

## The Most Depressed Person on the Planet

*Dark dialogues with my shadow,  
fictional characters, and other crazy people . . .*

by Michael V. Farnum

*The following account is based on true events.*

*It contains adult themes and graphic language  
and is intended for both mature and immature audiences.*

*Parental guidance is suggested.*

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First edition

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## Dedication

*This very personal account is dedicated to anyone  
who ever found they couldn't get out of bed,  
off the couch or out the door  
to face the insanity of the world, and their own fears.*

*Also, to anyone who ever made bad choices,  
but didn't know why.*

*Also, to all my elders who undoubtedly suffered way more  
than I did,  
and still made it. Or didn't . . .*

*This incredible retrospective also serves  
as a valuable life review  
for my own self . . .*

*Peace and namaste . . .*

**A New Poem: 7 AM, Sunday Morning**

*7AM, Sunday morning.  
Mommy and Daddy are snoring.  
Outside, the rain is still pouring.  
The whole house is all rather boring . . .  
The crazy cat runs everywhere.  
And then appears to be nowhere . . .  
It's in Daddy's closet, sleeping,  
As Daddy is downstairs sweeping.  
And alone and adrift across the great rift,  
Mommy is half-asleep and weeping.  
And the cat just keeps on creeping. . .*

--Pierce and Michael V. Farnum (1/31/2021)

## Apt Quotations

*“We live in a false reality – fake news, comical politics, manipulated history; a sick, diseased world, afflicted by a sickness of the mind, a virus of fear, enveloped with greed and avarice, trapped by selfish lust and pure stupidity and ignorance; an insane hell surrounded by Archonic soulless cement and metal monstrosities, lousy with toxic fast food, endless noise and plastic toys and more toxic shite, burning fossil fuels and pollution and junk mail. Tragically, we are removed and alienated from the healing forces of Nature; and the pure energy and sacred light that is our own immortal soul, the one true Source.*

*Is it any wonder half the world is depressed, and the other, just plain mad? . . .”*

*--Anonymous (2021)*

*“Insanity is a perfectly rational adjustment to an insane world . . .”*

*--R.D. Laing, *The Divided Self* (1960)*



*"Bad times, they're coming round . . .*

*Bad times, they're coming round . . .*

*Bad times, they're coming round, again . . ."*

--Waco Brothers<sup>1</sup>

**ONE: *Say Hello to my little friend, D. Presione***  
**(Mr. D.) A/K/A Mr. Shadow. A/K/A Big D . . .**

### **Introduction**

Hell is a dark, frozen wasteland, with no sun, ever; a black, nightmarish landscape of the mind. It's a soundless void, a lonely colorless netherworld somewhere between life and death, consciousness and sleep, numbness and pain, nothingness and emptiness, where no one sees you and nobody can hear you scream. Either in darkness or the warm light of day, it's

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<sup>1</sup> "Bad Times (Are Comin Round Again)" by Waco Brothers. *From To the Last Dead Cowboy*. (Released 4/1/1995). ©Bloodshot Records.  
<https://youtu.be/FcUWl9J3540>

a constant struggle to find meaning, sanity, and some sense of peace. That is how I see Depression . . .

This is a self-help book, kind of. For example, when in doubt, do your Wim Hof breathing<sup>2</sup> and meditate. You'll probably be tired, so take a nap. If and when you wake up, do your best to remember your dreams, especially the nightmares, then write them down. Repeat, as necessary.

*My unsympathetic Shadow Self, in the guise of fictional serial killer Hannibal Lecter, played by Anthony Hopkins (he's not real, after all): "And read the bloody footnotes, you lazy so-and-so, if you know what's good for you, Clarice<sup>3</sup> . . ."*

Full disclosure, the following is neither "politically correct" nor particularly nice, especially to myself. It is likewise a sneaky, cheeky, probably selfish, self-indulgent cathartic healing exercise in exorcising some personal demons, at least one. This account will serve

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<sup>2</sup> Hof, W. (2020). *The Wim Hof Method*. Sounds True Publishing.  
<https://www.wimhofmethod.com/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clarice\\_Starling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clarice_Starling)

nicely as my own personal Depression memoirs, at least up to the age of, well, middle age, let's leave it at that.

Forewarned is forearmed, by the end of this book I will lead you down so many, deep-dark-strange rabbit holes that your Depression won't know which way is up, or down . . . As an independent, self-published writer largely suppressed by the mainstream media, going it alone, in my eyes at least this fact renders this chronicle a rare commodity, indeed, provided you can even get your hands on a copy. But if you're already reading this, obviously, you've already accomplished that formidable feat, *good for you*.

Let's begin, shall we? . . .

Nobody said it better than existential philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre: "Life begins on the other side of despair."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> J.-P. Sartre (1957). *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, tr. Hazel Barnes (London: Methuen & Co.). J.-P. Sartre (1964). *Nausea*, tr. Lloyd Alexander (New York: New Directions). For another fascinating article on depression, see McCulloch, A. & Pavlou, A. (2003) Depression and Expression: Life Begins on the Other Side of Despair. <http://www.doubledialogues.com/article/depression-and-expression-life-begins-on-the-other-side-of-despair/>

Few human beings are immune from the highly popular mental health condition known as depression. At some point in our lives, depression will affect us all in some way or other. A loved one or a pet will die. We'll get dumped by a lover, divorced, or fired from a job. We'll crash mom's or our wife's new car. Our favorite binge-worthy TV series will end. The world itself will seem as if it is coming to an end as another surreal pandemic strikes, or another Kali Yuga<sup>5</sup> or globe-shaking Great Reset comes around. Things happen. *What are you gonna do?*

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) defines a major depressive episode as at least two weeks of a depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure in almost all activities, with the

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<sup>5</sup> The period calculated as the basis of the chronology of the universe was the *mahāyuga*, consisting of 4,320,000 sidereal years. It was divided into 4 yugas, or stages, on the hypothesis of an original "order" (*dharma*) established in the first stage, the Krta Yuga, gradually decaying in the three others, the Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali yugas. The respective durations of these four yugas were 1,728,000, 1,296,000, 864,000, and 432,000 years. According to the astronomer Aryabhata, however, the duration of each of the four yugas was the same – i.e., 1,080,000 years. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/chronology/Eras-based-on-astronomical-speculation#ref523207>

presence of at least five other symptoms indicating a diagnosis of some form of clinical depression as described by the DSM-5.<sup>6</sup>

According to recent statistics (2019) based on self-reports nearly five percent of the U.S. population routinely suffers from some form of clinical depression, from moderate to severe.<sup>7</sup> Five percent, only? (Obviously, statistics may vary depending on the study.)

With good reason I suspect these numbers are astronomically higher, particularly after the infamous year known as 2020, no doubt with further endless Great Reset madness to follow.

For the sake of clarity in my story and a brief FYI, in the early 2000s (although I wasn't a therapist-in-training yet) I worked for several years as a case manager, managing a large caseload of Seriously Mentally Ill adults and adolescents. It was one of the most interesting jobs I've ever had and a great learning

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<sup>6</sup> American Psychiatric Association. (2013) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5)

<sup>7</sup> 2019 National Health Survey. Division of Health Interview Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics

experience, despite the daily human drama and misery I had to endure. *Fun times . . .*

Mr./Ms. Shadow (*temporarily shape-shifting, assuming the guise of one of my most truth-telling former (or future depending on your point of view in this story) mental health case management clients, for some reason*): “Boy, you report me, along with your own self, to the so-called authorities, or anyone else, and you know what? They all gonna think you are weak as a wet noodle, and worse than that, *crazy, son! And I don’t mean crazy like a fox, boy!* Not only that, hell, you think your life is a living Franz Kafka nightmare, now? Shoot, you just wait ‘til the Man got mental health paper on your sorry ass, You will rue the day, home boy! . . .”

Whatever that meant . . .

Shadow self: “Besides that, snitches get stitches, *bee-yatch!*”

I knew what that meant. And I’m sure my vociferous former client had never heard of Franz Kafka, unless it was from me.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Franz Kafka was a visionary Czech writer who suffered from ill health and worked most of his life as an insurance clerk; best known for his dark, existentialist, oft nightmarish stories, including *The Trial*,

Yes, I personally have suffered from depression through much of my life. But wait, there's more . . .

Once upon a time I was, in fact, the *Most Depressed person on the Planet* (maybe, probably). The Master of Depression if you will. Until I wasn't . . .

Big D, back to its old, neutral, faceless self: "The most depressed, boyo? Or the most delusional? The Master of Dissociation, maybe. I can work with either one, you know. I'm a bit of a maestro of mental illness, myself, as you're no doubt fully aware, boy . . ."

Michael: "*Shush, Mr. Shadow! I'll deal with integrating you later, dear old friend . . . Run along now, shadow man . . .*"

Mr. Shadow: "*How rude! . . . No sweat off my dark shadow. I'll be back in due time, you sad, little man . . . Don't start any pity parties without me, Sunshine! . . .*"

Me: "*Whatever. It's time for my all-Wednesday depression nap anyways. Wake me up for the season premiere of Six Feet Under, will ya, pal? . . .*"

*Shadow: "I'll be counting the days, boyo . . ."*

The Most Depressed person on the Planet? *Wow, that is some accomplishment, Abe Lincoln . . .*

Now, you are probably saying to yourself that I only believe this to be so, that I was or am clearly suffering from some bizarre and pathetic delusion of grandeur. In the mostly forgotten words of "Piano Man" Billy Joel<sup>9</sup>, *You may be depressed. For all I know, you may be not. (Lyrics changed for legal reasons.) But you may be wrong.* Whatever the case, I beg you indulge me in this state of confusion, distorted belief, personal delusion, samsaric<sup>10</sup> illusion or private truth for just a moment.

Rightfully or not, I assume that the few intrepid souls who choose to endure or tolerate this personal

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<sup>9</sup> "You May Be Right". Song written and performed by Billy Joel, 1980. From the album, "Glass Houses." Family Productions/Columbia Records.

<sup>10</sup> Samsara: (Sanskrit: "Flowing around.") in Indian philosophy, the central conception of metempsychosis: the soul, finding itself awash in the "sea of samsara," strives to find release (*moksha*) from the bonds of its own past deeds (karma), which form part of the general web of which samsara is made. Buddhism, which does not assume the existence of a permanent soul, accepts a semipermanent personality core that goes through the process of samsara.

[Britannica.com/topic/samsara](http://Britannica.com/topic/samsara)

dystopia of a narrative (at least part way through, although what would be the point of that, right?) are likewise depressed to some degree or otherwise somehow presumably mentally ill, emotionally disturbed, etc. Or, just plain morbidly interested in the fascinating subject. Rest assured, no judgments here. This bold assumption is obviously based on the blatant presentation of this self-serving title alone, I confess. Whatever the case, after reading this rather depressing account (hopefully all the way through), I dare anyone in their right mind or otherwise to even attempt to out-depress me.

To even try to out-depress me is futile. Dare I say, dangerous if not potentially fatal? Just peruse the latest suicide statistics, at any given time. To paraphrase the insidious villain Humongous from one of my favorite post-apocalyptic flicks, *The Road Warrior*<sup>11</sup> (this frightful character probably an Archon himself): *Just walk away now, and I'll spare your life . . .*

Equal part self-help book, equal part autobiography, this eclectic chronicle could easily be considered a

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<sup>11</sup> *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior* (1981). Directed by George Miller and starring Mel Gibson. Kennedy Miller Entertainment. Warner Bros.

metaphysical mind trek through mass media. After all, love it or hate it, *red-pilled or blue-pilled*, aren't we all trying to make sense of the Matrix? . . .

Shadow Self, *raspy, smoky-throated and thoroughly unimpressed*: "You just had to go there, didn't you, pal? . . . But like the man said, if you don't like movies, or music, or spoiler alerts, then this ridiculous matriculating mess probably ain't for you, *brother or sister* . . . *Freaking Hollywood, it's dead anyways, friends. Like the Red Hot Chili Peppers sang in 2006 (more painfully obvious predictive programing from the Man), California, RIP . . .*"

MVF: "*Wow, that's dark. But fair enough, you cranky devil . . .*"

Mr. D: "*You can say that again, Michelangelo . . .*"

The thoroughly bewildering but fascinating Amazon original, *Bliss* (2021)<sup>12</sup>, is a dark fantasy, a metaphysical romance that appears to be simultaneously exploring such diverse concepts as existential crises, mental illness, opioid addiction, and the false reality of our so-

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<sup>12</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bliss\\_\(2021\\_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bliss_(2021_film))

called matrix, just to name a few. The protagonist (Owen Wilson) appears to be a down-on-his-luck, divorced homeless guy who exists in multiple dimensions. The enigmatic, alienated “Greg” starts out as a depressed, distracted, dissociative guy in an office, more interesting in sketching his own private fantasy world (and renewing his expired pain pill prescription) than answering urgent calls from his impatient boss. *(Spoiler alert)* When he finally makes it into the boss’s office, Greg is predictably fired on the spot. Unexpectedly (even to him apparently) an inadvertent headbutt kills his boss, on the spot. Greg lugs the body over to a convenient set of heavy curtains and conceals the corpse as it leans comically against the high-rise window glass.

Thoroughly discombobulated, Greg flees to a bar across the street for a badly needed drink or three. There, he encounters a strangely alluring, mystical woman, Isabel (Salma Hayek) who appears to summon him psychically to her booth. Isabel informs him that they are the only two who are “real.” *Everything and everyone else is just a fake simulation of reality.* Strangely enough, the mysterious Isabel seems to know exactly what her downtrodden new companion has been up to, more or less . . .

Whatever, for some reason, you just can't seem to put down this depressing book or X this PDF, *you morbid nihilist*. Sorry. Just kidding. (Perhaps you already have and I'm only jabbering to myself here, most likely, just hanging in the weeds. No worries. I'm used to it.) Once again, no judgments here.

That was just a test after all. Pray continue at your own peril . . .

*Are you still here? . . .*

Getting back on point, I am the self-proclaimed master of disaster, the maestro of melancholy, the duke of depression. In the timeless words of the legendary Muhammad Ali, *I'm a bad man* . . .

But by the end of this barely tolerable cautionary tale, you probably will have no desire to out-depress the master, I hope.

All joking and gratuitous challenges aside, perhaps by sharing this painful personal account, I can inspire others to be as freakishly, astonishingly (dare I say masterfully) depressed as I once was. Or not to be.

After all, if I can come out the other side in one piece, more or less, anybody can make it.

I write a lot of fiction. However, this account is completely non-fiction, or at least ninety percent of it or so. (Some of the inner dialogue may have been embellished for either educational or entertainment purposes.) Most importantly, the process of writing my strange, little stories has served as my greatest therapy in life. From a therapeutic perspective, particularly an existential one which I tend to lean towards (being a philosopher at heart), this narrative can be considered an autobiographical existential analysis. Truth be told, I am mostly writing this for myself. *You should write your own book.* For those interested in exploring the phenomenological meaning or *logos* in their own life, I highly recommend the stories of Dostoevsky<sup>13</sup>. For a modern approach, you won't be disappointed by the writings of existential therapy pioneer, Emmy Van Deurzen<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Fyodor-Dostoevsky>

<sup>14</sup> Deurzen, E. van and Arnold-Baker, C. (2005.) *Existential Perspectives on Human Issues: a Handbook for Practice*. London: Palgrave/Macmillan. <https://www.emmyvandeurzen.com/>

Mr. D, *under the sinister guise of one Anthony Hopkins, a la Hannibal Lector*<sup>15</sup>: “Yeah, how’s that working out for you, so far, Hemingway? . . .”

Me: “You see a lot, Doctor. But are you strong enough to point that high-powered perception at yourself? What about it? Why don’t you? . . .”

Shadow self, *clearly confused*: “Huh? What choo talkin’ ‘bout, Willis?”

Me: “Sorry, Doctor Lector . . . I thought we were role-playing for a moment . . .”

Shadow self: “Well played, Clarice, well played . . . Sorry, boyo, can’t stick around to continue this scintillating confab. It’s almost time for *Mad Men*, sad boy . . .”

Me: “What are you running from, Doctor? Okay, are we done? . . .”

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<sup>15</sup> From “Silence of the Lambs,” (1991), American psychological horror film starring Jody Foster and Anthony Hopkins, directed by Jonathon Demme. Orion Pictures.

Based on the novels of Thomas Harris<sup>16</sup>, *Silence of the Lambs*<sup>17</sup> (1991) is perhaps the ultimate psych-thriller serial killer film, with Anthony Hopkin's<sup>18</sup> Hannibal Lecter<sup>19</sup> being the crème a la creme of fictional madmen. FBI prodigy-in-training Clarice Starling (Jody Foster) is assigned by her boss to enlist the aid of notorious serial killer "Hannibal the Cannibal," currently contained in a maximum-security cell at the infamous Baltimore State Hospital. (If anybody has a reason to be depressed it is he, but somehow, he is not . . .) Clarice comes from a "trailer trash" background in West Virginia, an important if slightly depressing back-story for the film.

Highly cultured and sophisticated, Hannibal is Uber-brilliant with refined tastes and exquisite manners. He

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<sup>16</sup> According to author Harris and others, the character of Hannibal Lecter was inspired by real-life serial killers Alfred Balli Trevino a/k/a "Dr. Salazar" an elite physician of Monterrey, Mexico, notorious American serial killer Albert Fish, "The Brooklyn Vampire/Werewolf of Wysteria", Soviet serial killer Andrei Chikatilo, and "The Monster of Florence," Pietro Pacciani, a famous Italian serial killer active between roughly 1968 and 1985.

<sup>17</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Silence\\_of\\_the\\_Lambs\\_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Silence_of_the_Lambs_(film))

<sup>18</sup> Actor Anthony Hopkins said his performance was inspired by the psychotic computer Hal-9000 in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

<sup>19</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hannibal\\_Lecter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hannibal_Lecter). The character was also portrayed in an interesting NBC TV series (2013-15) starring Mads Mikkelsen and the 1986 film *Manhunter*.

often kills people simply over their crude manners. Prior to his capture, Lector was a member of Baltimore's societal elite and a sitting member of Philharmonic Orchestra's Board of Directors. As a young boy during WWII, Hannibal was traumatized, forced to watch his young sister Mischa being killed and eaten by starving Lithuanian ex-soldiers and Nazi collaborators. See, *Hannibal Rising*<sup>20</sup> (2007).

The FBI is in pursuit of an elusive spree killer called "Buffalo Bill," who murders young women and skins them. Lector reluctantly takes the ambitious, intelligent but inexperienced Clarice under his dark wing, pointing her in the "right" direction from time to time and becoming a bizarre kind of mentor. *But at what cost to the ascendant, young Starling?*

*You see, the brain feels no pain, if that concerns you, Clarice . . .*

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<sup>20</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hannibal\\_Rising\\_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hannibal_Rising_(film))

Ancient philosophies including sects among the Egyptians, early Christian Gnostics<sup>21</sup> and Cathars<sup>22</sup> of southern France believed that the human race has been eternally plagued by unseen hyperdimensional entities that drain our energies like parasites. Essentially, they strive to either control us for their benefit or to drive us crazy. These entities are known in certain circles as the Archons, the Watchers/Whisperers, or simply demons, though they go by many names. (Also, the cheeky, invisible tricksters love to spill, break or otherwise destroy shit and incite general mayhem, causing us to blame ourselves or others).

The native Americans of North America believe in a vast array of parasitic entities, from skin-walkers to shadow people to *wendigo* or *chindi* (from the Navajo tradition), an avenging spirit unleashed at death to

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<sup>21</sup> **Gnosticism**, any of various related philosophical and religious movements prominent in the Greco-Roman world in the early Christian era, particularly the 2nd century.

<sup>22</sup> **Cathari**, (from Greek *katharos*, “pure”), also spelled CATHARS, heretical Christian sect that flourished in western Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries. The Cathari professed a neo-Manichaean dualism—that there are two principles, one good and the other evil, and that the material world is evil. Similar views were held in the Balkans and the Middle East by the medieval religious sects of the Paulicians and the Bogomils. The Cathari were closely connected with these sects.

attack those who have wronged the deceased. The terms “depressed” and “anxious” are absent from many native languages where these conditions are expressed as “ghost sickness” or “heartbreak syndrome.”<sup>23</sup> In addition to denoting a cannibalistic monster from certain traditional folklore, some Native Americans also understand the wendigo conceptually. As a concept relating to mental illness or other emotional disturbance, *“the wendigo can apply to any person, idea, or movement infected by a corrosive drive toward self-aggrandizing greed and excessive consumption, traits that sow disharmony and destruction if left unchecked.”*<sup>24</sup>

The *Chiang-shi*, or *kiang shi*, are the Chinese version of the (energy?) vampire. In Chinese belief, each person has two souls, a superior or rational soul and an inferior irrational soul. The superior soul could leave a sleeping

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<sup>23</sup> Peterson-Hickey, M. (11/6/15). *American Indians, Mental Health and the Influence of History*. American Psychiatric Association. <https://www.psychiatry.org/news-room/apa-blogs/apa-blog/2015/11/american-indians-mental-health-and-the-influence-of-history>

<sup>24</sup> DeSanti, B. (2015). The Cannibal Talking Head: Portrayals of the Wendigo ‘Monster’ in Popular Culture and Ojibwe Traditions. *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture*. 27 (3): 197  
[doi:10.3138/jrpc.27.3.2938](https://doi.org/10.3138/jrpc.27.3.2938). S2CID 148238264.

body and appear as the body's double as it roamed about. It could also possess and speak through the body of another. However, if something would happen to the disembodied soul during its journey, its body would suffer. The inferior soul, on the other hand, was called *p'ai* or *p'o* and was that which inhabited the body of a fetus during pregnancy and often lingered in the bodies of the dead. Usually *chiang-shih* were created after a particularly violent death, such as a murder, suicide, hanging, drowning, or smothering.<sup>25</sup>

Buddhists might say that these so-called energy vampires, invisible or otherwise, and other hellish states of mind are manifestations of our own karmic consciousness – consciously or not, conjured and driven by our own materialistic attachment, desire, judgment, negative emotions, especially fear (mainly of death), and other unfortunate karma.<sup>26</sup> This concept is quite similar to the psychoanalytic workings of the subconscious shadow self and personal complexes as

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<sup>25</sup> Melton, J. Gordon. (2010). *The Vampire Book*. Visible Ink Press

<sup>26</sup> As described in the *Bardo Thodol*, commonly known as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, attributed to Padma-Sambhava, an Indian mystic who was said to have introduced Buddhism to Tibet in the 8th century. <http://holybooks.lichtenbergpress.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/The-Tibetan-Book-of-the-Dead.pdf>

proposed by the iconic Carl Jung.<sup>27</sup> According to Jung, the shadow comprises all the so-called negative or undesirable aspects of our personality which we suppress into the dark unknown realm of our subconscious mind. If left unacknowledged (and not integrated) for too long, the shadow may emerge, manifesting in highly undesirable ways, such as nightmares, psychosis, depression, projecting our own “stuff” onto others or other psychological complexes.

(So, according to the Buddha, it’s all just a story I’m telling myself, as you are with yours? It’s all bullshit. *But, it’s our bullshit . . .*”

Even most Christians today, and probably more than a few atheists, would hardly deny the possible existence of Satan and other demonic beings (at least in some metaphorical, spiritual or theoretical interdimensional form or other). Fictional, mythological or otherwise, these hell demons, vampires and other insidious creatures are ever-present throughout our literature, media and entertainment. Not to mention our private imaginations.

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<sup>27</sup> Jung, C.G. (2006). *The Undiscovered Self: The Dilemma of the Individual in Modern Society*. Berkley.

One of my favorite depression comfort films is *Angel Heart*<sup>28</sup> (1987), a neo-noir psych-thriller starring the oft-depressed anti-hero Mickey Rourke. Rourke plays NY private eye Harry Angel hired by the mysterious Louis Cyphre (Robert DeNiro, *as (spoiler alert) Lucifer*) to track down a famous singer named Johnny Favorite who broke a contract and went missing. Angel's dark investigation leads him to the black magic of the deep South and New Orleans, and a grisly series of bloody murders that all seem to point back to the seriously disturbed Angel himself. *You know what today is? It's Wednesday, "Anything Can Happen Day . . ."*

In a rather obscure 1990 supernatural thriller, *Mr. Frost*, Jeff Goldblum portrays an elitist serial killer, arrested and sent to an insane asylum after easily admitting to a detective that he had many bodies buried in the yard of his palatial French estate. Remaining silent for years, the nameless patient finally confides in his female psychiatrist. *Yes, he is Satan.*

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<sup>28</sup> Weeks before its theatrical release, *Angel Heart* faced censorship issues from the Motion Picture Association of America for one scene of sexual content. Parker was forced to remove ten seconds of footage to avoid an X rating and secure the R rating the film's distributor Tri-Star Pictures wanted. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angel\\_Heart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angel_Heart)

Soon enough, the doctor will wish her strangely convincing patient had remained silent . . .

Also, fairly obscure, M. Night Shyamalan's 2010 *Devil*. After a man jumps to his death from a skyscraper warning of the devil coming via his suicide note, four strangers become trapped in the building's elevator. *Can you guess which one is the devil? . . .*

"The Howling Man"<sup>29</sup> is Episode 41 of *The Twilight Zone* (originally aired 1960). On a walking trip in Europe, post-WWI, a man named Ellington seeks shelter from a storm in a castle run by a monk called Brother Jerome. Investigating a strange howling while exploring the castle, Ellington comes across a disheveled, depressed man captured in a cell. The captive claims to be the prisoner of an extremist religious order, wrongfully imprisoned. Demanding to know the real story from Jerome, Ellington threatens to go the police. Brother Jerome finally tells Ellington the truth: the captive is the Devil itself, held here only by the Staff of Truth, and captured by Jerome himself after the evil one instigated the war. Not believing the story,

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<sup>29</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Howling\\_Man](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Howling_Man)

Ellington foolishly frees the captive, only to find out the truth for himself, the hard way . . .

*One of man's greatest flaws: not to be able to recognize the devil within.*

Depressed Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg<sup>30</sup> was a genius scientist, metallurgist, theologian and philosopher who served the royals of Sweden and moved in the same elite circles as Sir Isaac Newton and Edmund Halley. Swedenborg's intellectual prowess was legendary. Following a spiritual crisis at the age of 53, and a series of enlightening lucid dreams, he turned his attention to mystical studies. Swedenborg described in detail his communications with a variety of entities, both good and evil.<sup>31</sup> He described his mystical experiences in at least 18 different works, most notably, *Heaven and Its Wonders and Hell*.<sup>32</sup> Swedenborg stated that spirit entities gather with those who are akin to themselves, and (contrary to Buddhist tenets) claimed that all angels and demons derived from outside the

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Emanuel-Swedenborg>

<sup>31</sup> Marzinsky, J. and Swiney S. (2020) *An Amazing Journey into the Psychotic Mind*. Lulu Publishing.

<sup>32</sup> [https://swedenborg.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/swedenborg\\_foundation\\_heaven\\_and\\_hell.pdf](https://swedenborg.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/swedenborg_foundation_heaven_and_hell.pdf)

body. Also, both angels and demons were all once humans on earth (contrary to mainstream Christian belief). After his death in 1772, devoted followers created societies dedicated to his teachings.

Like Swedenborg, mystic-philosopher Gurdjieff<sup>33</sup> insisted that spiritual manifestations were fundamentally physical in nature. They both correlated the relationship between the structure of the human body, its chemistry and spiritual nature. “Nothing takes place without a medium [the human body and its nervous system] through which it can operate.<sup>34</sup>” Gurdjieff recognized serotonin as an essential component of this system, an essential neurotransmitter, largely produced in the human gut. In short, serotonin has a significant effect on depression and the physiological well-being of humans. Gurdjieff

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/biography/George-Ivanovitch-Gurdjieff>

<sup>34</sup> Laer, E van. (12/14/13) Serotonin and the mind-body connection. <https://zenyogagurdjieff.blogspot.com/2013/12/serotonin-and-mind-body-connection.html>

documented this concept in great and complicated depth in Ouspensky's *In Search of the Miraculous*.<sup>35</sup>

In the dark, neo-noir sci-fi film, *Dark City (1980)*, John Murdoch is a singular man suffering from amnesia who possesses a special psychic ability. Murdoch finds himself accused of murder and goes on the run from the police and a strange group of creeps called *The Strangers*. The city that Murdoch inhabits is a shadowy, transient place immersed in perpetual darkness, a world in which the Strangers control the very fabric of space and time. His mind injected with false memories of a fake reality, like everyone else, at midnight Murdoch watches in horror as the Strangers rearrange the physical reality of this sleeping world and change the identities and memories of its inhabitants.

Modern-day quantum physicist, biofeedback engineer and fractal expert, Dan Winter<sup>36</sup> proposes that the key to freeing oneself from or preventing parasitic spiritual or alien incursion is having access to a specific form of pure bliss in one's life (through aura growth,

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<sup>35</sup> Ouspensky, P.D. (1949, new edition 2001). *In Search of the Miraculous: The Definitive Exploration of G. I. Gurdjieff's Mystical Thought and Universal View*, Harvest Book; ISBN 0-15-600746-0.

<sup>36</sup> See <https://youtu.be/E-4jNCnggfo>. Also, <http://www.fractalfield.com>

centripetal implosion, rear-brain dominance, longitudinal coherence of consciousness, charge propagation enabled by fractality and astral hygiene, i.e., lucid dreaming, astral traveling, awareness of the higher self, etc.).<sup>37</sup> Sound complicated? Yeah, it kind of is. Feel free to explore more of Winter's fascinating works on the physics of bliss and consciousness exploration at your leisure.

All that being said, I believe that all of these ideas bear some relevance to the collective and individual mental health of the human race. At the very least, they merit mindful contemplation and should be kept at the back of our collective minds for serious consideration and further research and investigation. *Do you have negative thoughts? Ever heard voices?* (If you said No, I don't believe you, by the way.)

*Do you ever wonder, Where the hell did that evil or just plain nasty thought or idea come from? So many . . . questions . . .*

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<sup>37</sup> See Bardon, F. (1962, repr. 2001). *Initiation into Hermetics*. Merkur Publishing.

[https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/619041.Initiation\\_Into\\_Hermetics](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/619041.Initiation_Into_Hermetics)

Philosopher-mystic Richard Rose queried, *What is the relation between sanity and reality? Whose thoughts are erratic, and whose are sane? Is a depressed person sane? Or just awakening to some new reality, such as making meaning of their own personal house of cards which is falling?*<sup>38</sup>

Or as another one of my philosopher heroes, Alan Watts, a Zen master and self-proclaimed spiritual entertainer declared, *“If you make up a theory of the universe that isn’t worth betting on, then why bother? Why go on? Just commit suicide . . . If you want to go on playing the game [of life] you have to come up with an optimal theory for playing the game. Otherwise, there’s no point in it . . .”* (Fun fact: A brilliant speaker, prolific writer and visionary philosopher, Watts passed from this earthly plain prematurely at the age of 58. Watts was infamously addicted to vodka and tobacco, undoubtedly depressed at times, perhaps frustrated by the cold shoulder he received from Zen Buddhist gurus in Japan (who refused to recognize him as a bona fide master, considering him a silly entertainer?). And he was understandably exhausted from hustling up near-

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<sup>38</sup> Rose, R. (1979). *Psychology of the Observer*. Rose Publications.  
Richard Rose (1917-2005) <http://richardroseteachings.com/>

constant speaking gigs to pay his prodigious alimony and child support).<sup>39</sup>

*But as a wise unknown Zen master once stated: The farther you go, the less you know . . .*<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Alan Watts (1915-1973) Alanwatts.org. Also see, <https://www.quora.com/Why-did-Alan-Watts-become-depressed>. Many judgey neophytes have written Watts off as a teacher or guru due to the apparent ignominious ending of his life. I clearly have not. *Have you ever heard the man speak?*

<sup>40</sup> Similar sentiments are expressed in the *Tao-te-Ching*, attributed to Lao Tzu. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Tao-te-Ching>,