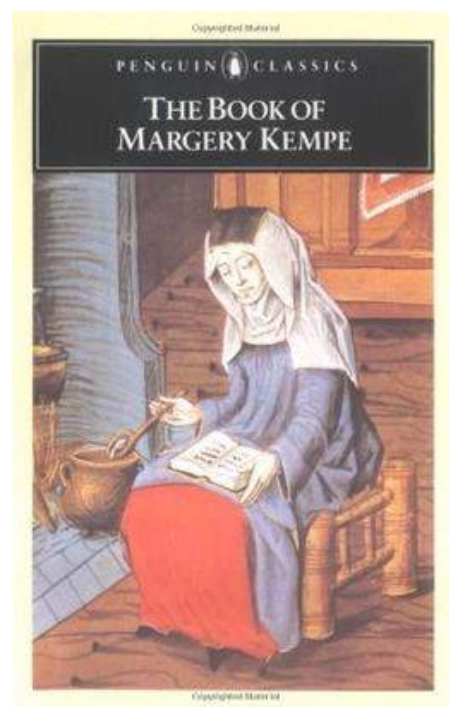
3. Schwarz-Bart, Andre. *The Last of the Just*, Paris, 1959.
4. On 16 July 2014 it was number 1,515,506 on 'Amazon.com Sale Rank'. In contrast 'The Last of the Just' was ranked 47,362; whilst 'Night' by Elie Wiesel stood at 94.
5. The Nobel Prize for literature in 2013 was worth \$1,200,000 USD. It also guarantees a blitz of media attention and soaring book sales.
6. Lifton RJ. Twentieth Annual Karen Horney Lecture. The sense of immortality: on death and the continuity of life. *Am J Psychoanal*. 1973;33(1):3-15.
7. Becker, Ernest. *The Denial of Death*, Free Press, New York, 1975.
8. Schwarz-Bart, Andre. *A Woman Named Solitude*, Atheneum, 1973, New York

The Book of Margery Kempe: Portrait of a 14th Century Woman with a Personality Disorder

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Introduction

Margery Kempe, a 14th Century British woman, produced what may be the first English language autobiography, titled *The Book of Margery Kempe*.¹² While the factual accuracy of this work is unknowable, what it does clearly offer is a remarkable portrait of the author. The objective of this article is to examine *The Book of Margery Kempe* through the lens of descriptive psychiatric nosology. In this context, there are suggestions throughout the *Book of* possible Axis I psychopathology in the Bipolar range. However, on balance, it is the evidence for personality dysfunction that predominates.



¹ Kempe, M. (1994). *The Book of Margery Kempe*. (B.A. Windeatt, Trans.). New York, NY: Penguin Group.

² Kempe, M. (1996). *The Book of Margery Kempe*. Ed. L Staley. *Robbins Library Digital Projects*. Retrieved from <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/staley-the-book-of-margery-kempe>

Background

The Book of Margery Kempe was discovered by chance in an English country house in the 1930s. It was authored by Margery Kempe, who was illiterate and therefore compelled to dictate her Book, which she did in her later years to two unidentified scribes. Biographical information about Kempe's life is limited, but historians have established that she was born in Lynn, England in approximately 1373 to a father who was a successful and politically prominent merchant. At an early age she married a local man with whom she had 14 children. As a young woman Kempe had several failed business ventures including ale brewing. Eventually she turned to religion, which became her chosen vehicle for interfacing with the world as she immersed herself in a lifestyle of proselytizing pilgrimages.³

Kempe's stated purpose for her Book was to present an account of her life that she hoped would steer "synful wrecchys" (I, 1: 1) towards "ower sovereyn Savyowr Cryst Jhesu" (I, 1: 3). The manuscript includes two principal sections, each divided into subsections; the whole contains 99 brief chapters cumulatively. Throughout her Book, Kempe refers to herself in the third person as "this creatur," depicting her life as a sequence of spiritual experiences and intimate encounters with the Holy Trinity. Kempe's narrative emphasizes the social context of her medieval world, particularly as reflected in the strongly negative reactions that she provoked from her contemporaries.

If the original stated purpose of the Book was the saving of souls, the author's primary intention was in fact to depict Kempe herself as a figure worthy of canonization. However, the book's grandiose auto-hagiographic aims fall far short of the mark, a fact that becomes obvious to the reader but never to Margery Kempe. Rather, the work reads as the autobiography⁴ of a medieval woman who is constantly seeking to leverage her social position with a poorly substantiated claim to be a spiritual authority. In this sense, The Book of Margery Kempe comes across as yet another failed business venture.

Since its discovery, The Book of Margery Kempe has garnered extensive academic analyses. Scholars have examined Margery Kempe's behavior in the context of her mystic influences and have attempted to understand her from feminist and psychoanalytic perspectives.

³ Goodman, A.E. (2002). *Margery Kempe and Her World*. London, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

⁴ Taylor, HC. (1991). Hagiography to autobiography: Generic conflation in "The Book of Margery Kempe." *Doctoral Dissertations*. Paper AAI9129933.

Others have raised the possibility that she suffered from a severe mental disturbance.⁵⁶ With its focus on description and on the reactions of others, contemporary diagnostic nosology provides a straightforward and relatively atheoretical basis for understanding Margery Kempe and the medieval world around her.

Margery Kempe's Character and Context

The Book of Margery Kempe provides a fascinating portrait of the author's character. In the unidimensional world of the late Middle Ages in England, Margery Kempe somehow managed, probably unintentionally, to produce an autobiography that emphasized her complexity. A controversial lightning rod throughout the Book, her idiocentric personality often clashes with the collectivist English culture of her day. She reflects little on her sociopolitical environment and conspicuously lacks deference for the cultural norms of medieval England, where religious authenticity was associated with retreat from secular society, renunciation of physical comforts, and a devotion to charitable work.⁷⁸ Moreover, the England of her day was preoccupied with the suppression of religious heterodoxy, regaining French territory, and mercantile considerations.⁹ Women of Kempe's middle class social stratum were typically relegated to domestic life and had a limited role in the public realm.¹⁰¹¹

Kempe demonstrates no regard for this expectation and positions herself central to the action whenever possible. She seems particularly tone-deaf to medieval conventions of modesty, piety and pessimism, and manages on many occasions to strike an affectively jarring note, seemingly intended to bring attention to herself, either by excessive emotion or by expression of feelings inappropriate to the occasion. Throughout the Book she poses strident challenges to normative social structures. Always the focus is on herself, and she shows utter disregard for the feelings and rights of others. At the same time Kempe herself is highly sensitive to rejection. It is her attempts to process the distress she suffers at the hands of others, mostly through detailed accounts of her social interactions, which most clearly reveal her character. Her anecdotes seem to be candid, but they are superficial, and Kempe invariably fails

⁵ Arnold J.H., & Lewis K.J. (Eds.). (2004). *A Companion to The Book of Margery Kempe*. Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer.

⁶ Mitchell, M. (2005). *The Book of Margery Kempe: Scholarship, Community, and Criticism*. New York, USA: Peter Lang.

⁷ Salih, Sarah. (2004). Margery's Bodies: Piety, Work and Penance. In Arnold J.H., & Lewis K.J. (Eds.), *A Companion to The Book of Margery Kempe* (pp.17-34). Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer.

⁸ Huizinga, J. (2013). *The Waning of the Middle Ages*. New York, USA: Dover Publications.

⁹ Goodman, A.E. (2002). *Margery Kempe and Her World*. London, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

¹⁰ Phillips, Kim. (2004). Margery Kempe and the Ages of Woman. In Arnold J.H., & Lewis K.J. (Eds.), *A Companion to The Book of Margery Kempe* (pp.17-34). Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer.

¹¹ Goodman, A.E. (2002). *Margery Kempe and Her World* (pp. 56-77). London, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

to appreciate the contribution of her own provocations.

Whether to save souls or convince the reader of her sainthood, Margery Kempe is unconventional in her approach. She abandons her actual family and becomes a traveler, embarking on a series of arduous pilgrimages in an effort to accrue the affirmation of high ranking individuals. She craves social and political affiliations with influential members of her community, and collects badges of these relationships as proof of her own worth. She insists that she has a direct line of communication with the Holy Trinity and regales her readers with religious images and personal experiences in support of her claim. She depicts the Holy Trinity as her adopted family, self-identifying as ‘dowtyr’ and ‘weddyd wyfe’ to God (I, 35: 2031), as well as ‘handmayden’ and confidant to Virgin Mary (I, 7: 438).

Essentially, Margery Kempe adopts an unconventional persona to draw the attention, envy, and respect of people she encounters. She sets herself apart as chosen and emphasizes her religious distinctness through eccentric all-white garb, dramatic scenes of violent weeping that disrupt entire congregations, and near constant unsolicited proselytizing. She insists that her sartorial choices and behaviors are based on the instructions of Jesus, which she claims to have personally received. In addition, she proclaims a litany of unsubstantiated achievements, stating, for example, that she orchestrated the safe journeys of her fellow travelers.

Despite all of her efforts, Kempe is unsuccessful in her attempts to validate a claim to sainthood. Even in a medieval world where extremes of emotion and piety are viewed as normative, if not evidence of spiritual integrity¹², the author’s behavior is regarded as disruptive, unsubtle and jejune. The combination of her continual self-aggrandizement, exaggerated expressions of emotion, and sententious interpersonal approach garners a mostly negative response from the public. Kempe’s authenticity is called into question by her contemporaries who repeatedly call her a liar and “a fals feynyd ypocrite” (II, 9: 586-7), and her presence in the community is perceived as meddling, grating and offensive. Still, she remains obstinate in her rejection of societal expectations and, at least for most of the Book, makes little effort to acknowledge or constrain her problematic behavior. As a result, she is unable to influence others’ impressions of her despite her overwhelming desire to do so.

In one example that is both poignant and comical to contemporary readers, Kempe returns to London following a grueling pilgrimage, impoverished and disheveled. She then attempts to disguise herself by covering her face with a handkerchief. Despite her desire for

¹² Huizinga, J. (2013). *The Waning of the Middle Ages*. New York, USA: Dover Publications.

refuge in temporary anonymity, Kempe's reputation as arrogant, inauthentic and hypocritical, precedes her arrival to the city and haunts her social engagements. Kempe becomes the object of amusement and ridicule at a social event where guests reference a prior dinner party at "a good mannys tabyl" during which Kempe is said to have declined red herring in lieu of a higher quality pike under the pretense of a religious directive, exclaiming "A, thu fals flesch, thu woldist now etyn reed heryng, but thu schalt not han thi wille" (II, 9: 565-8). Her behavior becomes a proverbial joke about people who conveniently rely on religion to acquire material comfort.

The joke is not lost on Kempe, who no longer merely suffering from an obsessive preoccupation with her appearance, now at last appears to have gained some awareness of how others perceive her. She reflects that "Ech of hem jangelyd to other, havyn gret game of the inperfecyon of the persone that thes wordys wer seyd of" (II, 9: 583-4). In response to her unpopularity, Kempe makes what seems to be a shrewd tactical pivot. Sensing an opportunity to counter the general negative impression she has left, she tries to turn her failure to advantage and begins to welcome social marginalization, shame, and persecution. She responds to being slandered by perceiving herself as "Jesus-like" and ascribing religious meaning to the shame that she experiences. Also, while religious pilgrimage was at that time fashionable for those who had the financial means, Kempe's peculiar peregrinations are motivated by her need to find a sympathetic community after she has repeatedly burned bridges with entire congregations and towns. She laments, "Thei wold not suffyr hir to abydyn in her chirchys, and therfor sche went fro on chirch to an other that sche schulde not ben tediows onto hem" (II, 10: 607-8).

In nearly every anecdote, Kempe shows evidence of unrelenting interpersonal difficulties, mostly of her own making, as well as considerable inner turmoil and identity confusion. As if copied from the psychiatric Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Kempe's self-portrayal emerges as not only self-serving and grandiose, but also inconsistent; her emotional range is unstable and shallow; her relationships are almost uniformly exploitative and narcissistically-driven; and her behavior is histrionic and arrogant. Aberrant in her time and place, Margery Kempe emerges with the equivalent of narcissistic-histrionic range psychopathology, functioning at the borderline level¹³, with possible evidence of intermittent psychotic episodes. The fragility of Kempe's grandiose self-conception is revealed in her preoccupation with her physical appearance and ruminations over shame-provoking interactions with her contemporaries. It is beyond the scope of this article to propose a particular defensive

¹³ Kernberg, O. F. (1985). *Borderline conditions and pathological narcissism*. Maryland, USA: Rowman & Littlefield.

structure that encapsulates Kempe's behavior, but she does continually misread the motivations of others, possibly projecting on to them her own ambivalent emotions, to which she in turn responds, not surprisingly leaving her peers mystified and contemptuous. This picture of dysfunctional behavior followed by sensitivity to the rejection by others that her behavior has caused may be explained by, or is at least consistent with, a personality disorder within a contemporary psychiatric construct.

Conclusion

There are several key limitations of this article. First, much of the manuscript upon which it is based may have been redacted or altered over the years. Then, it is fundamentally, although unavoidably, speculative to impute motivations and underlying psychodynamics based on the limited range of material included in *The Book*. Finally, without new historical evidence, it is of unclear intrinsic value to apply 21st Century DSM categories, entities that themselves are not without legitimate dispute, to medieval manuscripts. Nevertheless, these limitations do not justify abandoning critical inquiry into *The Book of Margery Kempe* from the psychiatric perspective. Margery Kempe's naive honesty in relating the constant controversy that she inspires as she navigates relationships with others still offers remarkable insights into the impact of a difficult personality on the medieval world.

Free Text

Mamma Chicago Addio!

After two years of my life I was leaving Chicago,

I was leaving Sinatra's kind of town with the overwhelming phallic architecture and the vagina building,

Being witness of the legacy of Lloyd Wright, Sullivan, Van der Rohe, and Goldberg among others,

Listening to the summer concerts with prosciutto, wine and cheese at the Ghery Auditorium,

The cloud or bean as the perfect meeting point,

Viewing the sunrise from my balcony at the East Corncob where one can look at the classical, deco and modern buildings,

Observing the making of *Transformers 7* and *Jupiter rising*,

The eccentric man wearing colorful dresses and costumes at State Bridge,

The remaining bullet hole at Holy Trinity, a living proof of the prohibition era,

Stepping down the stairs from *The Untouchables* at Union Station,

Walking from the Planetarium to Lincoln Park at the edge of the water,

The delightful and calming recorded voice while riding the "L" on the CTA,

Live jazz at Andy's and blues at Rosas, and the multiple music festivals,

The magic 20's atmosphere of the Green Mill with the sculpture of the Greek Goddess, and the long bearded psychedelic saxophonist wearing a tunic,

The fine midwestern cuisine at West loop and their horrific bills,

The burgers of Billy Goat and the hanging picture of Bill Murray,

Occasionally eating a multiple topping hot dog or an Italian beef sandwich,

The latinized Spanish tapas of Café Iberico and its high alcohol content Sangria from a black trash bin,

The deep greasy Irish Chicago pizza at Uno and Due,

Swimming at the Lake without caring of the pollution with flashbacks of the historical jump into the Chicago River,

The people from the suburbs with baseball hats, white socks, running shoes and fanny packs at the Navy Pier,

The conversazioni di italiano at Eataly and español at Panera,

The pizza of Buogiorno's while looking at Chicago's Giralda,

The stones from all over the world's monuments at the magnificent mile,
Living with an "artist" in an illegal loft with a bathroom without ceiling in South Loop,
The multicultural men's wedding at the top floor of the evil John Hancock,
Breakfast at Chinatown with the sculptures that tell your personality,
The Pakistani food of Devon and the Arabic food of Kedzie,
Eating oxtails, ribs, greens and mac'n'cheese in the south of the city,
The "cool" college graduates at Wicker Park and the crazy mood dysregulated female roommates,
The angry and bizarre man of Myopic Books and the traumatized artists' galleries of Flat Iron,
The luminescent hoop-bike rider, a hero for many,
The growing number of hipsters with expensive clothes and haircuts in Logan Square,
Watching wonderful films at the Italian villa's style Music Box Theatre while looking at the blinking stars and the ghost that I felt but never saw,
The Gene Siskel, Davis, Logan and Landmark theatres, the best huts for the winter,
The freaking cold and the clouds of little crystals when throwing boiling water from the balcony,
The people walking around with the North Face jackets,
The deep emotions lost in the silence,
The cheap beer of Rossi's and its nice servers,
The expensive glasses of already open oxidized wine bottles in fancy restaurants,
The parrillas at Tango Sur and its BYOB with the constantly playing album of Gotam Project,
The Vietnamese food of Tank and the other places whose names I will never remember,
Cooking Korean raw meet while being watched by the scary waitress at Chon Sung Ok,
The ceviches and churrascos of Ay Ay Picante,
The Berlin wall at Lincoln Square and the snitzchel and the tall beers with the old German musician playing the accordion for dancers at the Brahaus,
Eating ribs at Smoke Daddy and the veggie Indian food at Cumin,
Getting stuffed at Podhalanka and drinking Stieghl's grapefruit beer,
Filling the stomach with questionable quality tongue tacos at La Pasadita after all the bars were closed,
Singing "taco de pastor" at Big Star and its dangerous micheladas and margaritas,
The marvelous Rainbo club, the only place where I was never carded,
The eclectic Inner town with the Elvis memorabilia,

The unpredictable nights at Beauty Bar,
Smelling flatulences from inconsiderate people with the aggravating factor that tobacco does not neutralize odors any longer,
The pilgrimages to the Sh*t Fountain before and after the night ends,
The rib that I almost broke while attempting to break-dance at Danny's,
The balkanic concerts at Subterranean with the good looking strange women, and varied ones at Empty Bottle with the little dolls' heads art piece,
The 70's disco nights at Double Door and the Warhol party at Milwaukee Avenue,
Going to tiny theatres to watch plays with a total of two or three actors at Bucktown,
The dense traffic in Lake Shore Drive (LSD) during game time,
The green river and the madness of Saint Patrick's Day,
The Bulls still grieving the good 90's and the hockey team in their period of plenty,
The nerds and the gargoyles of the buildings at The University of Chicago with the nice dining room and the futuristic library,
Drinking divine coffee at Divinity School and Intelligentsia, and the controversial and tasteful food from the trucks,
Sneaking to the Oriental Institute during dead work hours to see the mummies,
Always discovering something new on Thursdays at the Art Institute,
The coyotes, rats, rabbits and possums in the alleys,
Making paella for a bunch of people on Sundays,
The weddings in Spain that I missed because I was living abroad,
Watching important soccer games online with the computer at work,
All these experiences I was leaving behind in Chicago,
Looking at the stars and light bugs and listening to the bullfrogs while trying to figure out the neuroanatomy of the unconscious mind during "the trip" in Indiana,
I was leaving the city where I put my first step in this country on the 4th of July of 1999,
The city where I had now turned Christ's age,
One more time I was leaving the city of the forever return,
Taking off to New York City... Mamma Chicago Addio!

Fernando Espi Forcen

Future Issues

- Winter Issue 2015: The Future
- Spring Issue 2015: Food

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