

Panel Discussion of Peter Jeffery's *The Secret Gospel of Mark Unveiled*

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The Diagnostic Question

I became aware of Peter Jeffery's *The Secret Gospel of Mark Unveiled: Imagined Rituals of Sex, Death, and Madness in a Biblical Forgery* (Yale University Press 2007) when a mutual friend suggested that he ask my advice on the question whether Morton Smith had suffered from an untreated emotional or mental illness and whether his belief that he suffered from Bipolar II Disorder was at least plausible. He cited the fact that Smith's writings are replete with mood swings, memory blackouts, angry swipes at Jesus and Christianity, sexual double entendres, insults directed at psychiatry, misrepresentation of shamanism and trance experiences, stampeding evil spirits, and so on. Jeffery added that although he is not a mental health professional, he has had a great deal of experience listening to seriously psychotic persons, and gave a detailed account of this experience. He added that the known tendency of bipolar illness to cause enhanced creativity and high-risk behavior could explain how Smith could write such a skillful forgery and have the temerity to plant the text in a Greek Orthodox monastery near Jerusalem and then publish his "discovery."

He went on to note that because his book was not about Smith but about *The Secret Gospel of Mark* he did not research Smith's personal life and history, nor did he indicate what emotional or mental condition he believed that Smith had. After all, he was not qualified to make a diagnosis and did not have the personal information that a professional would want to have in order to make an informed diagnosis. Furthermore, he did not want to appear to be using mental illness as an insult or to in any way discredit Smith.

Nonetheless, his book had been read by some reviewers as hostile and vituperative, so the question was what he ought to do in light of these reviews. If he were to write an article showing why he felt Smith was suffering from bipolar disorder he would open himself up to the complaint that he is not qualified to

judge. Then should he attempt to find a forensic psychiatrist or other expert who would be willing to write an article or otherwise go on record as saying that Smith's texts at least suggest mental illness? Or is there something else that he could do?

I responded that I would be glad to help out in any way that I could but would first need to read his book and the original text in which Smith published his "discovery." He provided me with copies of the two texts and I read Smith's *The Secret Gospel* before reading Jeffery's *The Secret Gospel of Mark Unveiled* so that I would not be influenced by Jeffery's own interpretation (which I knew only from his initial letter). In my response I made several comments about other matters but then focused on the specific question whether Smith suffered from bipolar disorder.

The Case for Narcissistic Personality Disorder

This is what I wrote: "As I read his *The Secret Gospel* I certainly felt that there was evidence of bipolar disorder (and not, by the way, of paranoid schizophrenia). [I had mentioned this as a theoretical possibility in my earlier correspondence on grounds that these two disorders are often difficult to differentiate.] His accounts of his discovery, followed by uncertainty whether he had discovered anything in fact, sounded like manic or hypomanic phases followed by depressive phases. But as I read your book, and saw the case for Smith himself being the forger developing, I began to wonder that if these accounts were used as the principal evidence that he suffered from bipolar disorder, and these accounts were part of an elaborate scheme to pass off a forgery as authentic, how much credence should be given to these accounts as reflective of his mood swings during the time in question? In positing bipolar disorder (unless one had a lot of supporting evidence from others sources) one might be the victim of a false representation of his moods. If someone else were the forger, then this would not be an issue.

"In any event, as I read further in your book, especially chapter 11 ("The One Who Knows"), I found myself wondering if another psychiatric diagnosis would be more credible, namely, that of narcissistic personality disorder. In fact, you comment on the possibility that "the one who knows" was himself, and that you can imagine him congratulating himself on "his own creative brilliance in a narcissistic mental mirror" (p. 243). But especially compelling to me was the very fact that his "discovery" enabled him to exercise considerable control over others in the academy (forcing them to choose sides for or against his discovery), and the fact that they would have reason to feel abused by him (as a key characteristic of narcissistic personality disorder is lack of empathy for others).

"What I am suggesting is, of course, based solely on the evidence provided in the two books. But, in a sense, this is really the point, as it is based on Smith's professional behavior in this celebrated episode involving the purported discovery of the letter, and the patient's professional behavior is a major focus of

the psychoanalytic literature on narcissistic personality disorder—i.e., how narcissistic personalities treat their work associates, members of their professional community, and the like.

“One such theme is the lack of empathy for others (diagnostic criterion #7 in the *Dsm-IV*). As you noted, there is an evident lack of empathy in his 1949 *Journal of Pastoral Care* article, and this lack of empathy continues throughout the forgery episode (i.e., little concern for the fact that his professional colleagues are confused, bickering among themselves, putting their own professional reputations on the line, etc.). Also, as you point out, he ridicules his professional colleagues. I was especially struck by his suggestion that [Paul] Achtemeier’s negative review served his own professional ends, the sort of thing that a narcissistic personality would perhaps recognize in himself: “Though worthless as criticism, it cannot confidently be described as ‘useless.’ It probably pleased [Joseph] Fitzmyer, who was then editor of *The Journal of Biblical Literature*, and thus may have helped Achtemeier get the secretaryship of the Society of Biblical Literature. That both names rhyme with ‘liar’ is a curious coincidence” (pp. 141-141 of *The Secret Gospel*).

“But there’s something else that prompts me to think that Smith was a narcissistic personality—this is the fact that he has Jesus reject the three women, one of whom was a mother (whether of the youth or of Jesus is left unclear). The psychoanalytic literature on narcissistic personality disorder is replete with references to its roots in inadequate mothering of the young boy and of the need for psychoanalysts to find a way to provide adequate “mothering” for their male patients.

“The fact that Smith was in his early forties when he made his “discovery” may also be significant, as it is usually surmised that one needs to have experienced two or three major “narcissistic injuries” (major professional disappointments, personal slights from leaders in the profession, etc.) before being a reasonably good candidate for analysis, and this tends to imply that the patient is normally in his late thirties or early forties.”

I went on to mention a book that I have had in my possession since the mid-1960s, allegedly an autobiographical writing by Friedrich Nietzsche titled *My Sister and I* (Boar’s Head Press 1951). I noted that the introduction by its “discoverer” and “translator” Dr. Oscar Levy (which begins with a quip by Oscar Wilde (accusing George Moore “of conducting his education in public”) “seems deliberately designed to raise questions about the text’s authenticity” and that the publisher’s foreword offers “a rather doubtful explanation for why the manuscript has disappeared” (see the appendix on *My Sister and I* at the end of this discussion paper).

Was There a Possible Boyhood Identification with Harry Houdini?

In a brief follow-up letter I wrote: “In light of your argument that Smith’s ‘discovery’ reflects themes that were current at the time he “discovered” the letter, I wonder if Smith might have considered himself akin to Harry Houdini, who disappeared in 1826, when Smith would have been eleven years old, and that the forgery was, for him, a sort of elaborate magic trick (the work of an “illusionist”). The “disappearance” of the letter, Smith’s instructions that his papers were to be destroyed when he died his writing of a book about Jesus as a magician (who created “illusions”)—all this suggests that he may well have been influenced by the Houdini mystique when he was a boy. This interest in the illusionist may have been normalized for a time for him when he was performing the Eucharist (bread and wine as the true body and blood of Christ) but then when he ceased to function as a priest, it could have taken a new direction, and the idea that he himself could create a stunning “illusion” may have entered his mind. In effect, *he* is the magician, and the justification for doing so may well be that this, after all, was what Jesus himself was” (see Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician: Charlatan or Son of God* [1978].)

The Fact That Biblical Scholars Know Very Little About Contemporary Psychiatry

At this point Peter Jeffery provided me with e-mail discussion and reviews of his book. My reading of the these discussions and reviews prompted me to observe in a letter to him: “Biblical scholars know very little about contemporary psychology and psychiatry, and therefore one is at a distinct disadvantage when one seeks to discuss the role that Morton Smith may have played in the creation of what many reputable scholars consider to be a manuscript of doubtful credibility. The e-mail discussion uses language like “mad” or “deranged” in relation to Smith himself (and “lunatics” in reference to early pro-Christian apologists and anti-Christian polemicists) and [one reviewer] suggests that you were trying to prejudice your readers “with evidence of bad character,” “the type of person who would commit a fraud,” and suggests that “Startling disparagement and dubious allegations of deceit occur throughout the book, but the attacks become disturbing when Jeffery attempts to *get inside Smith’s head*” (my emphasis). How does one respond to this characterization of your book to scholars who use generalizations and colloquialisms like ‘mad,’ ‘deranged,’ ‘bad character,’ ‘getting inside [another’s] head’? Clearly, they know very little about contemporary psychiatric terms and their meanings. I would assume that those who are satisfied with the vague generalization that Smith was “mad” or “deranged” would not be especially interested to learn that he suffered from “narcissistic personality disorder” or “bipolar disorder” and all others would view such diagnoses as character assassination, etc. When a psychiatrist took the stand in the O. J. Simpson trial and testified that he believed Simpson suffered from “narcissistic personality disorder,” Simpson’s lawyers joked about his testimony over lunch, observing that they, too, were narcissists. I can imagine that if one made a case for Smith suffering from “narcissistic personality disorder,” a disorder that might lead him to believe that he could in fact get away

with a forgery, and that, in any case, he will be vindicated even if the letter is proven to have been a forgery, the biblical scholars would respond much as Simpson's lawyers did."

In a letter to a colleague in my field, I mentioned the fact that I had read Smith's *The Secret Gospel* and Jeffery's *The Secret Gospel of Mark Unveiled* and that I had come to the conclusion that "Smith was a narcissistic personality who (1) believed that he had the intelligence that would enable him to stay one step ahead of his colleagues in academia; (2) hit on the idea of the hoax when he was narcissistically vulnerable (having lost his teaching position at Brown University); (3) demonstrated the lack of empathy common to narcissists, as especially reflected in the fact that those who came to his defense were the ones who were hurt, personally and professionally, by the hoax; and (4) was unable to confess openly that he had perpetrated a fraud on the academy and thus resorted to dissembling and covert confessions."

I added that I had recently read Smith's popular version of the "discovery" of the secret gospel in *The Secret Gospel* and mentioned Smith's article in *The Journal of Pastoral Care* in 1949 "in which he advised a young man who had homosexual desires to control them, then later seems to have reversed this view with his contention that Jesus had a baptismal ritual which was implicitly homosexual in nature." Finally, I mentioned my "theory" that "the forgery was an attempt to create an illusion worthy of Harry Houdini, whom Smith would probably have known about when he was a young boy," and cited psychoanalyst Adam Phillips' *Houdini's Box: The Art of Escape* (Pantheon Books 2001). I noted the fact that "in addition to his discussion of Houdini as an escape artist, Phillips discusses the case of a man who wants to escape from women (which is exactly what Smith contends Jesus, as represented by the secret gospel, also desires)." (Incidentally, the dust jacket of Phillips' book claims: "Whether we are getting away from something or getting away with something, we cannot describe ourselves without also describing what we need to escape from and what we want to escape to. . . . Adam Phillips reminds us why people often feel most alive in the very moment of escape" (emphasis added).

Humor Gone Awry

My colleague responded that the hoax was an example of "bad humor" and not the "good humor" that Heinz Kohut has identified as one of the features of the *transformation* of the narcissistic personality that occasionally occurs in middle-to-late adulthood.

In a subsequent letter to Peter Jeffery, I indicated that I had had a chance to read Stephen Carlson's *The Gospel Hoax* and noted that "it was useful in the sense that it provided further confirmation for me that there is no question that the Mar Saba letter was written by Morton Smith himself." I also alluded to a story that he had related to me (a comment Smith made to another New

Testament scholar that he, as a boy, feigned sleepwalking) and suggested that it provides “compelling evidence that Smith learned early in life to solve problems through feigning and pranks, and the fact that he viewed these earlier pranks as funny certainly indicates that he had a rather perverse sense of humor, the very perverseness that would prompt him to think, at least initially, that the Mar Saba letter would also be a great joke to play on his professional colleagues. I have come to suspect that he may not have realized at the time how damaging this joke would prove to be but that he was in too deep and felt he couldn’t make a clean breast of it.”

I suggested that Smith’s sense of humor was merely “perverse,” but Jeffery goes further, noting that the letter of “Clement” may have begun as a purposeful, even a wistful, attempt to set the historical record ‘straight’ (or rather ‘gay’),” it “quickly fell afoul of Smith’s nasty sense of humor, which in turn became the transparent mask of his considerable rage—I suspect without his fully realizing or understanding what was happening” (p. 243). In the concluding paragraphs of *The Secret Gospel of Mark Unveiled*, Jeffery also suggests that if Smith had had “a Christian understanding of liturgy,” he may never have played this prank on his professional colleagues:

The problem is not that Smith disagreed with the Christian understanding of liturgy, but that for all his learning he seems never even to have heard of it. As a priest in 1949, struggling with the counseling of parishioners’ sexual problems, he shows no knowledge of the claim that attentive participation in worship can help make burdens light. If he had learned from the Mar Saba monks that reverent attention to the liturgy can make keeping the commandments possible, he might never have gone back there to plant an obscene gospel in their library. If “the divine Feast of love” had helped him see all people as his brothers and sisters, and become “gentler, kindlier in dealing with others, friendlier, quieter” [here Jeffery quotes Nikolai Gogol’s meditations on the divine liturgy], he might not have carried out a plan to embarrass so many of his professional colleagues, or treated those who questioned his discovery so uncharitably. And if he had understood the Christian liturgy better, he might have been more reluctant to publish such absurd claims about its origins (pp. 250-251).

Alternative Diagnoses

Several months later I had a brief correspondence with another colleague who actually knew Morton Smith to a certain extent. I mentioned the fact that

another correspondent suspects that Smith was manic-depressive (bipolar) and that I believed this could very well be true (as Smith's account of his "discovery" of the letter suggested mood swings characteristic of bipolar disorder but that the very fact this account was probably fictional (and thus untrustworthy as a report of his emotional state at the time) had led me to guess that a diagnosis of narcissistic personality disorder is perhaps more compelling. I noted that "there is something rather narcissistic about someone who decides to flummox the professional society of which he is a member, and with seeming disregard for those who were hurt by it (especially those who have defended the authenticity of the document)."

My correspondent replied that from his own observations of Smith at professional society meetings he came to believe that he "was always *playing around* the edges of a mild case of psychosis" (emphasis added). He went on to suggest that he does not think Smith could be classified as having a "borderline personality disorder" but was one of those sorts of individuals "who pop across the boundary into some degree of active psychosis every once in a while, particularly under stress, but in any case, operate from birth on with an alternative model of reality in the back of their heads, and that is why their initiatives are always situationally inappropriate to some degree and they always, therefore, tend to think the world is out to get them. Their notions of reality just do not mesh with reality. Nothing ever quite works for them. *They are toweringly narcissistic, sure only they see reality, cannot put themselves into other persons' feeling worlds, or view themselves objectively, and when they are uncomfortable somebody else is always to blame*" (my emphasis). My correspondent provides support for my claim that Smith had narcissist qualities but not that he suffered from narcissistic personality disorder (as he believes that Smith's aberrations were *characterological*). At the same time, his suggestion that Smith "was always playing around the edges of a mild case of psychosis" supports Jeffery's bipolar hypothesis because bipolar disorder typically involves psychotic episodes (especially when the individual is in a manic state). And although Smith's account of his "discovery" of the secret letter is itself untrustworthy, we can imagine that when he was engaged in the writing of the forgery he was, in fact, in a manic state that bordered on psychosis.

It may well be the case that a final settling the diagnostic question in the case of Morton Smith will prove to be as elusive as the question whether the Mar Saba letter is a forgery. This conclusion reminds me of a joke which, unlike the joke Morton Smith played on his colleagues, is perfectly harmless:

In a small town in Russia, people brought their complaints to the rabbi to settle their differences. One day, two men were before the rabbi. He listened to the first man and said, "You are right." He listened to the second man and said, "You are right." When the two men left, the rabbi's wife, who was listening from the next room, said to him, "You're supposed to be a judge! They

can't both be right!" He thought for a moment and then replied, "You know what? You're right, too."

We're not told what the dispute itself was all about. It could have been over a factual question (such as who owns a piece of land) or a moral question (such as whether one man cheated the other man). But the rabbi was unable to rule in favor of one or the other, so his wife was right to point out that, in the context of rendering a judgment, her husband had, in effect, abdicated his role as a judge. On the other hand, it is also possible that the rabbi should not have agreed with his wife that both men could not be right for, conceivably, they both had a rightful claim and, if so, the rabbi did not abdicate his role as a judge, appearances notwithstanding. But unless his agreement with his wife was merely prudential (e.g., he didn't want to have to argue with her), it's hard not to conclude that he's ill-equipped temperamentally to be a judge because he is unable to say anyone is wrong, which is something judges are required to do. The rabbi is not alone: we are not professional judges, but we have a responsibility to distinguish true from false and right from wrong, whether we're discussing science, ethics, politics, religion, morality, etc.

And this, I believe, is what Peter Jeffery's book is fundamentally about: distinguishing true from false and right from wrong. This being so, his reviewers' allegations that he was "out to get Morton Smith" are especially disturbing. In fact, I sensed the very opposite in the course of our correspondence. Our shared personal experiences of listening to and commiserating with troubled individuals were especially evident in our correspondence around Morton Smith's *Journal of Pastoral Care* article and our shared intuition that in the article Smith was indirectly struggling with his own issues in his account of his counseling of another young man, a theme that reemerges in the account of Jesus' intimate encounter with the naked young man in the secret gospel. No, Peter Jeffery was not "out to get Morton Smith." He was concerned, as the dust jacket says of Adam Phillips' book, to discover "why people often feel most alive in the very moment of escape."

Appendix

The Case of Friedrich Nietzsche's *My Sister and I*

Dr. Oscar Levy, the alleged translator of Nietzsche's *My Sister and I*, says in his introduction to the original 1951 publication that he first learned of the existence of the manuscript of *My Sister and I* in the spring of 1921, "a period of both triumph and depression in my life." He had completed most of his work of translating Nietzsche into English but knew that his reputation had suffered so severely during the recent war that there was little prospect of "a return to reason in the consideration of his doctrine during my lifetime" (p. 9). It was at that time that a young American asked for an opportunity to discuss with him a newly discovered autobiographical work by Nietzsche. He proceeded to tell how Nietzsche wrote the manuscript while he was in an asylum in Jena, entrusted it to a patient the morning the patient was being released, asking him to take it to a publisher. The patient, however, was semi-literate, so he did not know the value of the document, and did not follow Nietzsche's instructions. Instead, he would

occasionally joke about the “comic herr-professor who would stride up and down the place identifying himself with a whole string of famous persons from Napoleon to God.”

Many years later, the man’s son, “out of sheer whim,” took the manuscript with him when he immigrated to Canada. His employer in Canada (a merchant and ex-clergyman) was interested in old books and manuscripts, so he showed the manuscript to him and the ex-clergyman paid him \$100 for it. Curious but also suspicious, the ex-clergyman compared the manuscript with published specimens of Nietzsche’s handwriting and concluded that it was authentic. Shortly thereafter, the ex-clergyman took his wife with him on a business trip to England and the young American met them on the trip over. A few weeks after their arrival in London the ex-clergyman called on the young American to help him with “an extraordinary difficulty” involving his wife, help that would require the young man to risk his personal liberty in order to make possible her return to Canada with her husband. When the young American expressed his unwillingness to take the risk for a fellow passenger he barely knew, the ex-clergyman said he would repay him by giving him the Nietzsche manuscript. Levy goes on to relate that the young American asked him to translate the manuscript for his usual price and concludes his introduction with the observation that he doubted whether the young man would be able to find a publisher during his, Levy’s, lifetime. The introduction is dated March 1927.

(A *Wikipedia* article on Oscar Levy (1867-1946) identifies him as a German-Jewish physician and writer, also known as a scholar of Friedrich Nietzsche, to whom he was “converted” in 1905 or 1906 via a patient. He oversaw the translation of Nietzsche’s writings from 1909-1913. He left Germany in 1894 and settled in England. Despite his support for the British side when WWI broke out, he lived in Germany and Switzerland from 1915-1920 and then returned to England. He was deported as an alien in 1921 after writing for the eccentric George Pitt-Rivers in an inflammatory political pamphlet and moved to France. Later he returned to England. The article states that “His was a paradoxical life, of self-exile and exile, and of writing on and (as often taken) against Judaism.”)

Levy’s introduction is followed by “The Publisher’s Belated Explanation with Which the Publisher Answers Certain Critics” in the 1965 edition of the book in my possession. As this is the fifteenth printing, I do not know in which printing the belated explanation, which is undated, began to appear. The publisher (who does not identify himself by name) explains that he did not consider this explanation necessary when the first edition of the book was published because it was “a misadventure of the publisher—not a part of the book” (p. 15). He explains that shortly after Dr. Levy had sent him the translation of the manuscript, his offices at 160 Fifth Avenue, New York City, were visited by agents for the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, the occasion for this visitation being an edition of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, which they confiscated, “along with tons of other books, manuscripts and records” (p. 15). He retired from publishing and was away from New York for some years. When he returned

and resumed publishing he began to inventory the material that had been stored in the warehouse and his wife discovered “brittle, vermin-eaten carbon copies of the translation and the *Introduction*, both having been further mutilated by careless handling. Much of the work required reconstruction in my office” (p. 16). He adds that he put several people to work on research at the New York Public Library and that some of the fruits of these researches he incorporated into the footnotes to the text, then adds, “These footnotes—inserted by me hastily and without corroboration—have caused much misunderstanding” (p. 16).

Anticipating that reviewers would want to know the whereabouts of the original manuscript, he “prepared for them a statement, the gist of which is in the above paragraphs. In all instances but one the explanation was accepted and the book reviewed on its merits” (p. 16). The exception was “one Walter Kaufman, who teaches German at Princeton University and is himself the author of a monograph on Nietzsche” (p. 16; Kaufman, born in Germany in 1921, taught at Princeton from 1947-1980, the year of his death; he converted from the Lutheran Church to Judaism in his boyhood over doubts that Jesus was divine). Evidently Kaufman had raised the question why it took so long for Levy’s 1927 manuscript to be published (the first edition of *My Sister and I* was published in 1951) because the publisher goes on to relate that he sent Kaufman a bound copy of his magazine *Beau* which contained an announcement of a digest of *My Sister and I* to be published under the title *The Dark Surmise: Concerning Friedrich Nietzsche and His Sister*. He notes, parenthetically, that Kaufman never troubled to return the magazine. He goes on to accuse Kaufman of “ignoring this proof that I had the book as far back as 1927” in the first review of *My Sister and I* in a Hearst newspaper. Also, in response to the publisher’s flattering letter regarding his book on Nietzsche, Kaufman “had the colossal conceit and impudence to claim that not only was *My Sister and I* not Nietzsche’s but that a few of the ideas seemed to derive from himself. If not for the 1927 announcement he might have claimed that Nietzsche’s very confession of incest with his sister, Elisabeth, was based on a parenthetical remark in his own monograph, to the effect that Elisabeth felt she was the only woman her brother ever loved” (p. 17).

The publisher refers to a subsequent article by Kaufman on *My Sister and I* in which Kaufman “characterized references to Detroit, to English Nietzscheans, to Social Darwinists and our Faustian age as anachronistic; traces the conception of the priestess of Isis to D. H. Lawrence’s *The Man Who Died*; he all but stands on his head to deny Nietzsche in death as the German professors so stubbornly denied him during his life” (p. 17). He concludes his “explanation” with this comment: “Kaufman’s whole attack (except that portion which is directed at me personally and is unworthy of mention) is based on an error in Dr. Levy’s Introduction, another in one of my footnotes to the text, and still another which was inserted into both footnotes and text by one of my staff” (pp. 17-18). There are footnotes explaining each of these errors.

What we have, here, is a situation in which Nietzsche’s original manuscript appears to be lost (presumably in the possession of the translator Dr. Oscar Levy

who is no longer living, having died in 1946), the translation manuscript is seriously mutilated, and a reputable scholar, Gordon Kaufman (who, like Peter Jeffery, was a Princeton University professor) has made some very persuasive arguments against its authenticity (including the twenty-four year delay in the publication of Levy's translation and various anachronisms in the text) to which the publisher responds by impugning Kaufman's integrity and motives.

There is an intriguing interchange in Levy's preface that may have bearing on *The Secret Gospel*. Levy says that he asked the young American, "But how could the clergyman know that it was a Nietzsche manuscript." The young American corrects him, "Ex-clergyman," adding, "There's an important difference. The moment his German employee mentioned Jena and the mad herr-professor, our ex-clergyman exercised the chief intellectual ingredient of the ex-clergyman, curiosity and suspicion" (p. 12; notice the possible play on "the mad hare"). It is not inconceivable that Morton Smith, also an ex-clergyman (the dust jacket of Jeffery's book refers to him as "an estranged Episcopal priest"), acquired a copy of *My Sister and I* sometime between its publication in 1951 and the discovery of the Mar Saba letter in 1958.

There is also a potentially relevant declaration at the beginning of chapter 9 of *My Sister and I*: "What we cannot have by faith we will have by magical means: *Therefore I have given myself to magic*" (p. 163). I have already referred to Harry Houdini, the escape artist, and the possibility that Smith identified with him as a boy, but it may also be noted that Smith grew up in an age of pranksterism. William V. Rauscher's *S. S. Adams: High Priest of Pranks and Merchant of Magic* (Oxford, CT: 1878 Press Company, 2002) reports that S.S. Adams, who grew up in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, the son of Danish immigrants, invented sneezing powder in 1904 (at the age of 25) and the joy-buzzer in 1928. Other inventions and products of the S.S. Magic and Novelty Company (located in Neptune, New Jersey) included the dribble-glass, razzberry cushion, invisible ink, exploding dance bombs, etc. His catalogs advertised a bag of magic tricks and a package of magical card decks with 125 card tricks for "ages 10 and up" (see also my article "The Melancholy Boy and the Religion of Humor: The Case of S. S. Adams" in *Pastoral Psychology* [2009] 58: 15-25). Interestingly enough, William Rauscher, who describes himself as "an aspiring young magician during the 1940's" was the rector of Christ Episcopal Church in Woodbury, New Jersey, from 1960-1996. Clearly, Rauscher was able to reconcile his identities as magician and priest, perhaps because he possessed the Christian understanding of the liturgy to which Jeffery points in the concluding paragraphs of his book and thus did not confuse the one with the other.

Finally, it is worth noting that when I was teaching at the University of Chicago in the late 1960s, I and my brother Walter, a religious studies professor at the University of California at Santa Barbara, edited a book titled *The Religious Personality* (Wadsworth Press 1970) comprised of excerpts from the autobiographical writings of twenty-two religious individuals. These excerpts were divided into four sections: the resigned self, the chastised self, the fraternal

self, and the aesthetic self. The Nietzsche selection, located in the aesthetic self section, was composed of excerpts from *Ecce Homo* and *My Sister and I*. Our editors' introduction notes that both autobiographical texts were written "in a period of disorientation," and goes on to say that Nietzsche "In these writings, he struggles with the decadence of European man, recognizing his own enslavement to that decadence. He recounts his anguished but ultimately unsuccessful efforts to regain his 'lost integrity.' And he views his incarceration in the asylum as the final absurdity, for he alone had struggled to rise above the sickness and spiritual poverty of his age. In these writings, therefore, he completes the personal confession and trenchant social critique begun in his earlier writings" (p. 308).

I recall mentioning to my brother that Walter Kaufman, considered the leading Nietzsche scholar at the time, questioned the authenticity of *My Sister and I*, but added that I thought it was worth the risk of including it in our book. In retrospect, I think I was influenced by the claim that Nietzsche entrusted his manuscript to a fellow patient, as I had been a student chaplain at St. Elizabeths Hospital in Washington, D.C., and had developed a great deal of empathy for mental patients who had good reason to believe that they could not trust family members (in this case, "Nietzsche's" claim in the text that he could not entrust anything he wrote to the care of his mother and sister).

Diagnostic Criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder

A pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following: (1) has a grandiose sense of self-importance (e.g., exaggerates achievements and talents, expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements); (2) is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love; (3) believes that he or she is "special" and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people (or institutions); (4) requires excessive admiration; (5) has a sense of entitlement, i.e., unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations; (6) is interpersonally exploitative, i.e. takes advantage of others to achieve his or her own ends; (7) lacks empathy: is unwilling to recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others; (8) is often envious of others or believes that others are envious of him or her; (9) shows arrogant, haughty behaviors or attitudes.

From *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders—DSM-IV* (American Psychiatric Association 1994, p, 661.