



Satanism and Witchcraft: The Classic Study of Medieval Superstition

Jules Michelet, Alfred Richard Allinson (Translator)

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Long out of print, Jules Michelet's classic study of medieval superstition has been reprinted in this edition to bring the general public's attention to one of the truly great sociological works of modern times.

Michelet brilliantly recreates the Europe of the Middle Ages, the centuries of fierce religious intolerance, the Inquisition and the auto-da-fe.

He depicts the feudal barons, the great manors, the fiefs and serfs... and the witches, hobgoblins and wizards of whom the masses lived in mortal fear.

Michelet draws flaming word pictures of the witch hunts, the Black Masses, the reign of Satan, and the weird rites of the damned. Here is the age of unbridled pleasure and sensuality, of luxury beyond imagination and squalor beyond endurance. Here is the time when a girl might be accused of witchcraft merely if she were young and pretty and did not survive the test of immersion in water or boiling oil. Here is the day of beatings, floggings, tortures and summary decapitations.

Encyclopedia Britannica called the book, "The most important work on medieval superstition yet written." It is indeed one of the great works on the Age of Darkness.

Satanism and Witchcraft: The Classic Study of Medieval Superstition Details

Date : Published February 19th 1992 by Kensington Publishing Corporation (first published 1862)

ISBN : 9780806500591

Author : Jules Michelet , Alfred Richard Allinson (Translator)

Format : Paperback 356 pages

Genre : History, Nonfiction, Witchcraft, Occult, Fantasy, Magic



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From Reader Review Satanism and Witchcraft: The Classic Study of Medieval Superstition for online ebook

Eric Williamson says

A fascinating book from a historical standpoint. Jules Michelet was a renowned French historian and radical, and his politics is evident in the book. He sees Medieval witchcraft as a act of rebellion against the oppressive Catholic church. It is effectively two books, the first is speculative, and the narrative is quite interesting. The second part is more of a dry history of the trials and persecutions. Largely regarded as inaccurate today, it is still an important work because it was one of the first to look at the occult in a sympathetic manner.

Silvery says

4,5 estrellas

Una excelente biografía de la llamada "Bruja" de la edad media. Aquella que sana, que alivia el dolor, aunque también hace el mal. Ella va cambiando su papel hasta los procesos de hechicería en la oscura edad media hasta los siglos precedentes donde la mujer cambia de bruja a poseída.

“El hombre caza y lucha. La mujer intriga y sueña; es la madre de la fantasía, de los dioses. Posee la segunda visión, las alas que le permiten volar hacia el infinito del deseo y de la imaginación... Los dioses son como los hombres: nacen y mueren sobre el pecho de una mujer...”

Epígrafe en Aura de Carlos Fuentes

? Jules Michelet

Drew Martin says

It's easy to think you've found a riveting, interesting book based on nothing more than the title. Every now and then, the promise holds true, and you find a gem between the pages. Jules Michelet's 1862 book, Satanism and Witchcraft: A Study in Medieval Superstition isn't one of them. As a long-time fan of dark, occult subjects, I wanted to read Michelet's famed work since I stumbled across the title. As it's not the type of thing you'll find in your local library, I bought it used on eBay. A waste of money, and time. Not a lot of either, but less time. I made it through the first few chapters, struggling to stay awake before deciding I had found another book to place on the “so bad I couldn't finish” shelf...

To read the rest of this review go to <https://drewmartinwrites.wordpress.co...>

XPHAIEA. says

A fabulous, albeit most likely wholly inaccurate rendition of the medieval witch craze. I enjoyed this greatly

mainly due to Michelet's truly incandescent narrative flair. The French writers I have read seem to have truly unique and inflammatory voices, often radical and often saturated with a festering nihilism - an abhorrence of humanity in all its grossness and grotesqueness.

This would be enjoyed by anyone who enjoyed Lautreamont or Huysmans, as it surges with a very similar repugnance for human life and revels in the foulness of damned souls, perversions and the black arts, with a philosophical spin.

Michelet creates a wholly original spin on the topic through his choice of presenting the book almost as a fictional account. The story of the witch is developed through the initial half of the book - the latter dealing with analysis of specific French trials. Hugely enjoyable, but to be consumed with a generous pinch of salt (maybe throw it over your shoulder for good luck afterwards).

una_sussa says

Come accadde con "La Dea Bianca" di Graves, il valore storico ed etnografico de "La Strega" venne sottoposto a duri giudizi, ma in entrambi è presente una dichiarazione di pensiero libero e, in Michelet, altamente scabroso. Egli infatti compie un'analisi, con stile aulico e romanzato, di tutto il Medioevo, identificato soprattutto con un termine esemplificativo - imitazione - per riferirsi alla tremenda attitudine o imposizione che dispensa dal ragionamento e rimette le esistenze a un femminile misogino: la Chiesa e la sua persecuzione verso la Donna, tramite un "dogma tremendo che seppellisce la vita".

In un'epoca così buia, dove "l'Uomo sente l'assenza di Dio", è la Donna a riappropriarsi del suo orgoglio e della Natura, è la donna ad essere madre e medico, amante e consigliera, a evocare il passato per riscattarsi dalla miseria presente, a costo di stringere un patto col Diavolo: cosa da intendersi, come è logico, in senso figurato, poiché il patto è un puro e potente gesto di ribellione, di desiderio e di lotta contro la fissità e la disperazione.

La Strega è fra i più forti *J'accuse* contro Chiesa e sistema feudale, senza mezzi termini traccia il percorso che ha portato al rogo ventimila "streghe", ma è anche tra le maggiori dichiarazioni d'amore infinito verso la Donna.

"L'uomo caccia e lotta. La donna gioca d'ingegno, immagina; genera sogni e dèi. A giorni è veggente; possiede le ali senza fine del desiderio e del sogno. Per meglio stimare i tempi, osserva il cielo. Ma alla terra non offre meno cuore. [...] Semplice e toccante inizio di religioni e scienze. Più avanti, tutto si separa [...] ma in principio, la donna è tutto... Gli dèi sono come gli uomini; le nascono e muoiono in grembo."

Kim says

I'd initially picked up this book as it was cited as the base for "Belladonna of Sadness," a 1973 animated feature from Japan. Alas, as this is not a review of that wonderful movie, but the book itself, my review will be less glowing. For the time period, Michelet comes off as a surprisingly strident feminist, quick to make the witch the sympathetic victim of a patriarchal society. So, for the first section of the book, he creates a scenario - a young woman, pushed to devil worship by the most desperate and miserable state of affairs. For me, this was the best part of the book. After that explanation of witchcraft and society, the book then becomes a series of "case studies." And these studies are the reason why it has taken me THIS long to finish

this book. This is where it becomes difficult reading, because without an extensive knowledge of French history during the 1600-1730s, specifically witchcraft trials, you get lost. Michelet assumes that the reader already knows - and it's a fair assumption, given when he wrote the book and who the original audience would have been. From what I can tell, his research into these cases is extensive, and he really does a good job of portraying the young women accused of witchcraft as victims. But it just drags soooooo bad. I finished this book out of sheer stubbornness, as my interest in the subject had absolutely plummeted. I could say it's an interesting read, and the first half honestly is. So maybe if you're interested in checking it out, read the first section, call it a day, and watch "Belladonna of Sadness" to compare.

Madrileña Reader says

I'm used to reading serious scientific essays, which is what I was expecting from this one. However, it reads like a bad novel with facts splashed in.

Ruby Tombstone [With A Vengeance] says

Huh. Looks like the thing I've been using as a coaster for the last month is a first edition. Oops.

Luan says

Fantástico... ainda que já tenha lido que algumas considerações de Michelet tenham sido revisitadas nas décadas que o seguiram, esse livro não deixa de ser fascinante.

O principal atrativo é a escrito envolvente do autor. Desde as primeiras páginas até os relatos da parte final, você se esquece que está lendo um livro de História e se deixa levar como numa ficção. Há muito o que aprender, bem como com o que se divertir.

Destilando muito veneno pelo período que ele mais amava odiar, Michelet alcança grandeza nessa defesa da mulher e da liberdade.

Derek Davis says

I doubt this is the same translation I have, which goes way back, but the book itself is nothing like most history you will read from any period. A 19th century French look at the medieval witchcraft phenomenon, it takes the side of the woman without apology or reserve. It also ignores fact much of the time for an open-handed interpretative and semi-fictionalized way of introducing place and mood.

Is this good history? Hard to tell, really. Mostly, it's a highly personal take on a complex subject which, up to Michelet's time, had had little examination outside the Church's horrid rantings.

J.M. Hushour says

"They are still far, very far, from being ripe for Satan. They have yet to learn to hate God."

Although largely worthless as an academic exercise in the history of the witch phenomenon in times past, Michelet's work here is bawdy, sexy fun! As anti-clerical as they come, Michelet didn't like the church at all and it really shines through here since the church is basically blamed for the fall to Satan of the fluttering hearts and genitals of every other woman in Europe, it seems, over a centuries-long span.

Borderline pornography (for the time) Michelet dishes out all the flushed thighs and unorthodoxies throbbing with a life all their own! And this makes it worth the read, because it's so damn hilarious and hard to take seriously. Couching the evolution of the "witch" (here little more than a kind of sex-crazed peasant woman buying new dresses and begging for sodomy from a veritable chorus line of hellish demoniacs) in terms of the lower class's vituperative attitude towards organized clergy who basically robbed them blind for centuries makes sense (as hinted at by Cohn et al), but Michelet takes it to new highs (or lows) and it falters because of that.

Spawned a bunch of utterly wrong historiography regarding witch cults, too, so watch out for false conclusions!

beesp says

Quando si comincia a leggere "La strega", ci si potrebbe aspettare un elegantissimo saggio che discuta della figura storica della strega, ma in realtà Jules Michelet ha scritto molto di più. Ci troviamo di fronte un'opera che analizzi il potere delle donne, e come questo sia stato strumentalizzato e ostracizzato e quanto le donne siano state il substrato funzionante, la base di tutta la società, per secoli. Jules Michelet non ci dice che le streghe non siano esistite, ma ci racconta - nella parte centrale del libro, la più meravigliosa e affascinante - come queste streghe nacquero e quale impatto ebbero in una società abbandonata da chiunque altro, per cui non c'era spazio nemmeno in una chiesa così lontana, così potente. Un capolavoro della letteratura, indipendente dal valore storico che si voglia attribuire al racconto della nascita della strega.

Luis Cardenas says

Un estudio extraordinario no solo de las supersticiones en la Edad Media, Michelet plantea el papel de la mujer durante este periodo y la lucha constante de la iglesia para defender la fe contra Satán. Con la narraciones de las actas judiciales de la época, se reconstruye un periodo interesante y poco conocido de la caza de brujas en Europa en donde la luz, la razón y la ciencia eran el enemigo satánico de la iglesia. No solo los datos y la información que aporta son lo rico de este libro, también es la manera en la que está escrito, con una exquisitez y un extraordinario uso de los elementos narrativos de la novela y el ensayo.

Alan Fay says

This book is weird. It's supposed to be a history book, but it's written in this first-person, "I'm a mystic channeling the past into your face," kind of style.

I look at pages in it any time I need random seed values.

Marcio Ribeiro says

Ótimo livro, embora por vezes intransponível na leitura em razão dos sentimentos de repulsa pelo que o ser humano faz aos demais. E não digo repulsa à feiticeira, simbolo da mulher, da natureza, dos excluídos, de tudo que a cristandade hipócrita procurou varrer da humanidade. A repulsa é exatamente pelo que a igreja e as supertições daí nascidas fizeram de mau. Superada essa repulsa, a leitura é agradável e essencial para se perceber inclusive a atualidade, em que a mulher é ainda, infelizmente, posicionada num segundo plano.
