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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★★ GENERAL FICTION

I Am the Antichrist

Kostyantyn Sitalo
CreateSpace
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Presenting itself as the first to drive a nail “into the stinking coffin of your rotten Christian religion,” *I Am the Antichrist*, by Kostyantyn Sitalo, angrily and disjointedly attempts to portray Christianity as a monolithic blight on the human race. In between black-and-white illustrations chosen for their provocative content rather than their relevance to the text, Sitalo accuses priests of being self-serving pedophiles corrupted by false teachings and a thirst for power.

In today’s pop-shock world where humor is evaluated based on its ability to offend universally, it’s impossible to read *I Am the Antichrist* and not think it a freshman attempt to join the satirical ranks of Seth MacFarlane’s *Family Guy* or Howard Stern’s wildly popular and crass radio show. However, satire, like all forms of humor and commentary, relies on self-awareness. Without it, the satirist ceases to function as an outside observer and becomes an extension or an example of the very absurdity held up for examination.

Like the incoherent ranting of a child throwing a tantrum, the narrator of *I Am the Antichrist* demonstrates no sense of self-awareness. Rather, he actively seeks to emulate the very thing he so venomously wants to abase. When laying the foundations of a new belief system to replace Christianity, the narrator, like the fundamentalists of Westboro Baptist Church, claims that natural disasters are retribution for vice, that homosexuals and other deviants will face corporal punishment, and that the dead will rise. And while decrying Christian rituals and prayers, the narrator explains that truth can be revealed by tying a trinket to a string and holding it over a list of answers when asking a question (the way it swings indicates the appropriate answer).

Since Sitalo fails to allow the narrator, or reader, to see that this seduction by the very thing the book seeks to destroy is intentional, the reader is not able to determine whether *I Am the Antichrist* was perhaps written as satire. If that is the case, the book is lacking in both logic and substance. The former could be fixed by creating complete thoughts out of the story’s many disconnected and unattributed quotes. And the narration could be elevated beyond *ad hominem* to strong, sustainable arguments. The problem of substance would require the author to show how his proposed new religion is intrinsically different from Christianity.

Be it satire or serious endeavor, *I Am the Antichrist* is a book published before its time. That is, a book published before its author knew what type of book he wanted to write.
JOSEPH THOMPSON (November 8, 2011)

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