

***ET. 32. Authoritarian method: 'I didn't want to see'.
A psychologist's blind spot.***

We pause from a logical standpoint with Torey Hayden, *L' enfant qui ne parlait pas, Paris*, 1992 (orig.: *Ghost Girl* (1991)). Torey Hayden passes for a psychologist specializing in problem children. In 1987, in Pecking, near Falls River (Canada), she finds herself in a class of four children, - three boys and a girl, Jade Ekdahl, main subject of her book.

Jade.

The writer typifies. While the three boys made noise on the first day, Jade behaved as if the class was normal: without being ordered to do so, she took out her math and reading notebooks, completed classtime tasks, and submitted them for correction. Whereupon she practiced spelling. Sometimes she would glance in the direction of her Hayden whose presence usually left Jade utterly indifferent.

Still contact.

After many attempts, a period of growing mutual confidentiality began. Especially after long class hours. - Immediately a number of possible explanations arise in writer's mind. (o.c., 73/74; 123/124; 138/139; 147)

1. Split personality.

Hayden: "I can't bring myself to believe such a thing".

2. Hallucinations (delusions). Hayden: "I don't like this hypothesis at all".

3. Inventions - Hayden: "What would Jade invent such a thing for?"

4. Abuses at home. - Hayden: It doesn't seem out of the question.

5. Sexual abuse. - Hayden: "some of Jade's responses show a sexual tinge".

A few details. Jade stated that one could obtain milk by sucking on a penis. Little imagination is needed to think of sperm when thinking of 'milk'. A child of eight years of age cannot friends such a thought alone". (o.c., 108)

In an after-school talk, Jade said : "Ellie took a knife. She plopped it down Tashee's throat. Blood splattered out. Ellie caught it in a pouch" (o.c., 124).

Satanism. Others than writer posit satanism with pedophilia and child sacrifice. To which Hayden: "Did one believe Jade? Had they actually killed a child and drunk its blood? How could Jade know the taste of blood?"

Now pay close attention to what the writer says: "I believe in 'evil' but not in 'an entity'" (note: That entity is Satan revered by Satanists as an invisible person). Oh! Finally, I know too little there (o.c., 149).

Conclusion: an authority argument! She sticks to what the psychologists and psychiatrists believe.

Fair enough, to some extent anyway.

O.c. 2/8 Hayden states that to believe in Satanist practices requires a certain openness of mind. "If Hugh (note: an acquaintance who knew occultism) had not discovered in that specialized bookstore, (...) I would never have thought of Satanism even when Jade spoke to me of the cat in the blood. This was partly due to my ignorance on the subject". (o.c., 219). One sees it: Hayden is honest enough to admit her knowledge gap.

Axiomatic-university education.

Hayden immediately continues, "There was a further dose of blindness in me: I was accustomed to interpreting all behavior in terms of psychology or psychiatry. Whereby any other interpretation was excluded". (ibid.).

In other words: rationalist scientism with its dogmatic exclusivism! University rationalism possesses the truth in an exclusive way. The prevailing axioms are pushed through as the only valid ones.

An axiomatic refusal.

Immediately Hayden adds, "Further, there was in me without doubt a certain refusal: I did not want to see." (ibid). This she tried to justify with university jargon: flying saucers, the snowman, the Loch Ness monster, - occultism, - all that is modern folklore".

Career concerns.

"Since I was still young and saw my career threatened, I underwent the pressure of professionalism." (o.c., 220). One gropes here with one's bare finger at the so-called freedom of thought and inquiry in the established intelligentsia.

The bottom line.

Hayden leaves the school. Because the police took the child's accusations seriously: they at least investigate thoroughly. For example, they did excavations in the Ekdahl's garden, turned the barn upside down looking for Tashee's remains. This police search took weeks.

(1). *The psychological explanation.*

During all those weeks of police work and meetings of the social assistants and health experts, the purely psychological-scientific explanation was generally accepted as the correct one (o.c., 216).

(2). *With neglect of some of the facts.*

Hayden, o.c. 217, frankly confesses: some of the data - labelled by her as minor facts remained psychologically inexplicable. For example, the fact that Jade did not want to be photographed. Also the fact that (when such material was little or not at all known) she skillfully handled magnetoscope and comescope (opm.: camcorder). Also her familiarity with "a cross within a circle", et al.

"Taking Jade's stories seriously inevitably led to the repositioning of ritual abuse (o.c., 217) with torture by a group.

Not an isolated case.

O.c., 218 says Hayden that in the last ten years (note: 1891/1991) a considerable number of children have told scenes that are surprisingly similar. O.c., 221, Hayden admits that one has discovered childish scenes.

Righteousness Method.

The second unscientific method that C.S. Peirce denounced at the time was called the righteousness method: every problem is treated by those in authority in a way that they have preconceived.

Called by a traditional name: "authority statement". This has the advantage of making the method of willfulness impossible in some cases, i.e. where an individual willfully wants to make something true without sufficient reasons or grounds.

But it very much hinders any free examination of the data. In this sense it is thoroughly unscientific, if only because, to save itself, it deliberately neglects part of the data and leaves it unexplained. Without sufficient reason!

Yet this is not surprising, it is modern tradition: already Galileo, out of prejudice against astrology, did not even want to investigate whether the moon caused the tides, neglecting data and interpretations of those data in order to 'save' his axiomatics.

Which the rationalist historiography demurely conceals.