

THE ROBERT WAELDER MEMORIAL LECTURE

Spectacularization & Enshittification: RECENT TRENDS IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ENVY

NATHAN KRAVIS, MD

Wednesday, October 7 th, 2026

7:00 PM – 9:00 PM EDT

Rockland - East Fairmount Park

3810 Mt Pleasant Dr. Philadelphia, PA

& Virtual via Zoom

Spectacularization (Debord 1967) denotes our tendency to replace direct experience with spectacle. Spectacularization defends against envy but can lead to depressive hedonia (Fisher 2008; Gilroy-Ware 2017) and enshittification (Doctorow 2025), defined here as a deterioration of meaningful experience and loss of interpersonal connectedness despite a cultural surround of apparent unfettered access and engagement. **Nathan Kravis, MD**, will sketch his understanding of the psychodynamics of spectacularization and depressive hedonia, illustrate them with a clinical vignette, and relate them to Guy Debord's 1967 book *The Society of the Spectacle*. Spectacularization and enshittification travel together: they are both implicated in the degradation of meaningfulness. Dr. Kravis will argue that the clinical problem posed by depressive hedonia and the Debordian cultural problematic of the spectacle can be linked with the psychoanalytic concepts of envy and unmourned loss and the sociologic concept of alienation. Then Dr. Kravis will try to show how individual and large group (i.e., societal) psychodynamics reflect and inform each other with regard to the phenomena of depressive hedonia, cultural spectacularization, and enshittification. Fascism and nostalgia, Dr. Kravis argues, are linked as defenses against envy and unmourned losses.

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Spectacularization & Enshittification:

RECENT TRENDS IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ENVY

NATHAN KRAVIS, MD

Biography

Nathan Kravis, MD is Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical College, Associate Director of the DeWitt Wallace Institute of Psychiatry at Cornell, Training and Supervising Analyst at the Columbia University Center for Psychoanalytic Training and Research, and a former Associate Editor of the Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association. He is the author of two dozen publications, including *On the Couch: A Repressed History of the Analytic Couch from Plato to Freud* (MIT Press, 2017). Other recent publications include “The Analyst’s Hatred of Analysis” (Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 2013), “Fuck Redux” (Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 2013), “The Googled and Googling Analyst” (Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 2017), “Charisma” (Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 2021), and “Greenberg and the analyst’s heresy/orthodoxy matrix” (Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 2022). He is the recipient of teaching awards from the psychiatry residents at Cornell and psychoanalytic candidates at Columbia, and several other awards and honors. He is in private practice in New York.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

At the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Describe newly emerging defenses against envy as they appear in the consulting room and the sociocultural surround.
2. Describe the relationship between the psychoanalytic understanding of envy and defenses against envy with the sociologic concept of alienation.
3. Describe the links between envy, fascism, and nostalgia in psychodynamic terms.

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**Rockland – East Fairmount Park
3810 Mt. Pleasant Drive Philadelphia, PA 19121
215-235-2345
pcop@philanalysis.org**

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