Clarion Review

General

Herphilisneurolysis
Oswald Mould
Trafford Publishing
978-1-4251-3187-6
Two Stars (out of Five)

Through our forays into philosophy and the arts and our continuous advancement of science and technology, humanity appears to have evolved from savagery into the saviors of our own species. Man has embarked upon many altruistic endeavors, but if examined closely there is still a beast within our souls, a darker side hidden under a thin cloak of civilization. Cicero said, "Man is his own worst enemy." One only has to look at some of the legions of atrocities humans have committed upon each other for Cicero's statement to be proven true.

For example, allegedly, the United Stated army purposely infected Native Americans with blankets contaminated with smallpox. Later our government infected the famed Tuskegee airmen with STDs without their consent. In 2010 it was revealed that our government purposely infected impoverished Guatemalans with STDs in the 1970s. During the Cold War, to test the side effects to prolonged exposure to radiation, developmentally disabled children in institutions were fed radioactive breakfast cereal. Such inhumane acts seem more like the subjects of a Dean Koontz horror novel or a Robin Cook medical thriller rather than historical facts. Moreover, events like these most likely still occur in the clandestine darkness below humanity's laws and conscience.

At first glance, *Herphilisneurolysis* may appear to be far-fetched even for a work of fiction. In comparison to the sickening bizarreness of our reality, just about anything can happen and that includes the chilling premise of Oswald Mould's frightening novel. He writes, "Back in the late 1930s the Kremlin begins receiving reports of an epidemic among the penal population. They became concerned when the military doctors documented disease that was sexually transmitted and was unresponsive to any treatment…The Russians knew that they had the ultimate covert weapon but they had to test it in an uncontrolled environment." Mould goes on to explain how the Russians infected the United States after the embarrassing Cuban missile

crisis. Fast forward two decades and the United States, as well as the rest of the world, are battling a killer STD that cannot be controlled with condoms or any known cure.

The author's experience as a registered nurse has added an element of accuracy in some areas of the novel, especially his descriptive passages about his characters' excruciating demise from the decimating disease. He writes, "The viral monster had no cures nor any successful treatment modality. Because of the intense continuous pain…doctors took to treating it with a variety of barbiturates, narcotics, antiviral medications…Once the pathogen migrated to the Central Nervous System and began feeding on the spinal cord on its way to the brain the patient had no chance of survival." Jennifer, one of Mould's stronger characters, contracts the disease after being raped. Following a dormant period the pathogen begins to lay waste to Jennifer: "Her skin had taken a dusty mottled scaly reptilian hue coupled with a malodorous stench…"

Herphilisneurolysis contains some brilliant original ideas and heroic and evil characters that draw the reader into the narrative. Unfortunately, the writing abounds with grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. However that may be, through his strong characters, research, and insight, Mould has written a novel conspicuous with the evil that humanity perpetuates on itself. He exposes the gray areas of morality that dominate a supposedly black and white society.

Lee Gooden