

THE LITTLE BOOK OF

DEMONS

THE POSITIVE ADVANTAGES
OF THE PERSONIFICATION
OF LIFE'S PROBLEMS

RAMSEY DUKES

LITTLE BOOK OF DEMONS

Uncle Ramsey's

Little Book of
DEMONS



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To my Angel, Lynn

PART ONE

AN INTRODUCTION TO DEMONS



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I am writing this book to help people tackle the problems of everyday life.

The book recommends one simple formula: treat life the way you would want to be treated yourself. Talk to your plants; empathise with the moods of your car, the office copier or your computer. Recognise the weather, the landscape, nature for what they truly are—mighty gods—and learn to read their expressions. Study all the patterns of success or frustration in your life, name them as demons and learn to work with them rather than simply suffer or deny them.

In place of a plethora of self-help books offering *Seven Secrets of...*, *Ten Scientifically-proven Habits of ...*, *The Four-step Process to Complete and Utter...* and so on, I am suggesting one simple solution as the answer to everything: **do as you would be done by.**

How boring.

But it's surprising how a simple idea like that can ruffle people's feelings. I will people your world with demons, angels, gods and spirits of all sorts and persuasions—if you really don't mind that, then you may want to skip this first part. But I know that some people won't be at all grateful for all this fun.

Indeed, some will say: "All this nonsense about demons is simply putting the clock back hundreds of years to an age of superstition, animism and gullibility." (I think they mean "putting the calendar back".)

So this chapter is especially for those who are worried about my approach to demons. People who are reading this book in order to get angry rather than enlightened will find that this introduction raises the stakes somewhat.

Cue for demonic laughter...

SLIPPING BACK? OR BOLDLY STEPPING FORWARD?

Aren't we slipping back into outmoded superstition if we talk of demons instead of using proven scientific and psychological terms to describe what are, after all, no more than causal interactions however complex?

Do you think that? Or does a part of you think that?

If so savour the thought right now—re-read the question and live that doubt. Is there any hint of revulsion in the feelings it evokes? The slightest unease?

The phrase “slipping back” betrays a sense of linear progress, an idea that we have risen steadily from a dark ignorant past towards ever-increasing understanding and enlightenment. But what if that progress has been less direct: if, for example it took the form of a wave motion, like an incoming tide requiring occasional retreats into superstition in order to consolidate and realise each rational revelation? Is that not how nature herself evolves? Is not every Winter an apparent setback to the progress of Summer, though actually a time of reaping and thinning for the benefit of next year's growth?

The author has a confession to make. It is not something that need reduce the value of this book, but it

is something that the reader ought to know. I do not believe in that linear progressive view. Indeed I once parodied it in these terms¹ :

When I was young the accepted wisdom was that our primitive forbears, being ignorant and brutish, used to do silly things. This we call 'magic'. Through many millennia of doing silly things they learnt to do silly things rather well. Doing silly things well is what we call 'art'. Through further millennia of doing silly things well, plus increasing civilisation, they learnt to do silly things with authority. This we call 'religion'. Then at last, during the last five hundred years, we grew up and learnt to be sensible instead. This we call 'science'.

What I noted was that—contrary to this common view—magic tends to come after, rather than before, science. Just as science tends to displace religion, so will magic usually displace science. And I am not claiming this as some great triumph of magic over science, any more than it is a great slide back into ignorance. It is simply the way things churn.

Taking myself as an example: after learning the truths and methods of science at school and university, I found myself not less, but more inclined to embrace the magical philosophy of Aleister Crowley. The same is true of the numerous Wiccans with degrees in computer studies. Taking a wider example: the 1950s were a time of extreme materialism and reverence for the power of technology and scientific endeavour, and yet we moved forward to a magical revival in the 1960s—just as the Victorian scientific revolution paved the way for a fin de siècle revival of magic and mystery. More seri-

ously, perhaps, the rational philosophical enquiry of the classical era was followed by the so-called Dark Ages when magic flourished. Do we not hear anxious commentators even now fretting over the rising popularity of astrology, tarot reading and supernatural beliefs despite our widespread scientific education and frequent media de-bunking?

Have these examples persuaded you? Oh dear, I hope not! The idea is not to batter into submission that part of you that opposes my magical ideas, but rather to moderate its loneliness by conceiving a younger sibling, a new idea that a revival of magic might be one part of progress. Two distinct demons that can look forward to years of amusing and nourishing discussion, co-operation and conflict as they grow up together within the ecology of your mind.

PATTERNS AND CAUSES

Some people will be stuck at this point; stuck because I have not yet defined what I mean by 'magic'.

My first real demonstration of magic will be to refuse to define what I mean by magic. For magic proceeds by recognition, not definition.

Instead of seeing magic as a well-defined area of activity, I see it as a direction of inclination. For example: whereas science looks at phenomena, classifies them by definition and seeks underlying causal connections, magic looks at phenomena and recognises patterns.

A naive example: if you notice that traffic lights are always red when you are in a hurry, you are thinking magically; and if you therefore calm your-

self down before a journey in order not to suffer too many red lights, then you are doing magic. If instead you decide that there can be no connection between your mood and the behaviour of traffic lights then you are thinking scientifically; and if you decide to count the lights on each journey to confirm whether the results are purely random, then you are doing science².

By the way: both these experiments work equally well. It is mental inclination, not effectiveness, that distinguishes science from magic.

Although I have not defined magic, I have now given something for the dogs of doubt to get their teeth into—pattern recognition. There have been a number of discussions recently about irrational human handling of luck and risk, and the usual conclusion runs along these lines:

One of the measures of intelligence is an ability to recognise subtle patterns. Not just visual patterns but also patterns of sound and patterns of events. This has significant survival value: for example, it allows a creature to sense and avoid a dangerous situation even before it has had time or data to work out precisely the nature of the danger. We humans have evolved enormous skills in this respect, and it has enriched our culture with the appreciation of pattern and interaction in music, art and drama, but we are sometimes too good at pattern recognition, and this is the basis of superstition and the follies of speculation. People, singly and en masse, see patterns in random events and gamble on the predicted outcome. In terms of group hysteria, these patterns can become self-fulfilling, as when everyone believes in the New Economy and it inflates as a result. But chance holds sway, and eventually

these patterns are revealed for the illusion that they are. The bubble bursts or the gambler's 'run of luck' collapses. We emerge bruised and not much the wiser.

That makes sense, doesn't it? We're too good at seeing patterns so, instead of encouraging and developing this skill we need to restrain and discipline it using our rational faculties. Register a hunch, maybe, but never act upon it before it has been critically analysed and tested against reality.

I don't agree.

What is this talk of being 'too good' at something? Millions of years of evolution have led us to where we are, and I respect that fact. If we have exceptional talents as a result, then I believe we must learn to develop and work better with those talents rather than subjugate them to other abilities. When people get their science wrong, my answer is that they should improve their science, not reject it. By the same token, when we get our magic wrong, I believe we should improve our magic, not abandon it.

This book is intended to improve our magic as best it can. So it will be encouraging us to take a closer look at pattern recognition. Consider this example.

I take a stone, and I release it. It falls to the earth, every time I do it, in a quite predictable pattern.

The same happens with an apple.

I take a live butterfly and release it. The subsequent motion is very hard to predict or explain, but I recognise that it will, almost invariably, flap about for a while.

I take a bird and release it. At first the results seem as chaotic as the butterfly's, but then I discover patterns of interaction. Under certain circumstances (as

with homing pigeons) the bird will fly toward me. More typically it will flee away in fear. And so on.

I take my wife and release her. An even wilder universe of possible results emerges, and yet my supreme pattern recognition skills begin slowly to map that territory: there is coming toward me in love, or coming toward me in anger; there is indifference, laughter, torrents of abuse... and there are multiple layers of conscious or unconscious simulations of such reactions in order to make a point or express something which may arise from any region of her soul or the interactions between us.

Four years of marriage and, although I still pay more attention to my wife than to any bird, butterfly or stone, there remains so much to explore. For I do believe that our fellow human beings form the most complex patterns of all.

I quote above what I was taught in my formative years, about mankind's steady rise to the mastery of science. It went with a belief in our defining trait as: "Man—the toolmaker". The idea being that we alone learnt to make and master tools and this lead to every evolutionary advantage including enormous brain development. However, as the above example illustrates, no tool can be as complex as another human being. No mechanical process can match the perversity of an individual or group of people.

I therefore propose that it was not tool-making, so much as social interaction that went with the evolution of our larger brains. (And I note the recent discovery³ that certain crows have been shown to possess remarkable tool-manipulation skills to confirm that tool-making is not so closely linked to brain size as was taught.)

You see it in a growing baby: picking things up and releasing them over and over. Smiling and observing the world smiling back. At some point nearly every child makes the vital leap and recognises that certain patterns of reaction are so complex that they can only be accommodated by projecting some of its own conscious awareness out into the pattern—in other words, by assuming that other people too are conscious, intelligent beings. “Mama must be a person—just like me!”

This is the very assumption that is helping me to map the territory of wild and wifely behaviour patterns. It would also help me to model the bird's behaviour to some degree.

This book argues that there is no more powerful technique for handling our environment. This is far from being a reversion to primitive and outmoded behaviour. Look for conscious intelligence in phenomena and you awaken the greatest powers of the human brain to assist your exploration or mastery. Whereas those who insist on hording “conscious will” inside themselves, and seeing only mechanical processes outside themselves, are closing down most of their brain connections.

This is the true “dumbing down”—a simplification of thinking that does indeed give sharper focus but offers little greater advantage. Like abandoning the fork for a knife—it cuts better but the peas of wisdom roll off and you risk cutting your tongue within the mashed potato of success.

Superstition thrives on absolutes, not relatives. Religion and science teach us to look for absolutes and so we lose trust in what is relative. Magic teaches us to walk on the shifting sands of relative or work-

able truth and that is a great skill. Without that skill we can only kid ourselves that truths must be absolute. Superstition is not the result of magic, but rather the result of people wandering into magical territory armed only with the tools of religion and science.

That is why our culture has become so deeply superstitious and why I refuse to cloak my ideas in pseudo scientific or religious terminology—even though it would improve my status among the gullible.

So... a slight adjustment to the phrasing of the opening paragraph of the previous section:

Aren't we turning our back on outmoded superstition when we talk of demons instead of falling back on clumsy scientific jargon and psychobabble to describe what are, after all, the exquisite complexities of human experience?

WE ARE ENSNARED IN AN EVIL WEB OF DARK FORCES

Baby pushes Spoon to edge of Table and... over it goes. Spoon hits the floor with a satisfying tinkle, leaving a charming little splash of white and gold—milk and cereal—to relieve the monotonous pattern of the dining room carpet. Baby gurgles with joy.

Baby is discovering the delightful mastery that Will exercises over the environment. It's the tenth time spoon has hit the floor with unfailing obedience during this meal—not that Baby knows anything yet about the number ten nor of its intimations of Pythagorean perfection and cabalistic or even ordinal significance.

Spoon never lets Baby down. Not like Mama. Sure enough, Mama is now bending down to retrieve

Spoon, and will put it back in the dish with one of those delightful little sighs but—uh oh—she has stopped to rinse it under the tap this time, and stands arms akimbo scowling for a few seconds before returning Spoon to its launching pad.

Mama is a problem to Baby. She is clearly controllable—like everything else—but seems to malfunction at times. It's a tiresome responsibility for Baby, who has so much work to do without the added burden of learning to operate a defective Mama.

Baby is forced to sacrifice vital learning/growing time and energy to the contemplation of this problem—and Baby eventually comes up with a stunning, mind-blowing solution. Is it possible that Mama might contain a Me inside her? Until now it has been obvious that there is only one Me in the world, and that is Baby; but if Mama is being operated internally by an invisible Me—a Me that can be feeling happy one minute, bored or angry another—then it might explain her erratic responses.

Baby begins the most dramatic experiment of a lifetime—pretending that other people are being operated by a Me and asking “how might Me behave if it was out there rather than here?”—and Baby's world is, as a result, being enriched with the warmth and light of human interaction.

Two great forces are now locked in battle for Baby's soul.

One force says *“GIVE! For I am the path of Magic and Art! Give meaning to the world and it will repay you an hundredfold! See patterns in everything, for pattern adds value. Trade Self for Understanding and Nature will become your mirror, reflecting back the many facets*

of your infinite complexity, for everything is alive and longing to teach you. Personify the world and I will grant you WISDOM!"

The other force says "TAKE! For I am the path of Religion and Science! There are no patterns, there is no life, save only the will of God or the laws of physics. Guard your soul within you—never trade it—for it is not yours but God's, an illusion woven from the laws of physics. Objectify the world and I will give you POWER!"

Should Baby move forward from the discovery of Mama's soul? Should Babe look again at the family pets and realising that they too might possess volition and be better understood in those terms? As a grown up, might he not speak of a sailing vessel as 'she' and seek to divine her moods and subtle handling characteristics under changing tide and weather patterns in such terms? When the office photocopier persistently misbehaves just when the pressure is on, might he not ask the question "but how does it know we are in hurry to meet deadlines?"

And next time the spoon hits the floor so satisfyingly, might not Baby peer over the edge of the table—a second chance to appreciate the aesthetics of the situation—and actually thank the spoon for being so co-operative? Do this, and Baby's world grows richer and more nourishing day by day—an ever-ready breast inviting Babe to suck the milk of wisdom.

Or should Babe rather retreat from all this sharing of complexity and concentrate attention on the compliant Spoon? Gadgets can be much more compli-

cated than Spoon, and take longer to control, but eventually they give in without the need to bargain with them by sharing out Me. Family pets might seem to have minds of their own but, as Pavlov has shown us, they can also be coerced into mechanical patterns of behaviour. It might take a long time, but even Mama has buttons that can be pressed—and the whole secret of worldly success lies surely in the calculated manipulation of your business colleagues. While others get distracted into hugging trees and kissing their children, there are millions to be made by exercising our God-given dominion over matter. Who needs a rich environment out there when they can have all those riches for themselves?

Reader! You stand outside the walls of my thesis and two Great Beings guard the entrance.

One, a mighty demon of polished brass seven cubits in height and wielding a flaming sword, beats its fist against the right hand gate and cries with the voice of thunder:

“Take my path, foolish reader! For mine is the path of Religion and Science, of law that must be obeyed! No matter whether the law is of god, or of physics, you stand helpless before it for I am all-powerful and you are weak—a plaything of original sin, a mere genetic mechanism to be imprinted by circumstance. But I will give you power, for I will teach that there is no will but God’s will, and therefore all phenomena are mechanical, even your fellow beings. Nature is under your command to exploit for your good. Other people are no more than consumers of your product, so raise your price! Be the fittest to survive! Conquer all and leave a wasteland—for matter has no life

and you have naught to lose! Reason is my standard, but Psychopathy is my secret name!"

The other, a mighty demon eight cubits high, clad in snowy samite and bearing a silver chalice from which an endless stream of milk is flowing, beats its fist against the left hand gate and cries with the voice of tempest:

"Take my path, wise reader! For mine is the path of Art and Magic, of laws made to tinker with and throw aside! I know you as a thinking, feeling being that will make up your own mind—so what can I do but invite you to the great adventure? Be one with nature and your fellow beings, trade your soul for meaning and stay hungry! Experience is not to own, but to eat. Taste life, don't hoard it, and you will find love. Empathy is my standard, but Fellow Victim is my secret name!"

Choose, reader, choose!

I said CHOOSE! Damn you!

Oh well, if you must stand there dithering, then you might have time to notice that between the two great gates there is a little doorway with the door ajar. Peep in and you see a family seated round a hearth and the elder man smiles and invites you in for a cup of tea, saying:

"Well done! So you didn't fall for either of those charlatans out there! Let me introduce myself: I was writing this book and got a bit bored with the intro so decided to repeat the opening argument in demonic form—no longer a self-help manual but a cosmic battle cry. Don't worry about

making choices at this stage, all that matters is what can be learnt from your own responses."

- When I re-presented my introduction in terms of great powers, a choice of paths that could lead humankind into a world of nature and love or into a world of destruction and power, did it become more interesting to you?

- Or did it revolt you? That a thoughtful, if possibly misguided, thesis was being sensationalised in this obvious way?

- Or did you simply wonder what the author was playing at?

The first two responses are what I would consider to be superstitious: an over-reliance on demons to motivate us, or an instinctive rejection of them.

The third reaction is that of an awake human being, an explorer whose intelligence, alertness and sensibilities have not been altogether subjugated by a thousand years of religious and scientific cultural dominance. It is the response of someone who knows that a human being, not a sinner, nor a machine, is writing this book.

To those who chose the first two responses I say "have you forgotten that the author will receive a small amount of money, and an iota of kudos, every time a copy of this book is sold?"

Ah yes! And that would surely explain why I would want to sensationalise my thesis, in the desire to win more sales!

But no—for I know that many potential buyers would be put off by a sensational approach.

Ah well, that explains it—that is why you have now deflated the sensational approach in order to win more respectable sales.

The oh-so logical process of reason has just reached two diametrically opposite conclusions based upon an assumption that I am a mechanism seeking to boost sales of my book. The fact is that I, the author, am a total mystery except for one crucial fact: I too am a human being.

As a mystery I might want to boost sales, at the same time I might be addicted to unconscious self-sabotage, or I might want to prove how clever I am. I might want to teach you, or to help you, or to atone for deep feelings of childhood guilt. I may equally be a simple explorer of ideas, or an artist playing with words...

In fact I'm more likely to be all these things rolled into one and that would still be but a tiny part of the whole of me. And yet the whole pathetic structure of Western academic discourse is based upon the inane assumption that people should write what they mean to say.

"Science proves a connection between infertility and..." and we are supposed to believe it, rather than consider that it is a team of scientist who have made the announcement, human beings with individual agendas and in the pay of an institution with its own agendas. The papers are full of book reviews that blindly assume that, because the author makes an impassioned case, they must believe what they are writing.

And yet there is a ghetto for lies. The same people who reject homeopathy because it is "scientifically unproven" will go to the theatre and applaud when

a man in tights pretends to be the King of Denmark, and that a few square metres of wooden flooring is a battlefield. They will go to an art gallery and see lovingly painted scenes of cruelty and destruction, without automatically assuming the artist loves cruelty and destruction. They will applaud a film portrayal of Nazi fanatics without assuming the director is a Nazi fanatic.

Indeed, the assumption that life, nature and our fellow humans are profound, unfathomable, mysterious and rich in meaning still survives in our culture. It is safely quarantined in a ghetto called "art", and I am simply proposing to lead it out into the real world in the name of magic.

So, don't be put off by those tired old gas-bags hired by the so-called "serious" media; the rent-aboffin acamediacs who decry superstition, the New Age, astrology and human gullibility; those dinosaur spokespersons of the Enlightenment who splutter at the least glimpse of shade. This book is about putting meaning back where it belongs and living magically.

Sure, mankind needs certainties in times of terror. There is a place for science and religion when we are living in the trees, or being invaded by Goths, or discovering terrifying new worlds across the ocean. But in a world where cyclists wear hideous helmets, where cars may only be parked at the owner's risk, where packets of peanuts bear the message "warning—this product may contain nuts" and where teachers can be sued for allowing adventure in an adventure holiday—in such a world we have far greater need for art and magic.

Absolute truth, whether religious or scientific, should be celebrated for what it is—a crutch for epochs of lameness—and not become a burden in times of such agonising comfort as ours. Science and religion are a balm in times of uncertainty, but in an over-regulated world like ours we need art and magic to bring back the life.

In the prosperous nations today we do not seek marriage partners to huddle against the cold, or for mutual support in the battle for survival. Instead we marry for fulfilment, for romantic love. We marry to invite challenge into our lives, not to overcome it. We crave the excitement and will turn up the volume and wallow in films and tales of terror to regain that sense of being alive.

Do you really want to go on clinging to the skirts of science and religion and the flabby certainties of academia when you could be dancing naked on the heath by moonlight? Do you need the desperate diet of fake media frenzies—terrorism, paedophilia, cannibalism, murder and mayhem—to keep up the phantasy that we still live in a dangerous world and need religion and science to control it?

Or are you prepared to dance with dangerous ideas for a change?

Let me now introduce you to a different sort of partner—a real slut of an idea.

And be prepared to ride the comet's tail!

CHAPTER TWO

THE POSITIVE ADVANTAGES OF PERSONIFYING

Let us begin with one near-universal life experience: the way that gadgets and systems let you down just when things are most critical, when you are in a hurry, when an important person is present, or when the deadline is pending.

It does not matter whether it is red traffic lights on the way to a late appointment, or a car that won't start, or an office copier that grows cantankerous—in every case I recommend recourse to that very obvious question “how does it *know* I am in a hurry?”.

This is such a natural question, and it arises in so many minds, that it is easy to overlook its radical import. It is, in fact, deeply revolutionary, for it betrays a mindset for which one could be burnt at the stake in religious times, or treated as a mental case in scientific times.

The idea that an object could *know* anything, have any conscious volition, let alone know you are in a hurry, is anathema to religion. It is an idolatry, a pantheistic pagan notion that the church has been fighting since it emerged triumphant at the end of the so-called Dark Ages. The denial of that notion was inherited by science in the second half of the millennium—replacing the term ‘ungodly’ with ‘untruthful’, and seeing those who support the notion as ignorant or insane rather than sinful.

For the official view is still that an office copier cannot possibly know if you are in a hurry, because it has no brain, no mind, no intelligence, no con-

sciousness or will. It is an object, not a being, and should be treated as such.

Despite this revolutionary import, I recommend that one does ask the question "how does it know?", because it is actually a very sensible question.

Even that word 'sensible' can sound like a revolutionary battle cry, because we are led to believe that only science can be sensible, that the only sensible response is to say that the copier cannot possibly 'know'.

This is because people confuse two very different things: sense and logic. It is certainly not logical to assume the copier has a mind, when there is no evidence of neural activity, of communication, or of the level of complexity associated with mental processes. Logic does have some place in magical thinking, but its role is subservient and it is certainly true that science is far more logical than magic.

On the other hand, magic is far more sensible than science because it is an application of all the senses. When we think of the copier as a conscious being, instead of a mechanical object, we are vastly expanding our sensibilities to embrace mood, purpose, affection, commitment and a multidimensional infinitude of additional factors. The copier could be malfunctioning because it is an undercover agent for a rival organisation, it might be a revolutionary fanatic wishing to sabotage the business, it might simply hate me, or it might equally have fallen in love with me and be trying to attract my attention...

The possibilities are endless, they are highly illogical, but they are all simultaneously embraced by that single process of personification.

The tiny trickle of mental activity represented by logical thought has expanded into a torrent of parallel processes as the brain gears up to tackle the most challenging object in the universe—a fellow conscious being.

Next time you approach the copier under pressure you might first kneel before it and bellow out a song of praise for its steadfast support during easy times, or you might beat a drum and dance to placate it. It is then possible that the pent up aggression of working under pressure will be dissipated before you even touch the copier, and thus it may subsequently function just as it would in times of peace. In this case, the problem has been solved by magic.

Too much of such behaviour and you will be sacked—an even better solution because it not only removes you from the irritating presence of the copier but it also relieves you of the very work pressure that instigated the problem. Magic has again triumphed.

It is this effectiveness of magic that is so deeply threatening to science, and the reason that magic is forever under attack. If you are suffering aches and pains and lots of people are finding relief from the latest quack nostrum or New Age therapy, then it is not very logical to put your money and trust into something not endorsed by the medical establishment, but it is jolly sensible so to do. Who cares if the cure is 'purely psychological' or based on 'mere mass hysteria' when what you want above all is a cure?

If a bandwagon appears at the right time and place—then jump on it and rejoice. The idea that one should refuse to participate in a successful healing

process here and now because it fails to satisfy certain tests in some distant laboratory has a certain logic but it is anything but sensible. A test laboratory is a wonderful thing, but its significance is proportional to its success at excluding external factors—i.e. real life—from the experiments it conducts.

We all need an escape from the pressures or monotony of real life at times, and religion and science offer welcome alternatives—just don't confuse them with reality. Chess is a wonderful mental exercise, but it doesn't wash the dishes.

So look at that copier and simply ask "How does it *know* I am in a hurry?", and a new, more complex relationship develops between you and the copier.

But surely, isn't complexity at the heart of the problem? What you want is just to simplify the relationship back to master and obedient, mechanical slave? The answer is that complexity is a nightmare when thinking mechanistically, but it is a richness when personifying. For our personifying skills are nourished by complexity in relationship: handling complexity and multiple parallel processing are what personal interactions are all about.

The copier is now no longer a dead object, it is a new recruit to the office team and a new relationship to explore. How do we behave towards it? With fear? With contempt? With reverence or politeness? By bullying or cajoling?

A beautiful affair is about to begin and discretion now invites me gently to draw closed the curtains of the boudoir, but not before a final moment of speculation as to what might be the answer to that magic question.

How does it know I'm in a hurry? Maybe I slam the lid down harder when I'm rushed? Or maybe I don't allow time enough to warm up? Or maybe I press the buttons so impatiently that a loose connection is displaced?

If your new friend does reveal its secret, the chances are that the answer will prove quite banal—'mechanical' indeed. But that does not mean that it would have been more quickly discovered by thinking along mechanical lines and doing a series of tests designed to 'eliminate extraneous factors and isolate the problem'.

Mechanical answers are not the antithesis of the personifying approach, but merely a small subset of it. For even when we deal with real human beings and ask, say, "why does this person become a murderer?" the answer may prove quite mechanical—along the lines of a bullying father plus a genetic disposition—but the same principle holds: namely that the answer will generally reveal itself more quickly to one who treats the subject as a human being rather than an object for experimentation.

So, have I persuaded you to abandon mechanistic thinking and to personify the world instead?

If so, then I must hastily retract. For we live in a society where magic is an anathema that has been hounded for a thousand years. However sound you consider the above argument, its practice will ruin you: for copiers are not intended or designed to be personified in our society.

A copier is painted a dull beige colour to depersonalise it. You are not meant to winkle out its whims but rather to treat it like a slave object. When it protests you are meant to replace it—that is the quick

solution by which the mechanistic thinkers leapfrog the speedy subtleties of magic.

To succeed in life you chuck out office equipment as soon as it comes alive and reveals its character, for it is but an object like the staff you should sack as soon as their performance figures drop. You may detect a sneer between the lines of my writing, but even I recognise that this is how it is and how society works.

Lorry-loads of old copiers dumped in some field of sorrows for showing a moment's weakness and humanity; huddled for comfort in awkward postures against the oxidising rain, and sobbing toner into an already-poisoned soil. A field has become a tip, lifeless acres to be traded, just like the 'lives' of those who do the trading. Thus the wheels of commerce turn, the world, the flesh and all non-godly spirits are demoted and denied and religion and science have triumphed.

So do not abandon mechanistic thinking, just allow a new member into the family. Magic will be bullied by its older siblings, but will survive and enrich their lives with challenge. For they are far too comfortable in their victory.

We began with an errant office copier—but it could have been anything.

Have you not seen cars personified? In a street near mine there is one with a veritable beach of shells, pebbles and driftwood glued across the expanse of black plastic above the dashboard. I doubt if this is consciously done in the name of magic, as it is more likely to be considered as 'folk art'—the permitted ghetto for feelings in our society. If the motive inclines toward self-expression and inner need, then

art is indicated, but if the motive inclines towards outer purpose then magic is a truer dwelling. As a magical act it might soothe the driver, affirm the owner's rebel status, express a loving relationship with the car and its role in the priesthood of Mercury. It might even be a response to malfunction when the driver is in too much of a hurry.

Nor is it just machines that can come alive in this fashion. Try talking to your plants as you tend the garden, as many a beekeeper talks to the hives. I have enjoyed the most sublime intellectual and philosophical discussions with my cats—who prove even better listeners than the average Oxbridge scholar, and far more patient for they show greater restraint in not interrupting to put forward their own theories. The fundamental thesis of this very chapter has already been rehearsed before a small cactus on my desk—prickly company at the best of times and yet respectfully silenced on this occasion by the force of my conviction.

Everything comes alive when you trade soul substance in this way instead of hoarding it. For I am not just advocating that we see soul in external objects but also in patterns of manifestation.

Was it the office copier that misbehaved? Or was it the car, the traffic lights or your children who played up when you were most pre-occupied? Or... maybe... they all behave in this way?

If *everything* seems to conspire to trip your progress whenever anything important is trying to happen, then recognise the guiding presence behind it all, for you are being plagued by a demon. Name it, honour it, reach out to it and the adventure begins.

Or dismiss it all as “coincidence” and you will remain forever safe—as a prisoner is safe in the familiarity of his cell.

So who is this demon that forever seeks to forestall your progress? Why has it attached itself to you and who profits from its machinations?

Prepare to be surprised by the answers, for the relationship between people and other demons is not mechanical in essence but complex. You may not want the constant drag on progress but consider: what would be the alternative? If everything worked out and you became an overnight success, would you love your new state, or would it prove so terrifying that you would prefer the old familiar feeling of failure? A demon can serve at the same time as it persecutes, and therein lies its true power.

In this last example I have apparently replaced a family of souls—a car, a copier, the traffic lights, the children—with a single demon. But the method is not reduction so much as multiplication, for any cluster of phenomena can be unfolded into a far larger number of interrelationships every one of which can form a demonic pattern. Like layers of an onion, not only has the world come alive, but it has revealed depth upon depth of layers of life and meaning.

Behold! I invited you to give away a little of your soul consciousness, to project it into the environment, and you have reaped a whole universe of meaning and meta-meaning!

Has any demonic pact of fable ever delivered so faithfully and so richly?

PART TWO

PERSONAL DEMONS



CHAPTER THREE

HOW SHOULD I ADDRESS DEMONS?

The last example of the previous chapter expanded the field of enquiry dramatically, and introduced a new problem.

Until then, I seemed to be simply advocating talking to something—car, copier, cat, plant or whatever. Though revolutionary in concept, as I explained, it is hardly revolutionary in practice because it comes so naturally. Many more people talk to objects than would admit it—“Hurry up, you silly thing!” says the secretary as she stands fretting by the office printer.

But when I suggest talking to a complex comprising discrete phenomena—like a run of bad luck—and naming it a demon, then we are moving up a gear. How the hell does one talk to a run of bad luck? Let us begin with an illustration.

ILLUSTRATION — A YOUNG MAN WITH A PROBLEM

A bright young man has just left Oxford with a good degree and track record for enterprising extra curricular activities, and he needs to get a job.

He's got used to a Summer vacation, so puts off thinking about the problem until September. Then he thinks about it.

After a couple of weeks thinking he discusses it with someone who suggests looking in the Guardian job adverts. So he buys the paper every day and studies the ads.

The jobs all sound so boring that he does not reply to any of them. After three weeks he hears that several of his old friends are being interviewed for jobs and panic sets in. He studies the next Guardian very thoroughly and decides that one of the jobs doesn't sound too awful and might be worth considering. So he considers it for a week or two, discusses it with friends and family, looks up the company's website and imagines what it would be like working there. In the third week he prepares a very careful application letter in great detail, re-writing it several times to get it perfect, then keeping it and re-reading it for a few more days before sending it off.

He is told that the position has already been filled. This precipitates a mild depression and it is a week before he looks at adverts again, and now they look as dull as ever but he makes a couple of desultory applications, trying now to sound as dull as the positions advertised. Then a fellow graduate who has just got his first job on a mouth-watering initial salary tells him he has nothing to worry about "I only got this job after I'd applied for hundreds of posts—you've got to keep applying—ten, twenty letters a day!"

This launches a period of frantic activity and hundreds of applications. After a few weeks he gets his first positive response, but cannot now find the advert among the mountains of old clippings, cannot remember anything about the company nor why he applied. He could look for a website, but his computer is on the blink after all that frantic work, so a few days pass and he feels a bit stupid and decides it is too late to respond, so tears up the letter. This

has, however encouraged him to go on applying in a more positive spirit.

Mother is getting worried for him as he is spending more and more time brooding in his room, and suggests he ought to ask Uncle Ronald—a very successful businessman, but one whom our hero considers to be a ghastly prat—so he does nothing about it until mother invites Uncle to dinner. Uncle Ronald fixes an interview with a senior director, but the interview is a disaster because the man seems like just another ghastly prat and our hero responds by going moody. He doesn't get the job and Uncle Ronald is embarrassed, but Mother is very sympathetic.

Stop, gentle reader, at this point and answer this simple question: will you come to the rescue and offer this bright young man a job?

Really? Why not? He's had rotten luck and surely deserves a break!

The first thing to demonstrate is that one's demons can be much more easily detected by other people. The answer I am hoping for is that you would not give him a job because he "clearly has a problem"—in the sense that he owns or is part of the problem himself.

But if we try pointing this out to him he might well protest, insisting that it wasn't his fault he'd run out of stamps that day and the post office had early closing, that his computer went on the blink, that he'd applied for so many jobs that he got the people's names muddled and said the wrong thing etc. etc.. All these failures are quite unconnected and surely could have happened to anyone....

Despite all these protestations we are left with a feeling that he is not really trying, that he is somehow pretending to himself that he is searching for work.

OK, so he now admits he has a problem, but externalises it: maybe by calling it “a run of bad luck”, or himself being “a victim of our corrupt capitalist system” or “typical inverted snobbery against Oxbridge graduates”. If he does come to own the problem it amounts to total identification with it: “I’m just a loser, I haven’t got a chance”.

As independent witnesses, however, we recognise that he is part of the problem but is not identical to it. Being aware of a problem does help distinguish oneself from it, so we might decide it is his “attitude” or his “commitment” that is at fault.

But what I am now suggesting is that he should externalise the problem in a different way, by calling it a demon. This guy has a demon that is persuading him he ought to get a job while sabotaging his efforts. The demon has occupied the space between desiring employment and failing to get it, and is quite comfortable in that niche. If our hero were to get a job, that space would close up and the demon would have to go or else adapt—maybe making him dissatisfied with the job he now has. So it is in the demon’s interest to keep him failing to get work. Equally, the gap would close if he were to give up wanting a job, so the demon wants to keep him trying.

This illustrates the fact that demons usually like to be left alone in their niche. The best option for this demon is that the hero just keeps trying and keeps failing, but it is not that simple. Our hero is a human intelligence that detects patterns and needs the stimulus of new approaches from time to time

and this tends to raise the stakes. So, the way things are going, he might take to drugs to relieve the pain of not getting a job, and the resulting changes to his character make him even less employable. Then there is the possibility of suicide attempts, and maybe turning to crime.

If the demon wants to be left alone, the first problem will be how to convince our hero that there really is a demon. This is why he either projects the problem out by saying that he is simply unlucky, or a victim of society, or else totally takes over the problem by saying he's a no-good loser. Whereas I say that he has a demon—a third thing that is neither fully out there nor fully him. The situation is summarised in this diagram—a whole host of “simple explanations” lie out there trying to tempt us away from the central realisation that he has a demon.

CONTEXT:

I AM NOT GETTING A JOB BECAUSE..

I AM NOT GETTING A JOB BECAUSE... I AM NOT GETTING A JOB BECAUSE... I AM NOT GETTING A JOB BECAUSE...

there are too many grads after too few jobs

that's just the whole system is corrupt

they are all snobs

they are all stupid to recognise my genius

my parents & I don't prepare me for this

they are all intimidated by me

I am in a relationship with a demon that feeds upon us not getting a job

over-qualified

people as clever as myself are destined for failure

unlike some I won't lie about myself

I'm simply not meant for this

I'm just too nice for this rat race

I've never had a prophet in my own land

I'm not getting a job because I'm just too good for this rat race

I've never had a prophet in my own land

I'm just a pathetic loser

I'm just an unlucky

I AM NOT GETTING A JOB BECAUSE...

"Tempt us away"? that's a curious way to put it—but it reflects the fact that all those other simple explanations are themselves just demons trying to attract our attention—an important extension of the argument but one that we put aside for the time being and will return to later.

So the next problem is to resist our own rationalising habits described in the introduction—the tendency encouraged by our religious and scientific culture to analyse and dissect rather than to personify. The questions it raises are along these lines: "but what exactly is this demon? Is it a problem in society or is it an unconscious complex?". Is he not getting a job because he is a personification of youthful rebellion, a principle that could actually regenerate some hidebound organisation were it not for the fact that the establishment resists change and will refuse such people a job rather than accept the challenge of employing them? Or is he a mummy's boy who doesn't want to leave home but makes feeble little efforts in order to win mummy's approval, while failing in order to qualify for her protection?

Stop it! I say. The answer to these questions does not matter. Don't dissect the demon, speak to it. There are many other approaches to the problem that involve analysis at this stage, but I am describing a particular one that requires the problem to be addressed in its own right. At this stage it is actually better to picture the demon as a little horned being lurking behind our hero and ready to leap out and pitchfork his prospects, than it is to attempt to explain it away.

Instead of analysing the demon we analyse its relationship with our hero. This is how the per-

sonifying approach handles the logical dilemma of something that is “neither fully out there nor fully him”, it does so by projecting the demon out there while allowing it to be in personal relationship with him. The demon is seen as his partner—that is how it is neither fully out there nor fully him.

Partnership is not one-sided, it is not a victim state. Realising that fact provides the key to working with the demon. It can only have power over your life because it has paid for that power. The demon is providing some sort of service.

Demonic services can be broken into two categories—providing pleasure and avoiding pain. Better to avoid the loaded words “pleasure” and “pain” and simply say that demonic services are based upon feeding and avoiding.

In this case the demon is helping him to avoid change, avoid having to give up time to work, avoid having to commit to a career amongst others. It is feeding his sense of being a victim, a tragic hero, of being “too clever” or of being a failure. We don’t yet know which are the crucial exchanges in this case, but this is where we will start searching.

But it is also where we have to get ready to abandon our hero. Because the relationship with a demon is intensely personal in detail—only he can sort it out, not us, and there is no ultimate formula beyond this point.

So what does he actually do? that’s the question which arises again and again, but all I can reliably answer is “personify the problem: treat it as an equal, an intelligent, aware being until evidence consistently proves otherwise”.

Unless the person is exceptionally gifted, or unlucky, he won't actually see the demon and hear its voice. He can speak to it—out loud is good, provided no-one else is around to make it embarrassing!

The answers can come in various ways, but it is worth remembering that demons usually prefer to hide. We are dealing with something akin to a wild person or animal that runs away when we actually address it.

So what would you do with a wild creature? You would stalk it, follow its tracks and be subtle.

The tracks of a demon can show in various ways. One we have already seen—in this case it was a string of missed job opportunities. Often the demon manipulates us through feelings: feelings so familiar as to be almost invisible. So I would advise our hero to look closely at his feeling reactions to certain aspects of his failed job hunt.

When one of his carefully worded job applications is met with a crude rejection, or even totally ignored, what does he feel? Anger? Where does that anger go? Inwards? Outwards? Is it dissipated or stored? Where is it dissipated or stored?

How also does he feel when an application is turned down, but in a really sympathetic and humane way—maybe with a genuine-sounding regret that the post has already been filled and “may we keep your details on file in case another vacancy arises”? Does he still feel angry in that case? or does he feel a subtle sense of relief? That would be a clue!

When his father asks how the job hunt is going, how does he feel? Does he relish telling father how it has failed? Is there a hint of “you smug smartiboots

bastard—look what a fucking failure your son has turned out to be!” in his response? That too would be a clue.

A letter comes back from a company—don’t rush to open it, hold it in your hand trying to sense what it will say, and trying to anticipate what you really want it to say, and how you will react to it.

I say it again—we can go no further at this point because the relationship is a personal one—and that is what makes it so meaningful to him and so arbitrary to us. So we must leave him at this point and return to general comment on how to handle demons.

DEMON? WHAT DEMON?

In the above example, it was suggested that the hero might well resist the idea that he has a demon, and insist on another explanation. We need to explore that possibility further.

In the diagram are several alternative explanations. Taking a couple that lie quite close to each other:

- I’m not getting a job because the work ethic is a corrupt system designed to crush those at a disadvantage.
- I’m not getting a job because I’m too clever and that scares those ignorant bastards who post recruitment ads.

Ideas like that can be quite addictive: the more you believe them, the more evidence you find to confirm their truth. If our hero ignores my advice and opts for explanations like that, it could be his undoing, but it also could work very well. He might,

for example, build up such a level of protest that he is driven to express it in violent punk music, or to write a scathing first novel.

Even the most negative ideas on the diagram can lead to success in their own terms. For example: “the reason I can’t get a job is that I’m just a fucking loser” could lead to a downward spiral towards self immolation and suicide that looks from the outside like an outright failure but is actually a superb victory over pompous attitudes in an arrogant, self righteous family—“get them where it really hurts” stuff.

Either way, a tempting thought grows into an addiction where it can lead to ruin or it can lead to triumph. More properly, as we shall see, it can lead to both. The loser gets revenge on his proud father, but sacrifices his life. The protest singer soars to fame, but will be particularly vulnerable to the other temptations of that lifestyle—including drugs.

So you don’t have to follow my advice in order to succeed. Does this weaken my case? Does it mean that demonising is just an alternative psychological trick to solve problems?

My answer is instead to extend the principle from therapeutic technique to broad life principle, by claiming that all those alternative explanations are simply demons in their own right. That is what makes them so addictive. We do not see them as demons, we insist that “I’m a loser” is just an explanation, rather than a parasitic life-form that is seeking a niche in the ecology of our minds. As a result “I’m a loser” gets a foothold, becomes a demonic partner to us and begins to manipulate our behaviour to confirm its validity and strengthen its hold. This is an example of a demon preferring not

to be recognised and named, and thus it can grow without interference.

So the analysis has shifted. Instead of a choice between demons or not demons, I present a choice between two sorts of demonic pact. In one case we name, shame and co-operate. In the other we deny and are taken over.

Actually, it's a little more complicated than that.

TOUGH AND TENDER APPROACHES

If I said to our hero "you have a demon" he might reply "don't be soppy, it's just a run of bad luck" or "just the fault of the narrow minded British approach to work" or whatever. Many people would say this reply is being "tough-minded" or "hard-headed" relative to my approach.

There is something in that. Working with demons can be a bit like Alice Through The Looking Glass—a topsy turvy world where you sometimes make better progress by walking backwards. Politicians are very aware of this and often say the exact opposite to the truth, and it is a very effective technique. In this example, people who go along with the herd and meekly bow to establishment values by insisting "it's just coincidence" or "the government's fault" are called "tough-minded", while those who champion a revolutionary diagnostic technique are called "soppy". Fair enough. It's no worse than insisting that people are being tough when in reality they are so feeble that they pine for "strong leaders".

Nowadays you follow the herd by denying that demons exist. In religious times, like the Middle Ages, you did it by insisting that demons are evil. In

either case it is forbidden to make a pact with them. The following is an extract from The Grimoire of Pope Honorius⁴, a medieval book on demonic magic, and gives an idea of their approach to the subject.

"I conjure thee Spirit, by the Living God, by the true God, by the blessed and omnipotent God... etc. etc.

In the Name of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Sacraments and the Eucharist..." etc. etc. for another 6 lines.

I conjure thee into this circle, O accursed Spirit, by thy judgement, thou who hast dared to disobey God. I exorcise thee, Serpent, and I order thee to appear immediately in human form, well shaped in body and soul, and to comply with my commands without deception of whatsoever kind, and without either mental reservation: and this by the great names of God ..." etc. etc. for another 7 lines

I conjure thee, O evil and accursed Serpent, to appear at my wish and pleasure, in this place and before this Circle, immediately, alone and without any companion, without any ill-will, delay, noise, deformity or evasion. I exorcise thee by the ineffable names of God ..." etc. etc. ad nauseam...

The whole thing reads very much in the style of a heavy handed legal summons or warrant for arrest, and is a far cry from the tender negotiations I am recommending. The fact is that there are other approaches than the one I recommend, but they are more risky.

In the example given earlier, I suggested that the hero might deny that he has a demon, insist that his failure is the fault of society, and get so worked up about the idea that it leads to a brilliant career as a

revolutionary rock singer. Although this looks like a denial of the demonic diagnosis, it actually confirms it, by suggesting that the notion “society is at fault” is itself a demon that has taken him over and used him as a vector for spreading its message into the youth culture.

As an alternative way of working with demons it has definite advantages. Following my prescription he might overcome his resistance to work and end up with a safe job in Dad’s firm. The other way he becomes a folk hero. I know which I would prefer.

The problem is that, the way he did it, he denied the existence of the demon and so became its vehicle. Great benefits could result, but the position is very dangerous because people who succeed because of being driven by a demon are people who have made a career out of addiction and are therefore very vulnerable to the addictive qualities of success itself.

If instead he had realised he had a demon in the form of deep contempt for certain elements in our society, and he had made a more conscious pact with that demon by allowing it to drive him to the top, then he would have a greater chance of handling the situation when he became a teen idol. It is still a risky choice, because the better you control a demon, the less powerful it is. The more you allow it to control you—for example by insisting there is no demon, the more freedom it has to grow.

I associate this division between tough and tender demonic contracts with the right/left division in politics. Consider this: what does a politician do with its criminal or unpopular elements?

The left wing approach is to communicate with them and try to assimilate them back into society:

a murderer who genuinely repents and wishes to make amends is not just another honest citizen, he is an honest citizen with extra insight into the mind of the murderer and can therefore make an even bigger contribution to our society.

The right wing approach is to punish them, alienate them in order to make them strong and to use their strength. This is typified by Adolph Hitler's approach: put your thugs into uniforms and use them to increase your political power. Or by Margaret Thatcher's approach: the more underdogs become re-classified as criminals, the more the middle classes will be terrified into voting for her government.

The right wing approach is certainly effective, but the trouble is that it depends upon increasing the strength of the demons and you can end up with a demon too strong to handle.

We are talking about two different forms of demonisation. My type of demonisation begins with a recognition that demons exist, and then studies how best to handle them. The other approach is to deny that there is any such thing as a demon, then to give some problem all the supposed characteristics of a demon—evil cunning, base motives, social outcasting etc..

In these terms, the Tory government gained a brief electoral rush in the 1980s by blaming the ills of society on feckless single mothers and the resulting demonisation lead to even more marriage breakdowns and eventually enough single mothers to provide a significant addition to the ranks of opposition voters. The result was that not only were more of these feckless women liberated from their feck-

less husbands, they were eventually also liberated from Tory governance.

THE BASIC RULE

In conclusion: in this book I am mostly advocating a left-wing, co-operative handling of demons, but I will also keep my sights on the right-wing combative approach as I recognise and respect its potency—after all, if the socialist re-assimilation of criminal elements was taken to its logical conclusion there would be nothing worth watching on television any more.

I suspect that the best relationship with demons involves a combination of both approaches, one that must be discovered and developed by the readers themselves.

And that brings us back to the basic rule underlying all approaches to demons: resist the continuous temptation to look for rules and laws; return always to the present situation and empathise.

After reading the last section, many people will habitually form questions such as: "When do you recommend the tough approach, and when is the tender approach better?"

To this I say: consider that baby who has just started exploring the difference between a spoon that falls to the floor every time it is dropped and a mother that usually picks it up immediately but sometimes refuses or waits. Were the baby able to talk, it might well pose questions to me such as: "How often does she pick it up before she starts refusing?" Crude formulaic answers to that question may provide some immediate satisfaction but

eventually numb the sensibilities. Better that the baby returns to the reality of the moment (a reality embracing the weather, the emotional atmosphere, the feng shui of the surroundings, the sense of hurry or relaxation, the baby's own mood and behaviour and the shadows of the recent past) and then asks itself: "how many more spoon droppings would I tolerate if I were her?" It isn't science, but it does foster wisdom.

To help underline this lesson—a lesson that will be much easier for some people than others—I will now pose a problem as follows. Let us say you have read thus far, considered your situation, located a demon and started to approach it from the tender way, but it turns tough on you. Or vice versa: you get tough with your demon and it goes all tender and reconciliatory on you. The question is this: "Does this disprove my analysis into tough and tender approaches? If not, then what has gone wrong?"

While you are considering this problem, I will expand on the distinction I am making.

As explained in the introduction, this is not one of those *Seven Simple Laws of Total Mastery* type books, because it only has one recipe in it, namely "empathise and explore". And yet I do suggest certain guidelines along the way – such as the distinction between tough and tender approaches. These are, however, not laws, algorithms or formulae, but simply guidelines, and must be recognised as such.

Compare them with signposts. If you are in Cheltenham and you take the road signposted to Stroud as if it was a formula for Stroudness, then you will be quite upset after ten minutes when you find yourself not in Stroud but a place called Brockworth.

Don't give up. Trust me. But when after a further fifteen minutes you are now in a place called Pain-swick—no more Stroudlike than either Brockworth or Cheltenham—then you will probably decide the signpost was 'false' and give up. Guidelines, like signposts, are not laws or formula that are liable to such objective testing, they are always dominated by the reality of the situation in all its objective and subjective aspects.

So, back to that problem. You have happily accepted my analysis into tough and tender approaches, you have located a demon and begun the most tender reconciliatory approach to it, and it has turned into a snarling monster. What has gone wrong?

It's so obvious.

Think!

All that has happened is this: the demon has been reading this book too. Over your shoulder.

Put yourself in its position. You are like a long-term marriage partner. No matter whether the marriage has been comfortable or unhappy, how do you react when you find your partner reading a book about how to improve their relationships. Does it mean they are not happy with this relationship? Or that they are wanting other relationships? Maybe you welcome this attention to the relationship, but shouldn't they have told you they wanted to explore further before making a unilateral decision to buy this book?

And so on. Simply by reading this book you have added a new factor to your relationships with demons, and that in itself will undermine any rigid formulae I might have chosen to provide in this book.

The tough/tender distinction is still valid, and will prove its value in the longer term. But apply it only with awareness and understanding of the actual situation as an ongoing, developing whole.

CHAPTER FOUR

VARIETIES OF DEMONIC EXPERIENCE

You don't learn about people from books. Discuss.

The first point is that it is not true—of course we learn about people from books. I've never met Aleister Crowley, so most of what I know of him has come from biographies.

The second point is that the sentence, although not strictly true, does contain a truth. Although I gained most of my knowledge of Crowley from books, I also learnt something about him by talking to others who had met or worked with him. Without the greater depth of empathy and understanding this personal contact provided, my knowledge of him would have been more brittle, fragmented and stereotypical. The added input had a bigger impact on the quality of my understanding of the man than on the quantity of my knowledge.

I also believe that we learn more about our fellow humans from fiction than from non-fiction books, and this is because stories encourage us to enter into the scene described and empathise with or 'become' one of the characters. In imagination we are no longer reading a book but participating in a drama.

This is not to say there is anything innately wrong with non-fiction books about people, but simply that they are labouring under a disadvantage as long as they simply present facts and do not weave stories that engage the imagination and encourage the reader to participate.

So the opening sentence should be replaced with this: We learn most about people by living among them and interacting or observing them in a receptive manner. We also learn something from books, especially when the books manage to emulate the experience of human interaction.

The same applies to demons. You will, I trust, learn quite a bit about them from this book, but will only really understand them insofar as you work with them in your own life. Meanwhile I will attempt to increase the teaching potential of this book by giving a few examples based on real life to illustrate the process in some of its diversity.

I won't go as far as to weave stories from these examples, I will simply seek to distil from them a few useful guidelines for the next chapter.

DEPRESSION

Depression is a recognised medical condition, and I believe it is possible to be permanently depressed. In this example, however I am using the word in a more popular sense to describe a feeling of despair, pointlessness and utter lack of energy or motivation that can descend upon one's life and then lift again.

It may happen for a reason – an unhappy love affair or loss of job – but it may also just descend for no obvious reason and cast its shadow over a period that could otherwise be a high-point in our lives. This can be even worse – what is wrong with me, one asks, that I should be feeling like this when I have so much to be grateful for compared with others less well off in life?

When in this state of despair, it is hard to imagine that any other state could exist for oneself – happiness seems like a prerogative of other people. It is important, then, not to exercise the imagination but rather the memory. Give imagination a rest and focus on the fact that one has been in this state before, and that one has since been out of this state. The condition comes and goes. Therefore, however unlikely this might seem, there is reason to suspect that one might again be happy at some time in the future.

This can be a very useful revelation. I began the chapter with an example of a sentence that was not true, yet contained a truth. It illustrates an important principle, namely that most people are not demons yet they contain demons. In this case there is enormous pressure of temptation to identify with one's black despair and see it as 'me' rather than something that visits me and departs again. Instead I encourage the depressed person to detach from the condition – and remembering that the condition has come and gone in the past is a very great help towards achieving such detachment.

If depression is a recurring problem, it deserves also to be addressed in those times of relative joy between visitations. When feeling good, it is tempting to turn one's back on the depression of yesterday and throw oneself into life again 'making up for lost time' in a frenzy of fun. Instead I suggest you invite depression to join you at times of hope: when feeling confident and optimistic, think back to the arguments you used to convince yourself that there was no future, that you were a loser and there was no hope. Don't work yourself back into that state of depression, simply converse with your memory

of that state, take its arguments seriously and give them the respect of a serious refutation. Take those arguments apart gently. And next time you are depressed, think back to that inner conversation and invite it in turn to participate in your depression.

Note my wording: when I say that the depression “deserves also to be addressed” I am beginning to anthropomorphise the state. Then I invite it to join a conversation. What I am in effect doing is seeing the condition as a demon that visits rather than simply a change that comes over one.

But how much respect should one allow for such an unwelcome visitor as this?

The answer came to me when visiting a friend in a nearby parish. As we chatted over tea he looked out of the open door and said “Oh God, no. Not Jules.” A moment later a small, fussily dressed old man entered and proceeded to bore us with his conversation until my friend invented a dinner date as reason to flee his presence. In truth, I did not find Jules boring at first—he had some interesting views on literature and a passion for first editions—but it became clear that my friend had heard them all before many times and the boredom soon rubbed off on me.

I’ve met this in several communities: the presence of an idiot, bore or nuisance that everyone dreads and groans as they approach. Linda Snell, the interfering busybody dramatised in *The Archers* – BBC radio’s favourite soap opera—fits the bill, though she is far from being a bore and much more of an irritant. But I’ve also noted that such people play a definite role in the community. Everyone laments their existence but, if the character dies or goes away,

they would equally be missed. After all, if Linda Snell really was of no value to The Archers, she could have been written out of the script long ago. Sometimes we need someone to complain about, or to blame: "Sorry I didn't get back to you yesterday. I was intending to come over but ruddy Jules turned up – you know he goes on – and that was the end of my afternoon."

Depression can play that sort of role: an unwelcome guest yet a part of your life ecology; a time to slow down, turn inward, tend your wounds... even an excuse for time off work.

Winston Churchill named his depression as his "black dog" and I like to believe that his very phrasing gave him enough detachment to help cope with the state. For that is indeed the approach that has helped myself and other melancholics to handle our periods of gloom.

First: grant it the status of a living being, a demon. Second afford it the modicum of respect that goes with such a status: treat it as a visitor—even though unwelcome—and talk to it. In many cultures a guest always has status once allowed past the door. Even if you then discover that he is your worst enemy, you are bound to preserve hospitality until he leaves—ok, then you kill him.

As a youth I was the sort of person folks turned to when feeling blue. I had a number of such 'foul weather friends' who would turn up to be comforted when things were bad, but who had no time for me when they were feeling good, and would rush off to enjoy more extraverted and with-it company. I sometimes resented that. So don't treat depression in that way, but remember it sometimes when things

are good and invite it to debate the pleasures of life as I suggested above. See how well its negative arguments work when you are on a roller – and remember and remind it of your discussion next time you are again feeling low.

Am I trying to give you a 'cure' for depression? No, rather more a solution: a solvent to dissolve that sharp boundary between times of gloom and times of joy and thus discover a spectrum of possibilities instead of a binary discontinuity.

I, for one, have learnt to enjoy somewhat my times of gloom and low energy. I liken them to a sort of "soul sauna" in which I can wallow on my own and sweat out life's surplus. These dark days seldom last beyond the next sunny morning.

Admittedly there are others I know who began from the same position as myself but went down the path of medication. With the force of medical opinion behind them they can argue that depression is a clinical condition subject to understood and ever-improving remedies. I would never try to deny their approach, and I am sure there are levels of depression so severe that the full comforts of professional expertise should be available to address them.

My plea to those who started from the same position as myself is simply to recognise that there are other approaches worth exploring.

SICKNESS

What has been said about depression could apply to a number of minor illnesses.

I recall my days as a computer programmer in the mid 1970s when one had to spend boring ages at a typewriter terminal. I had already conceived the idea of a VDU, so it was all the more tedious having to type commands and wait for the computer to type out a response.

One day I had flu, and realised that I was actually better at the job in that state because my energy was so low that I did not get bored and fidgety. The experience transmuted my experience of flu from one where the condition was simply an illness—i.e. a defect to be corrected as soon as possible—to an understanding that flu could be seen as a condition where I was less well fitted to everyday life but actually better fitted for certain specific activities.

I am writing about the sort of flu where you lie still in bed and actually feel quite good. It is only when you try some frantic activity like raising a finger or turning over in bed that the illness is felt. That sort of flu can be brilliant for meditating upon Life and taking stock. I have learnt to thank it for visiting me and, to some extent, even negotiated less inconvenient times for its visits.

And as for my memories of my prep-school: being sick was the only time one could get away from all that frantic timetable of bells and lessons and actually read a few detective stories.

In terms of demonology then, it becomes reasonable to address minor ailments—from sneezes, through head and back aches to bouts of flu—as tiresome guests who might actually have something to teach us. So you can lie there and ask the ailment why it has come, whether it has a purpose, and whether it appreciates that it is not altogether

welcome in your life. Note especially that last point: one of the excuses people have for not addressing demons is that they believe it means moving from total condemnation of the condition to fawning acceptance. Not at all: you can be quite straight with a demon in explaining why it is unwelcome, as long as you are prepared to listen to its reply.

I have learnt quite a bit about myself and how to regulate my own health by talking to my illnesses as pesky demons with a point to make. There are also times when I'm simply ill like anyone else—and if you think that funny, or a blot upon my thesis, I would reply that even the best inter-human relationships have been known to break down or go through bad patches, but that is no reason to give up on them.

NOSTALGIA

Here's an example where the personification process is clearer and easier to visualise, so I'll weave a little more fiction into it to make the story more vivid.

He was the product of the sixties: a star who had rocketed to fame while still a teenage hippy. His manager had called him back from a Caribbean island idyll, telling him that a recording he had made before setting off on his travels had become a surprise best seller and was now at number one in the charts.

One day he was living the life of a beachcomber, easily at home with the native islanders, fishing, swimming, leading a simple life and composing songs to play to friends and neighbours on balmy

evenings. The next day he was being mobbed in the swinging streets of London, feted at the grandest hotels, flown by helicopter to wild parties in stately homes and setting out on gruelling concert tours. Unlike some who totally cave in under such pressures, he kept his sanity more or less and rode out his success over the years, putting enough money aside to be able to settle down comparatively when the frenzy of fame abated.

But as he entered middle age, no longer a chart buster but still with a loyal following of fans, he began to yearn for that simple island life he'd left far behind. It wasn't just a question of retiring to comfort in the sun, he missed the innocence of one who has known nothing but the simple life, for whom creativity is just a natural, spontaneous response to the beauty of nature and fellow beings—rather than a cash-cow being milked by greedy agents.

As you can tell from my description, this is an idealised picture. It is not real. For people living the simple life need be no more innocent than anyone else. So, if it isn't a real person, what is it? In my terms it is a demon, albeit a rather nice one, and it deserves to be properly addressed.

So I asked the man how well he could picture himself as that hopeful youth, full of creativity and dreams and happy to express them in a relaxed and joyful way in the sun. He could picture him so easily, as he had been daydreaming now for months about that lost youth.

So how did he see himself compared to that ideal youth? A middle aged figure, not unlikeable but a little jaded, dried up, less able to enjoy simple pleasures for having been everywhere, done everything.

The irony was that, to his fans that youth was still very much alive in him. When he played his music they saw the flame sparkling as clear as ever, the humour, creativity and fresh outlook on life still shone in his music. That was why they loved to hear him play. But for him that same youthfulness was a will 'o the wisp: just out of reach, ever teasing and seducing but never quite there.

What was not working in his relationship with the demon of his innocent youth was that he had given it too much value. I have so far been arguing the case for giving value to demons, but you can overdo it by putting them on a pedestal. It can be fun to be idolised, and some people actually need a bit of that to compensate for unhappy feelings, but in general most people admit it is not so easy to live with someone who keeps you on a pedestal.

The right value to give a demon is to empathise – i.e. assume that it has a value similar to yourself until proven otherwise. What he was doing was giving the innocent youth all of his own value—devaluing himself and inflating the youth.

So what I suggested was that he should not only visit the youth in his imagination, but also see himself through the youth's eyes. Remember himself as he was on that island and imagine how he would have felt if a famous star like himself came to visit. Would the youth have refused a visit from this dried up middle-ager as he saw himself? I doubt it. If I was that youth I might put up a certain show of not being impressed by the man's star status, make a few jokes to my friends about what this 'stuck up star' would think of the island, but inside myself I'd be utterly thrilled and honoured by the visit.

So, if he could really imagine his young, callow self meeting his old self, and realise just how exciting, worldly wise and experienced he would seem to the youth, then he would have taken back some of the excess value he had given away. Imagine the youth saying "wow! Did you really play with Hendrix? Is it true you dated Marianne Faithfull? You played at Woodstock?" And other such eager questions.

This is when the real dialogue starts. Instead of psychic pederasty of an old dried up middle-aged bore chasing a golden youth, we now have a mutually rewarding meeting between an aspiring youngster and older mentor. He can see his present life through the youth's eyes and realise that, although he was feeling bored and suffocated by it, it is actually pretty amazing. In turn he comes much closer to that once-distant and unobtainable youth, realises the sorrows and frustrations of being young and can begin to heal his own past. The youth never died in him, he simply left it frozen on an island.

A whole class of demons is like that: parts of ourselves we left behind in growing up; parts that have been locked in the past, unable to grow up with us because they have been split off and frozen. The freezing can be as a result of shock or denial—as when an act of violence leaves a psychological scar that becomes repressed—or through sheer preoccupation with life's other pressures as in this case. Can you blame these discarded selves for turning into demons and returning to us in dreams and nightmares when we allow them no other form of life? Nostalgia can be a source of great wealth if thoroughly enjoyed.

There is a poignancy in this example. It arose from the fact that the star was about to go to hospital to endure a worrying operation, and it was this portent of coming old age that had precipitated his nostalgic contemplations.

I pointed out to him that there were probably other such demons—old neglected or forgotten parts of himself left behind in the rush to fame—and that they were still around. If he would allow them and give welcome, they could gather at his hospital bedside and offer support. Some would support him eagerly, some grudgingly, but whichever way he would be surprised by the sum total of goodwill and affection they could offer him in his need—just like a real family that gathers around and supports even its less popular members when life comes to the crunch. He need not feel alone.

THE BODY

The book began with a very simple, down to earth example of an office machine that misbehaves, and then quickly proceeded to address much more abstract forms of demon. Rather than lose sight of my roots I include a very concrete example now—treating one's own body as an autonomous being or demon.

The basis of this example is as follows. The human body is the state of an art that has so far encompassed several million years of evolution from primordial slime to our present physical form, during which time it has learned and developed ways to survive physical and psychological damage from elemental disasters as well as microbial, viral, chemical, plant

and animal attacks from every quarter. It has also developed a thing we call conscious intelligence or awareness to help assist that survival. It is therefore almost inconceivable that this development should have ceased at this point, and far more likely that there should be somewhere in our body some form of dormant learning intelligence waiting to deal with fresh attacks and new dangers as they arise.

If, therefore, we could learn to dialogue with our bodies, we could then address that intelligence and ask for its advice on matters dietary and medical. Rather than read books telling us what we should eat, for example, why not ask the body what it needs?

A nice idea, but extremely threatening to those who earn a living by charging for such advice and selling remedies. The drug companies would rather suggest that the world is changing too fast and that they alone have specialised, up-to-date knowledge of what modern people need to cope with urban life. What's more they have teams of experts who have been working for years on these remedies, so what could we laymen possibly know to match their wisdom?

The answer is that modern life seems to me pretty static. I have not yet experienced any change in London to compare with a sudden volcanic eruption, an attack of plague or destruction of food crops—the sort of crisis that nature has been tackling since time immemorial. I do agree that the drug companies' research facilities are wonderful, but let us not forget that their resources consist of a few hundred experts working on a remedy for maybe ten years, whereas nature has had many billion

testers working under far less incapacitating commercial and ethical restraints over many millions of years. But let's not forget that the medical experts do deserve a little pat on the back before we return them to their playpens.

How then do we address the body's superior understanding of our own needs? By first listening to it. It helps if we first turn down the background noise, and this entails turning our back on any other medical advice, refusing to read articles on the latest diet fads, ignoring the stern admonitions of well-meaning know-alls, and becoming blind to advertisements for commercial remedies. The only answer to "should I eat this?" is to pose another question: "does my body want to eat this?"

How does a publisher feel about an author who tells his readers to ignore medical opinion? Does he listen for the sound of legal summonses from the families of dying readers to come thudding through the letterbox? Will he allow me that paragraph or should I add a safety clause on the lines of "the author and publisher shall not be held responsible for any misfortune arising from the application of the advice given herein".

Answer: bollocks! Far from denying responsibility, should I have a reader stupid enough to follow slavishly the advice of an unknown idiot like myself then I want that reader to die. Go on! Do it! For killing off the idiots is how nature made humans as good as we are! You owe it to the human race to die! Go on!

(Note to the jury: I think what I have just written should be just as liberating as any let-out clause.)

This point will be expanded upon in my appendix example on divination: following the advice of an expert without questioning it is no more respectful than it would be to ignore that advice.

So we begin by listening to the body. Let us say we are in a restaurant looking at a menu that describes the dishes in reasonable detail: *Seared scallops with foie gras and girolles on a broad bean puree*. Basically what I do is foretaste the dish rather than simply reading the words: I imagine seared scallops in my mouth—easy enough—I imagine foie gras—also easy but I cannot clearly imagine them together so there is room for uncertainty here – and so on. Then I listen for my body's reaction. Is it a slight hint of nausea? Or is it an eager watering of the mouth? Is it a feeling of 'nice but not today, thanks' Or is it a feeling of acceptance without satisfaction as if something is missing—what is missing, an accompanying glass of wine or bread? Fore-taste those too and see if they complete the picture.

This sounds like a slow process, and it may well be at first. In practice I don't run through the whole menu as I can eliminate certain items immediately and narrow down to one or two choices that get the full treatment. Even then, it does not take as long as it sounds because the process has become habitual over the years and I need hardly think about it. And so what if it is slow? Good eating deserves time and this way you get the pleasure of eating twice over!

Practicing this has been very easy for me and it increases awareness of how the body responds. I find it hard to sympathise with those who say things like "I know I shouldn't eat it but can't help myself" or "I've ordered far more than I can manage" when

the body can express so clearly what it wants. Nor is it just a matter of initial choices: the wine might be superb but, when the waiter comes to fill your glass again, just re-savour it in advance and see if the body really wants more. I hardly ever get drunk because my body simply tells me how the pleasure keeps decreasing.

This approach is so natural to me that I have to work to understand why it is not universal. My conclusion is not that other people's bodies are dumb, but their voice is drowned out by the clamour of other demons. People order a dish because it is trendy, or the most expensive or cheapest on the menu, or because their diet demands it, or because someone else has ordered it, or because it is visually interesting or quicker to prepare. People have second helpings out of habit, or politeness, or because they did not notice the glass being filled and so on.

Moralists who rant against the body claim that carnal lust leads to excess and I do not agree. If you really listen to the body it knows exactly what it needs and when best to stop. Excess has more to do with such non-carnal abstractions as status, pride or duty. Hunger is carnal, whereas greed is a corruption rather of spirit.

The above exercise in eating food in advance is, as it were, just the taster. It instils an awareness that there is a principle within us that appears to manifest good taste in choosing what it needs. This same principle can then be questioned about other matters pertaining to its wellbeing. For example: if I am feeling ill I can explore the physical sensations of the illness and then combine that feeling with certain potential remedies. How would I feel if I took a walk

in fresh air? Or if I were to lie down? Or to drink more water? Or take an aspirin? Again we learn to pick up a clear sense of 'yes' when the correct course of action is considered. It just feels right.

Then we progress to more uncertain territory. In the above paragraph I asked the question "should I take an aspirin?". Whereas the food tasting or consideration of a walk in the fresh air has lots of sensory hooks to focus the questioning, the difference between "should I take an aspirin" and "should I take an ibuprofen" has little to distinguish it in sensory terms and depends solely on the difference between the two words. Can we expect the body to understand that difference? In my experience, it does. But I would recommend a thorough initial grounding in easy dialogue based on strong sensory clues in order to build up mutual trust and reduce any risk of misreading the answers. The responses can be quite subtle, but there does seem to be a distinct preference shown between apparently indistinguishable tablets when the body has had experience of them in the past.

Then we reach even more uncertain territory. What about a tablet or remedy never before experienced, indeed one that has only recently been invented and therefore lies outside any ancestral experience. How can the body know whether it is better to take such and such a patent drug or have laser eye surgery?

The first answer is to be careful about asking, and acting on the answers to such questions. Remember what has been said about consulting experts and respecting their limitations just as much as their expertise. If the eye surgeon says that laser treatment would be wrong but your body says it wants it,

then I certainly would not over-rule the surgeon. But nor would I totally ignore what the body is saying, for I have found that there is a genuine trickle-down effect from intellectual understanding of a situation.

And this leads to the second answer: although laser treatment lies outside the experience of my body, if I read a little about it and make some effort to picture what is involved, then the body often will get a grasp of the principles and something of what is at stake and come up with a significant even if not a fully informed opinion. On the other hand the eye surgeon, who knows much more about the technology involved than my body, lacks the intimate knowledge of the inner state of my eyes and may not be aware of some concealed factor that my body is trying to convey. All this is pure speculation of course, and the real lesson is that when it comes to treating others with respect – whether eye specialists or demons – then we must not take advantage of them by denying our share of personal responsibility.

When in this uncertain territory it becomes harder to read the answers than when simply foretasting a third glass of Chateau Lafitte. In this case I have recourse to a translator. My favourite translator is a pendulum. For a more detailed explanation of how to set up dialogue with a pendulum I recommend Tom Graves' books on dowsing⁵, but basically it is to agree a language – I myself interpret a clockwise circling to mean 'yes' and an anticlockwise circling to mean 'no' – and then try it out on a few obvious questions with known answers (e.g. is my name Ramsey Dukes?) to make sure the dialogue is working.

Let us say you have a headache and are asking about aspirin or ibuprofen. I would take the pendulum, set it swinging to and fro (i.e. not circling but a neutral movement) and begin the dialogue by saying "may I ask about matters of health?" to which the pendulum replies by changing its motion to a clockwise circling indicating 'yes'. It could always answer 'no' but never has in my experience; nevertheless I always ask that question to encourage my sense of respect. I then explain the situation – out loud if no-one is around, otherwise in my head – saying "I have a headache and am not sure whether I should take aspirin or ibuprofen to cure it". I then set the pendulum swinging neutrally and ask "should I take aspirin?" and get a yes or no answer. I then ask about ibuprofen and get a yes or no answer. If lucky, one is yes and one is no indicating a clear choice. If I get two yeses I'm a bit perplexed so would then ask "are you saying I should take both aspirin and ibuprofen?" If the answer is yes I would then enquire if they should be taken together or one first and the other later, or whatever. If I get two 'nos' then I might ask if there is something else I should take, or if the headache will simply pass, or whatever. There is one other possibility that does sometimes occur: the pendulum answers neither yes or no but continues its neutral oscillation. That I take to mean that it does not feel able to give an answer. Again, it is not a bad idea to follow that with the question "do I understand that you cannot answer that question?" I have never failed to get a response to that follow up. If it was still neutral I'd guess I'd somehow caused offence and would seek to renew my acquaintance with the spirit.

TOUGH LOVE

In the last example the demon had a somewhat angelic quality, so it's time to redress the balance with a few real stinkers, and to show how these too can be worth getting to know. The following examples also major on the right wing 'tough' approach to demonolatry.

The 'nostalgia' example was fictionalised in the sense that I took a personal example and embellished it with invented detail and altered a few facts to preserve the privacy of the person concerned. In the following examples I will name names, but please allow that this act does not necessarily banish fiction from the scene.

Consider Peter Scott, son of the famous explorer, "Scott of Antarctica": I do not know the man, and have not made a study of his biography, but was told something about him that rang true even if it should subsequently be revealed to be inaccurate. For it was drawn to my attention that he was an amazing achiever: for example, there was a time when he was Britain's best selling artist on the strength of his bird portraits and wildlife scenes; he was at the same time the founder of a chain of very successful and esteemed sanctuaries for waterfowl; he was also a best-selling author and an international champion glider pilot.

The other side of the story was that he was driven to so many achievements by a profound sense of his own inadequacy compared to his famous father. Despite the fact that, in many people's eyes he had contributed far more to the world than his father ever did, as far as Peter was concerned he always

needed another achievement to compensate for that ache of inadequacy.

The point here is that, had the young Peter Scott read this my book he could have sat down for a good chat with this demon of inadequacy and ended up as a happily balanced nobody who spent his weekends at the local bird-watching club. The world might have been less well off.

Oh dear, it looks as if all I can offer you in this book is choice—at a time when we are all feeling utterly sick of having choice forced down our throats by manufacturers and politicians of every description.

If you value achievement over happiness, then it is good to be tough with your demons: chuck them out to fend for themselves and grow tough in the streets, or else cast them into prison to learn the lessons of survival in the inner jungle. If, on the other hand, you value happiness over achievement, then talk to them, learn from them, assimilate them.

Or else, having got a grasp of this polarity of choice, conceive a spectrum of possibilities between the poles. Later in this book we will explore how one might form a relationship with a demon while keeping much of its toughness and power intact, but for now let us simply explore the opposite pole.

If you consider the ruling of nations to be a noble enterprise, and the making of history to be the greatest good, and at the same time you do not like people very much, then the life of Adolph Hitler looks like a pretty rollicking success story. If, however, you like people and consider that ruling nations and making history is strictly for prats, then his life was a disaster. Let our present choice be to explore the first viewpoint.

One of Hitler's demons was a world Jewish-communist conspiracy against the German people. An interesting point is to consider where this demon came from. In theory it should be possible to create an expedient demon out of nothing, to invent some prejudice or fear that could serve your political purposes and then build it up as he did. However, the strength of his passion on the subject did suggest that it the demon already had deep roots in his soul, as it already had in Christian society as a whole. When I say "deep roots", I do not necessarily mean strong or active roots: my own conclusion is that a demon or its constituents has to pre-exist in some form, but that it is possible to tap some deeply buried seed and nurture it into strength so that to all intents and purposes the demon seems to have been created out of nothing.

In any case, Hitler made a very effective pact with that demon by attacking it and thus giving it strength. What had for most people been little more than the odd grumble about Jewish moneylenders or the occasional Jewish joke, became inflated into deep distrust and fear. Young men put on uniforms and went to war against this demon while their families cheered them on and the nation became united and strong from a majority—even if not a consensus—viewpoint. So far the relationship between Hitler and his demon was a very great success.

To what extent then was this demon created rather than discovered? Jews existed, communists existed, and there were also people who resented or feared Germany, but there is little real evidence of any world conspiracy uniting all these elements. But we are talking of abstractions – remember that

my demons can be personifications of abstract principles. The idea of a world conspiracy already had its seeds planted, and what Hitler and his government did was to evoke it, nurture it and exploit it. The demon gave them power and influence but in return it incarnated to the point where there really was a world Jewish Communist conspiracy against Germany.

"Really was a conspiracy"—what am I saying? I am saying that it was not a pre-existent conspiracy of the sort Hitler had envisioned, but rather a realisation of that vision in response to his actions. For what else should the Jews and communist sympathisers who had been driven out of Germany or escaped to the West do but to offer their services to help defeat their oppressors and those who threatened their remaining families and friends? And what more useful ally was there to the capitalist West than communist Russia to the East? It was not quite the sort of conspiracy that had been conceived by Hitler, but it did consist of a world alignment of Jews, communists and sympathisers united not so much against the German people as such but rather against what Hitler had made of Germany. And this alliance did help contribute to the downfall of Nazi Germany in terms of manpower, intelligence and such specific technical expertise as nuclear weaponry.

Effectively Hitler had evoked a demon to physical manifestation and it had got out of his control and turned on him. In the same way that the 1980s Thatcher government in Britain was to evoke the demon of a feckless single mother in order to scare the bourgeoisie into voting for her. In so doing she

created a whole class of people out of scattered individuals and thereby give single mothers enough combined clout to realise that they had an enemy in the form of Thatcher's government and so could chose to vote against her and help remove her from power.

In both examples the demon kept its side of the bargain by delivering real benefits, but the strength it had been given made it difficult to control—like a rabble army that will fight tooth and nail for you as long as you keep finding new enemies to be united against, but once the world has been conquered it has nothing left to attack except its own commanders.

Take a more recent example—George Bush, current President of the United States, and the demon Al-Quaeda. We are lead to understand that there were plentiful warnings that bin Laden was planning some sort of attack, but that White House officials didn't want to know about it. They were more concerned with bigger vote-winning targets like Saddam Hussein. But ask this question: who really benefitted from the attacks of September 11th 2001? The answer is that Bush went from being an unpopular president with a minority vote to a national hero, while Al Queda expanded from small dissident movement to global terror machine.

The demon effectively bought Bush by offering mutually advantageous terms. He, in return, boosted Al-Quaeda by recruiting most of the world's population into its ranks with the words "if you are not with us, you are with the terrorists". Take myself as example: I had not voted for Bush because I am not American, I live in Britain and had no interest in

his politics. So in no sense was I with him. He then insists that I am therefore his enemy and a supporter of Al-Quaeda, and I resent that. Unfortunately I've no contact with bin Laden, so have not been in a position to hand in my resignation from his organisation, nor do I know what the status is of people like me who have been volunteered into Al-Quaeda's ranks by President Bush—I've not received any further instructions or official papers. The example is growing tedious, but it illustrates the way that demons grow stronger when attacked according to their own terms.

Bush accordingly launched a popular attack on Afghanistan—liberating the repressed opium trade but without, of course, eliminating Al-Quaeda. Taking the opium poppy as metaphor, this attack was like destroying a poppy plant with a flail in that it provided the satisfaction of seeing the plant being destroyed while at the same time scattering its seeds far and wide. Military power was then diverted into a war on Iraq that removed the one significant remaining secular government in a region dominated by Muslim theocracies. Thus Bush has served Al-Quaeda well by destroying its enemies in return for consolidating his hold on the presidency.

And yet a problem remains: Al-Quaeda is now much stronger, more popular and more influential than ever before. What will it make Bush do next?

There is another recent example that harks back to the Hitler demon. I heard a woman on BBC radio speaking angrily about the resurgence of anti-Semitism in Europe. It turned out that she was not referring to skinhead gangs so much as to media pundits disapproving of the policies and activities of

Sharon's government against the Palestinians. Now anti-Semitism is a powerful demon in the West, and her invoking the support of this demon to her cause had got her onto prime time radio and was certainly triggering debate—but at what cost?

The price she was paying was to make anti-Semitism respectable by association. Whereas for people of my generation anti-Semitism evokes images of neo-Nazis, skinhead thugs and violence on the streets leading to the horrors of Hitler's final solution, her message was that anti-Semitism simply means disagreeing with the policies of the present government of Israel. As with Bush's declaration on Al-Quaeda, myself and a majority of reasonable people including many Jews and even citizens of Israel had thereby been re-labelled as anti-Semitic and were thereby forced to re-evaluate the word. The label ceases to describe a demon to be feared as it becomes more a mark of tolerance and decency uniting a vast swathe of human classes and persuasions.

The only good thing to be said for that woman's efforts is that they have not been very successful.

LUST

After such diverse examples under the blanket term 'demon' let us conclude with an example closer to traditional notions of what a demon should be and do. Again I have partly fictionalised this example, this time because it is very personal. It concerns a man of high intelligence, integrity and education who became gripped by a fascination for wayward sexual experience quite out of keeping with his

image of gentlemanly restraint, good humour and taste.

This sort of split is well known in deeply religious people for whom fleshly lust is an abomination, but he was not like that. As someone with an interest in psychology and avant-garde thinking, he was not initially shocked by his growing fascination with sado-masochistic imagery – in particular that of the classic dominatrix in black leather. Indeed he saw his fascination as an interesting avenue to explore and he made the acquaintance of a highly sophisticated and cultured lady who claimed to practice these arts. He then arranged to visit her S&M club.

It was a powerful experience, but not quite the ecstatic realisation of his dreams, for he found the atmosphere overwhelmingly repellent and sinister. Of course, the atmosphere was meant to be sinister and he expected and was looking forward to that; but his reaction to it was a profound sense of evil, of real rather than simply imagined danger. Although coming from a very different direction from the Christian purist, he had fallen into a similar sense of revulsion and disgust. Here was something that haunted him with its fascinating aura of wicked power and yet the realisation disgusted him as the wickedness degraded into sheer evil and the power into real danger.

Really effective demons like this carry a strong feeling charge. In the previous section I commented that the world Jewish communist conspiracy seemed too highly charged in Hitler to have been a straight invention for the purposes of political manipulation, and I concluded that it really was a demon of his belief. Such a charge of feeling can be used as

a technique to initiate communication with such a demon.

So I asked the man to sit in a comfortable chair and close his eyes while he contemplated the thrill of S&M phantasy until he had evoked it to real feeling. When he had done this I asked him to focus on that feeling of dangerous excitement and describe it in purely physical sensation terms. In other words I did not want him to say words like *"it's utterly overwhelming, a surging sense of dark power rising up to engulf petty moral scruples and suck out my soul..."* or whatever, but rather to say words like *"my whole body feels charged, with a sort of cold chill of energy concentrated near my solar plexus sending out electric sparks along my nerves..."* or whatever.

This concretisation of powerful emotions is a good first step in communicating with a powerful demon, and it is in any case a useful technique when handling an obsession because it tends to defuse the obsession and reduce its hold slightly. One reason for this is that physical sensations are bounded – the body can only feel a certain amount of sensation before it cuts out or faints – whereas emotional and thought content is potentially unbounded – one can surge to heights of ecstasy or depths of despair and yet imagine even greater heights and depths beyond; from having one's soul sucked out by a demon one can proceed to having the entire universe or existence itself sucked out in frenzy beyond frenzy.

So, by telling him to stop describing his powerful experience in emotional or intellectual terms and instead describe them as accurately as possible as physical sensations, I was effectively placing temporary limits upon his demon—constraining it in the

“triangle of art” as the demonologists of old would say.

Having established a definite clear sensation that matched the demon, I had made dialogue easier. Because we could tell the demon to use that sensation to communicate with us. For example: we could say “when I ask you a question, if the answer is ‘yes’ please respond by giving me this same physical sensation. If I do not feel this sensation by the time I have (say) counted to one hundred, then I will take it either as a ‘no’ or that you do not wish to answer.”

As you can imagine, this is a very slow and ponderous form of dialogue. The first question must be “does it work?” and my experience is that demons are often rather glad to be approached and will indeed enter into dialogue. Like people, however, they may deceive, or refuse to co-operate and so the practitioner must keep their wits about them just as they would with a dubious stranger.

The second question is whether such a clumsy form of communication can be any good. The answer here is that it tends to prove just as frustrating for the demon as for the human, and soon the dialogue speeds up as you begin to get more direct answers popping into your head.

To return to my story. I asked the man to tell me how he felt about this demon and he described how shocked he was by it, how filthy and poisonous: it seemed like a dark vortex sucking him off the straight path and risking his mental—even physical—destruction like some addictive drug. This demon was ruining his life.

I then reminded him that we had the demon restrained in the triangle of art and that it was there-

fore in a sense under his power. I could give him an imaginary pistol and—as easy as shooting fish in a barrel – he could hold it to the demon's head and pull the trigger. Voila! End of problem! No more demon to lead him astray. How did he feel about that?

After a long pause he said he did not feel good about it. Although he despised the demon and its malicious influence, he also rather admired it. He admired its power, dynamism and wilfulness, qualities somewhat lacking in his own restrained self. He would not pull that trigger, because he did not really want to lose the demon.

This was a crucial point in the communication. One of the two bitter enemies had acknowledged something of the other, and this allowed me to ask the demon now to speak through the man. It would not have been easy to do this before, when the demon was still being seen as 100% negative.

Now he allowed it to speak and the demon described him as a stuffy, boring, repressed and stuck up old fart. Again I brought up the idea that the demon could take this imaginary pistol and get rid of this oppressive tyrant once and for all and enjoy perfect freedom. Again this led to an uncomfortable silence after which the demon confessed it did not really want to kill him, because without the man's disapproval the demon's own waywardness would lose much of its savour. Sin simply wasn't so much fun without anyone to tell it how wicked it was, without an oppressor to battle against.

Thus the dialogue balanced out with two bitter enemies recognising the extent to which they relied on each other for their own existence – like commu-

nism and capitalism during the cold war. The question now was where to go from here.

One way is the path of reconciliation: seeing that these two characters were really to sides of the same coin, that the life force had been split into two streams. One stream was raw libido, growing feral for being abandoned and denied, the other was discipline and structure turning to tyranny and repression as it ruled without challenge. These two could, with further dialogue, become reunited to restore a sense of life and dynamism to the man that would make it less compulsive to pursue dangerous pleasures.

The other way is to regret the passing of the old sense of sin and all the potential for revelry it offered. Somehow to get these two characters to remain separate and yet to dance together. So that visits to naughty night clubs could still sear the soul but without permanent damage, while a daylight self could still enjoy the nanny joys of earnest disapproval. A perilous path along the edge of addiction, yet awful good fun.

I have not since asked him which route he has taken, but he is looking well.

A note to this story. When I am describing these examples and using the words 'demon' some people object to my terminology and suggest that I am really only talking about 'complexes' or 'patterns' or some other word for the same thing. They feel that the traditional idea of a disembodied spirit of demonic aspect is far removed from my descriptions.

In response I point to an example like this last one and draw comparison with the traditional picture of a little black being with horns and pitchfork. This

demon, like many others, did indeed have horns: the horns were the two polar sides to his dilemma—wild lust and repressive decency. Those two horns were the first thing he knew about the dilemma, the fact that they were actually two horns of the same basic problem only emerged with time. This demon was also dark, lurking in his depths and it goaded him with its pitchfork into acts that felt shameful. A mediaeval moralist would have loved it.

CHAPTER FIVE

WHAT WE LEARN FROM THESE EXAMPLES

The examples in the last chapter, and in Appendix I, are deliberately diverse in order to discourage you from forming a narrow interpretation—for example that I am using the word ‘demon’ to describe unconscious complexes. Amongst all the diversity, however, certain consistent lessons can be deduced. This is what we can learn from the examples.

VARIETY

The first lesson to be learnt from these examples is that we are dealing with an enormous variety of demon forms. From sixteen stone of living flesh in the form of a human body to Spirit itself. From a persistent mood called depression, or a human sexual obsession, to a world Jewish conspiracy that existed only as a figment of the imagination until its opponents prompted it into an unanticipated form of manifestation.

The only common factor in all these and other examples is that I am prepared to honour them with the initial assumption that they are like me and possess a sense of self awareness. I then, from that point of understanding, invite them into dialogue so that they can reveal the extent to which they are different from me and how we might each benefit from our differences.

THROW AWAY THE RULEBOOK

The second lesson is that we must beware our cultural inclination to seek ever for simple rules to dictate our interaction. I was once a mathematics teacher and would often be asked “please can’t you just give us the formula to solve these equations” when I was actually trying to teach my pupils to look beyond formulae and discover the fundamental thinking processes required for tackling new and uncharted problems, the thinking skills that could deduce those formulae from first principles if need be. So it is with this work: the one question “how might I feel or respond if I was that demon?” being worth more than any number of simple rules or seven step programmes.

For how would you feel if you discovered that your friend or partner was treating you according to a set of rules rather than empathising? “Always remind him to clean the dustbins before asking him to wash up so the latter seems like the lesser of evils.” “Give her three glasses of wine before suggesting sex as that usually breaks her resistance.” It’s the sort of thing that leads to broken relationships with humans as well as with demons.

STEREOTYPING AND EXTRAPOLATION

Working with demons requires one to work with them rather than to extrapolate from stereotypes.

As an example of what not to do, consider some of the absurd statements people express via the media on the lines of “if we didn’t have these regulations our motorways would turn into a bloodbath” or “if

material like this becomes available in the Internet it would lead to a breakdown in society.” The second example illustrates the paradox:

- Has the speaker studied the offending material? If not how can they know what effect it would have on people?
- If they have studied it, and decided it would corrupt those who read it, may we assume that they have themselves been corrupted by reading it and therefore can no longer be trusted to pass judgement?
- If we cannot make that assumption, then they must in some way be different from those who would, in their opinion, be corrupted, in which case how can we trust their pronouncement on the responses of those others if they are fundamentally different from them?

The basic mistake behind all such pronouncements is to assume that other people are not thinking, feeling beings like ourselves, but mechanisms who will respond predictably. The anti-abortion campaigner who insists that the availability of abortion will lead to unlimited promiscuity without considering how the very availability of abortion presents an enormous emotional and ethical challenge to most people—it is not a light matter however much it is condoned. And the journalist fulminating against the pornographic material he has found on the Internet, speaking of “the sort of perverts who seek out to these obscene sites” and forgetting that he himself has now joined their ranks without, presumably, considering himself to be a pervert.

So it is with demons. The moment we start saying things like “that sort of demon would only take advantage if I tried to dialogue with it” or “you cannot make any pact with a demon like terrorism” then you are resorting to formulae rather than communicating.

Have you ever heard someone say something like “English people are so uptight and uncommunicative about their feelings” and not known the temptation to gush all over them just to prove they are not 100% right? Demons too might like to confound our expectations for the sheer hell—or love—of it.

RESPECT

You should not by now need to be told again that demons respond to respect, but what the examples may have done is illustrate better what respect really means as a measure of empathy rather than reverence.

As the nostalgia example illustrated: to idolise or place on a pedestal is not in the long run respectful as it does not allow for the fullness of human being. Similarly, to deny all personal responsibility and follow an expert's instructions to the letter without asking “what did he really mean?” or considering that he might have spoken in haste or misunderstanding, that too is less than respectful. As the body example illustrate, it is respectful to allow others to make small mistakes.

As the tough love examples show, you can even show respect by launching an attack against a demon. While intelligent people were sniggering at the sheer unlikelihood of a world conspiracy of Jews

and communists, Hitler honoured it with war to the point where it almost became real. Al-Qaeda was nothing much until Bush ran it up the flagpole and saluted it—with gunfire, that is. Just as the various “wars on drugs” have made endless fortunes for the drug barons.

Short of declaring war, you can be pretty tough on demons. The demon of lust was mightily constrained by being described as sheer bodily sensation rather than its preferred Lovecraftian language as a “vile, devouring vortex of miasmatic primordial evil” or whatever. It was the equivalent of nailing it to a cross, but the point is that we did not leave it bound but used the constraint to dialogue with it and even offered it the possibility of slaying its oppressor.

When you start trying to treat phenomena as if they were human you learn many things. One of them is how better to treat your fellow humans as if they too were human.

ANGELS AND DEMONS

Another topic arising in the examples was the difference between what one might consider to be good and bad demons, and why I prefer to stick to the blanket term ‘demons’ rather than start dividing them into angels versus demons. This is a curious matter and it deserves your close attention.

My experience is that, the more tightly demons are classed in terms of good and evil, the greater the likelihood of polarity reversal. Polarity reversal can be dangerous if not understood, but is very healing when anticipated and properly addressed.

The clearest example of this was the one about lust. Although I chose not to use such language, one might initially have described the situation as if an angel and a demon were battling for the man's soul. The angel was a figure of decency and moral uprightness, trying to protect the man from dark temptations to filthy depravity that were sucking away his will power and leading him into a dangerous and ultimately destroying underworld of perverted sex.

But, at the point where the demon confessed that it would not get much fun out of the perversion if it was not for the 'angel' disapproving so vociferously, it was hard not to feel a certain affection for the demon. It was really rather a sweet thing to say, converting this demon from a principle of evil into a somewhat lovable naughty child or 'imp'. One could also revisit the angel's confession that it did not wish to destroy the demon because it admired its power and drive, and see in that confession not so much an act of righteous forbearance but a disgusting revelation that it was harbouring evil under a facade of righteousness. A bit like catching a holy man or peace campaigner at home watching all-in wrestling or bare knuckle boxing on TV and shouting "Kill! Kill!".

That example illustrated something quite fundamental about demons that was addressed by the occultist Dion Fortune when she wrote in her novel *Moon Magic*⁶ about the cults of the Black and the White Isis—cults which to less sympathetic readers could sound respectively like black versus white magic. In it the Vivien Le Fay Morgan describes

Black Isis as “terrible” and “the source of power” and goes on:

I am used to Her power and received it fearlessly, knowing that in a few seconds She would change into Her beautiful aspect, which is so much more beautiful than anything that can be built under the symbolism of the White Isis, who is liable to change over into the Black Isis if much power is brought through Her. Therefore we who have knowledge work with the Black Isis and transmute Her.

I suggest that this has something to do with the dual nature of demons, the horns referred to in that example. What happens is that a single principle seeks manifestation by becoming dual and that very often the duality expresses itself as a good versus an evil principle. In the lust example you could say that Life had split into Libido versus Control, or Force versus Form, neutral terms that became arbitrarily aligned with good and evil. In the Hitler example a single principle that we might name Intolerance manifests as two poles: one is the angelic and worthy desire to create a new order that is pure and magnificent, the other is to see it opposed by a demonic force of evil—so we end up with a movement to clean up Germany that is powered by fear of a conspiracy against itself. As in the lust example, the good/bad polarities then reversed, so that the intended noble cleansing force—the SS—turn into a symbol for ultimate evil, while those supposedly wicked scheming Jews and communists become a noble symbol of humanity under the threat of annihilation.

What we learn from this is that it is very important not to over-identify with the 'good' pole when dealing with strongly polarised demons, for that is how the other pole enters and manipulates your soul. When this happens to other people it can be glaringly obvious, but it remains totally unseen to the victim. It is like seeing someone destroying themselves with an addictive drug.

Consider this illustration. I recall an investigative television programme about sexual abuse of boys in which the reporting team broke into the private files of paederast groups and exposed their dirty secrets, leading to certain teachers and children workers losing their careers and facing criminal prosecution. The programme also featured interviews with adults who had been the victims of such people and whose lives had been ruined by their actions.

Now it was pretty clear that the programme makers saw their product as spotless: a sword of justice as wielded by the angel Michael to avenge those who had been victimised and to bring their tormentors to justice. What had the victims of abuse suffered? An invasion of privacy, being forced to expose themselves before their tormentors and a resulting damage to their esteem and chances in life. And what was the justice meted? It was that their tormentors should have their own privacy invaded, be forced to expose themselves to an avenging public and that the resulting damage to their esteem would mean punishment and permanent exclusion from contact with children to the destruction of their career. In other words the punishment was a perpetuation of the same abuse already inflicted on their victims.

'An eye for an eye' is indeed a form of justice, but not the noblest form, and it does raise the question whether the programme makers enjoyed what they were doing. For if they suffered remorse in the making, and felt empathy for the paederasts they were persecuting it was one thing, whereas if they delighted in dealing this form of justice it put them on a level with their victims. For they too had taken to invading others' privacy, exposing their private parts and ruining others' lives for their own pleasure—the very crime they were setting out to punish.

The point of this example is its delicacy, for the programme gave no hint of addressing this paradox. The programme was an example of a derivative market in perversion⁷, or paedophilophilia, where people—including some of the TV viewers—obtain perverse satisfaction through others' misery by imagining themselves as being 'on the side of the angels'. They are like a mob turning out to watch a murderer being hanged without doing anything to thank the murderer or honour him for the pleasure his death is providing them.

Remember that example and be very wary indeed of the pleasures of meting out justice. The statue of justice has a blindfold over her eyes for very good reason.

A PICTURE OF INTERACTION

Faced with such diversity, one can feel lost and yearn for a return to simple formulaic responses. Instead, it helps to survey the landscape from a new perspective.

Why is it that some demons want to be recognised or even to take material form, while others seem to lie low and avoid being noticed?

I believe that demons look for three quite distinct benefits from interacting with humans: power, recognition, and physical incarnation. Bear in mind that they are a different order of being from us and consider now how we might react with a different order of being—say fish in a pond.

The first natural reaction is to enjoy power—see how the fish rush away when our shadow is cast on the pond. After a while we may either grow bored with this simple exercise of power, or else grow to a desire for two-way interaction as in feeding the fish, catching them with rod and line and maybe breeding or farming them. Some people become so fascinated with another species that they will live among them and empathise to the point where you sense they would really like to become or reincarnate into that species.

Beginning with that sense of exercising power: young children begin with this sort of reaction, delighting in throwing stones into a pond just to see fish dart away, or dashing after chickens to see them scamper. It is quite hard, while they are still revelling in that power, to get them to settle down to feeding or forming more intimate contact with a creature. They may start feeding them but, when you turn your back they cannot resist lobbing a stone again.

Similarly with demons. A demon that is enjoying controlling someone's life—like my first example of a demon that was stopping a young man from earning a living, or the demon of lust—can be quite hard to contact because it is revelling in its power.

If a philosophy or creed can still send people out on crusades to kill thousands, it is not always ready to sit down for a cosy counselling chat.

But power can become boring or lose its appeal. The child eventually wants more than just throwing stones after chickens and may well become keen on feeding them, collecting eggs or even rearing chicks. Instead of mere power over, it becomes interested in forming a relationship even when this involves an apparent surrender of power. You have to break the habit of throwing stones at a kitten if you want it to come and eat out of your hand.

This promise of relationship is what makes it possible for even quite a nasty demon like the lust example to join a dialogue. It may resist for a while, resenting being noticed and addressed and trying its best to lurk in the sidelines—as with the example of the out of work man who insists he’s just unlucky or being picked on, rather than admit he has a problem. That is also why a respectful, listening approach is favoured, because a demon who thinks you are merely setting out on a psychological process to get rid of it is less amenable than one who thinks you might really listen to it and understand its needs.

The other desire of a demon is to incarnate, to get its own body rather than just have power over or relate to a being with a body. This form of demonolatry is a great favourite with the media as it assists dirty old journalist hacks in incarnating their private wanking fantasies. Every time I read some phrase like “a new, sinister form of teenage violence is erupting on the streets of London” my heart sinks because I know that there is a chance that one day this new sinister form of violence might actually

be manifest. Although there were plenty of young people before World War II who were between the ages of twelve and twenty there were not yet, I am informed, any teenagers—and now there are millions of them.

Other attempts at invoking demons to physical manifestation show differing levels of success. Christian fundamentalists and the yellow press managed to get a small satanic movement going, mostly among heavy metal fans, but it did not amount to much. There are some pretty decent paedophile murderers in the news nowadays, achieving a modest rate of kill but not yet living up to the standards set by their creators. Terrorism, however, has been a roaring success and has been keeping the media happy for years while they struggle to create another Princess Di to slaughter. Global warming is still trying to get a foothold, while the millennium bug was an utter disaster news-wise.

To return to the human analogy: as a child I soon grew out of chasing chickens and became fascinated with them. I fed them, collected eggs and helped broody hens to bring up chicks. I loved them so much I would walk like a hen and cluck and drive my elder siblings crazy, but never actually managed to turn into a hen though I got pretty close at times. Then other matters pressed in on me and I gave up the quest. It was nearly forty years later that I became acquainted with the Chinese horoscope system and discovered that I had, after all, incarnated as a Rooster.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDING AND WORKING WITH YOUR OWN DEMONS

I am advocating demonolatry as an alternative way of dealing with life's problems—firstly problems as they arise but then extending the solution to an exploration of potential problems and how they might be forestalled. This in turn leads to the joys of demonolatry for its own sake as a hobby alternative to fishing, philosophy or creative writing.

I begin with simple exercises and progress to more complex possibilities.

MECHANICAL PROBLEMS

Harking back to my introductory words on the divergence of mechanistic and humanistic ways of dealing with phenomena, and how the mechanistic approach can extend right up to psychopathic manipulation of fellow human beings, the demonic approach can turn the tables on this invasion of territory by in turn treating obvious mechanical problems as if they too are sentient beings.

This is rather easy to apply, because most of us tend to do it anyway—talking to our car when it is reluctant to start, cursing the photocopier as if it was sensitive to such malevolence. So the only difference I am advocating is that one does this without shame or reserve.

There is no need to stop talking to your car just because others are within earshot, or to tell yourself it is silly so to do. Instead recognise that, by allowing conscious motivation, spite or malevolence into

the equation we are by no means lowering the tone and dumbing down, but are positively upgrading the interaction.

What this means in practice is this: you not only allow yourself to do silly things like talking to your vegetables or arguing with your computer but also—at the point where one might pause and say “really! I must stop this ridiculous habit of cursing the copier as if it was a living thing, or I will turn into a superstitious idiot”—you actually move up a gear and really examine your behaviour from the other thing’s point of view as if it had one.

Ask yourself how you might seem to your vegetables: as a mere callous devourer, as a manipulative exploiter of their nourishment, as a caring provider with perverse lapses into carnage, as a straight trader in mutual nourishment or whatever.

Ask how you might respond to your treatment if you were a copier being asked to deliver copies hastily under pressure, and so on.

When you open up your thinking processes to seeing yourself and the subject interacting in this way the brain grows more alert and active for it is now addressing something very complex and challenging—namely a potential partner or an enemy. Instead of, as it were, playing with a stone it is now engaged in a negotiation that could threaten its very survival.

You might think this additional complication has made the problem worse, but actually it has made it into a class of problem that the brain has best evolved to handle, and it can become most ingenious in its subsequent problem solving and far faster-moving than the clumsy and limited processes of mechanis-

tic reasoning and tool manipulation. You will notice things about your behaviour that might otherwise pass unnoticed, and you will alter your behaviour instinctively and scan the results barely thinking about what you are doing. In many cases you will come up with solutions to the problem, or it will solve itself automatically in response to an unconscious shift in your behaviour.

Now it is very natural, because of our education and society's bias towards the mechanistic approach, to analyse the solutions that come up along mechanistic lines. You might find that the plants you talk to really do grow a little better than the others, and you might decide this has something to do with the carbon dioxide in your breath as you speak to them, or the closeness to them that causes you to notice early signs of pest infestation and take pre-emptive action. You might find that it helps to calm yourself down as you start the car in order to reduce the number of red traffic lights and hold-ups that seem to arise when you are in a desperate hurry, and decide that this calming simply reduces a hysterical tendency to over-react and imagine that the delays are more numerous than they really are. You might be polite to the copier when in a hurry and decide that, because you are as a result treating it less roughly, that is why it responds more reliably.

There is nothing wrong with any of these rationalisations, indeed they can provide useful guidelines for passing to others as well as being fun to work out. However they should be handled with care because they are a constant temptation to slip back into that rule-based thinking at the expense of the empathy I am advocating.

Science has been enormous fun, but it does a terrible job of dumbing down the population, especially when taught in schools. For science proceeds by eliminating all that is inessential and irrelevant—often before it has been strictly proven to be inessential and irrelevant. Take science's approach to global warming: again and again the data has to be re-examined because some previously dismissed factor like variations in the sun's output now has to be considered. In science problems start small and grow bigger and bigger, while my approach begins by embracing all possibilities at a single, economical stroke. Maybe the earth is heating up because it is blushing at the behaviour of its children? Maybe extra warmth is being transmitted to our climate by jealous aliens on the overheated planet Venus? Maybe our measuring instruments are conspiring worldwide to mislead us just for a laugh? There are endless exciting and highly unlikely possibilities cast aside in the name of scientific respectability while simply reducing the number of brain cells being actively engaged with the problem. Like a mathematician, the brain enjoys playing with an infinite number of infinitesimal factors—until the demon science tells it to stop.

That brings us from simple mechanical systems to the second class of problem.

COMPLEX SYSTEMS

Some people need to work with something that lies between the complexity of a fellow human being and the simplicity of a mechanical system. They have to work with a complex system like the

weather, an ecology or the financial markets—something that is presumed also to operate according to simple mechanical laws without any volition or self awareness, but is different from the previous examples because it is so complex or chaotic that it cannot be fully analysed, predicted and controlled along those mechanistic lines.

What I am here suggesting is that it can be useful to deify the system and work with it as a conscious demon along the same lines as already suggested.

The first thing to say is that, as in the first example, this is not on the face of it difficult because we tend to do that already. We talk of gloomy weather, a miserable Spring, overworked farmland and nervous financial markets—recognising something akin to human feelings in these systems, but again we are taught to stop short of really allowing them to have such feelings.

In the case of nervous financial markets, does it not simply mean that the investors are nervous and so this is reflected in the group behaviour of the market? Not quite: for a nervous market can arise when trade is so boring that nobody reacts much, the market wiffles around without any direction and in this state is quite sensitive to small movements, appearing nervous even though it is made up of bored, phlegmatic investors. So these systems can manifest a personality at odds with the personalities of their constituent parts—and in the last part of this book, on demons in our society, we will look at several examples of this in greater detail.

Personifying such complex systems is a rather more serious undertaking than merely chatting to your copier, however. What I am suggesting is more

relevant to someone who has a lot invested in the system and is prepared to invest quite a bit more time getting to know it personally—examples include the sailor or sea fisherman who really depends upon the moods of the weather, or a financial trader who will suffer the vagaries of the market. That said, the process is basically the same: you allow yourself to continue with that natural inclination to personify and, instead of applying intellectual or dogmatic brakes to the process, you put your foot on the accelerator. Be prepared to woo the markets like a flirting paramour, to deify the weather as did our ancestors and listen to its tantrums, to seduce your garden into fecundity as if it was the slowest most languid lover in the world.

Is this a recipe for success? The secret of making millions on the stock market? I doubt it, for if it were it would deny the very complexity assumed in my thesis. On the other hand, however, successful traders and surviving sailors sometimes display just the sort of intuitive empathy I am exploring.

I have not myself had much luck with this approach, but nor have I tried very hard because my life has never depended on the weather or the markets for any length of time. I have, however, produced excellent vegetables from making love to a garden over several years. Such modest success might simply reflect my own limitations in personal relationships with real humans. But again, I notice something akin to my approach being practiced by those whose livelihood does depend on such complex systems. Weathermen who, although they can give reasons for most of their predictions, will still go beyond that to expressing hunches; and financial traders

who are prepared to explain market movements after they have occurred yet will put their money on 'intuitions' about what is currently happening and will happen.

My suggestion is simply that, if you wish to nurture such intuitive abilities, then practice looking at the current moods of the system, asking "if I were in that mood, what might I do next?" and then meditating upon what actually happens. This is why it is a slower process requiring greater commitment: you need to allow your intuitions to develop with practice. Whereas the mechanical explanations you deduce in the previous examples dealing with mechanical systems are in a sense 'complete', graspable and final, the explanations you allow after the event in these cases are never complete because of the complexity, so the learning process is unbounded.

There was an interesting example in the 1990s when certain mathematical formulae were devised, based on the random motions of the market. The formulae were accurate enough for the hedge fund managers to use them to make a lot of money. But then came the collapse of the Asian markets and suddenly the formulae were not working so well, but were still being used by those managers who had become dependent on their efficacy. Others, however, who relied on more intuitive responses to the markets, fared rather better because they did not lose contact with the market.

It was as if the market had suddenly woken up, found a direction, and no longer fitted the equations based upon its randomness. Like a pond full of milling fish the market had been mostly random for

several years—and therefore acting according to the equations. But events in Asia acted like the arrival of the fish farmer with his basket of food—the fish suddenly moved in a clear direction, the motion was no longer random but reactive, and it became clearer to those with intuitive sense just as it defied those who relied upon formulae.

PERSONIFYING UNCONNECTED PHENOMENA

If my last example was a little harsh on those who live by mechanistic thinking, this category is devised to appease them. As a magical thinker I do not really think there is such a thing as unconnected phenomena, however I see a perceivable distinction between deifying a consistent system like the weather, and calling a run of bad luck 'my demon'. For that is what we are now proposing.

When a life problem presents itself in many different yet parallel forms, what I suggest is that you study the pattern of occurrence as a phenomenon in its own right. The word 'different' in the above sentence simply reflects the assumption that you are not quite stupid enough to make exactly the same mistake over and over: even if it looks clearly the same to others I presume there were details that reassured you that "it won't happen again this time", before it did indeed happen again.

Here are two contrasting examples to consider together: the first a series of unhappy, unrequited love affairs with gorgeous, caring partners who then rat on you; the second a growing dependency on eating to provide comfort even though you are seriously putting on weight. Especially in the first

case I am assuming that each affair appeared different, that you said things like “this time I’ll really check first if the person is already married” and yet the outcome always seems the same.

What if we say that we have a demon that is sabotaging our efforts to have a good relationship, or to keep a trim figure? How do we then address that demon?

My suggestion is based upon that polarising quality mentioned in the last chapter. Ask this: does the demon present itself to you in positive or negative terms? Whatever the answer, begin by exploring the opposite pole.

In the first case we assume the presentation is negative, you are dwelling on the accumulating pain of rejection and failure with each break up. In the second we assume initially that the presentation is positive: you like eating and so do it to feel better.

So in the first case we now turn our attention away from the blaring noise of negativity and ask what, if anything, is gained by this pattern. Does it confirm some prior prejudice like ‘all men are bastards’ or ‘basically I’m just a loser’? Does it restore to you that independence enjoyed by those without a partner? Is it sweet revenge on those cooing aunts who spent your teenage years trying to pair you up with ghastly men?

If you can uncover some hidden benefit behind all the pain and frustration, it is an excellent initiator of dialogue because it transforms the relationship with that one partner who has not ratted on you—namely your demon. The demon can now be seen as a caring figure that has been working all the time to keep away voracious women who are probably

only after your money—or whatever the benefit is decided—instead of as a tormentor to blame for everything that has gone wrong. You are now in a much better position to discuss your problem and seek a mutually agreeable solution.

Vice versa with that eating problem. If you turn away from the pleasures of eating and try to determine what is the painful or upsetting condition that eating distances you from—e.g. loneliness, self criticism or self neglect—then the demon can be seen as a partner trying to comfort you and the dialogue can more easily begin. If, however, the eating problem presents itself in purely negative terms—you hate eating but cannot help it and keep putting on weight—then again you can turn to the positive effects and seek to find what you gain along with the weight.

When a sense has been gleaned as to the nature and role of the demon, then the dialogue begins. It may be that the demon makes itself very obvious, you can easily picture it in almost tangible form, you ask it a question and the answer springs to mind in a most clear and gratifying manner. Or it may be that you struggle to make contact.

You can try the technique described for the lust demon among my examples. Identify the strong feeling and then observe its physical symptoms. In the first case you could evoke the sense of failure and misery upon rejection by the lover, then ask what exactly you feel in your body, rather than in emotional words. Better still, if you have identified a benefit, such as a deep need to be alone, then identify and evoke that precise subtle feeling of relief that lurks behind the overwhelming pain of rejec-

tion as you say 'here I go again'. Then you can use the accompanying physical sensations to start a dialogue as in the last example: use it as a marker for a yes answer, then check first that the demon is willing to dialogue, in which case you can put questions such as "would you be willing to help me find a different kind of partner, one who would love me yet respect my need also to be alone at times?" and so work together toward a better resolution of your needs.

Failing even that you might try using a pendulum or other form of divination to break the ice. But do not stick with this form of communication if it becomes at all possible to speak more directly, for you may end up conversing with a different demon than the one you intended.

UTTERLY UNASHAMED DEMONS

Another class of demons is of those that manifest in demonic form. No question of lurking and pulling strings from the shadows, these demons are 'in your face' and can take the form of vandalism, immigration, teenage promiscuity, crime, a collapse in public morality, national decline or a world conspiracy.

The clue here is that there is something out there that makes your blood boil while casting a shadow over all that you hold sacred. We are not talking of "a shame about this year's rising crime figures, let's hope next year improves" but rather "it's time the politicians woke up and did something about this explosion in crime before we are all murdered in our beds" and so on.

The seduction of this kind of demon is to believe it is something totally 'out there'. That you are a bastion of decency and values, while this monstrous tide of filth rises on the horizon ready to sweep in and destroy all that you hold sacred. The dialogue cannot begin until you realise that your reaction and sense of outrage is exaggerated and you could not possibly have such strong feelings if there was not something of that demon rooted in your own soul.

To illustrate, here is an example from my own life, one that I have already written up in *The Good The Bad The Funny*⁸. Being myself something of a vegetable, when I see a vandalised flower bed or damaged tree I can be seized with a fury out of all proportion to the damage inflicted. My rage would hardly be assuaged by finding the perpetrators, dynamiting off their balls and gouging out their eyes slowly with a blunt and rusty screwdriver. In view of nature's rough and tumble since the dawn of creation, my response to a few damaged plants could be said to be somewhat extreme. That is the clue to the demonic presence: righteous anger is one thing, but to feel like doing far worse damage than the original act of vandalism is surely overdoing it.

According to the theory, I could not feel so strongly unless the demon of vandalism had some roots in my soul. If it had no root whatever I could only gaze in puzzlement at the damage and wonder how it had arisen and why—rather than not only being so sure of the answer but also so ready to apply the severest remedy. Remembering what was said about the polar nature of demon's horns: vandalism and rabid anti-vandalism represent the two horns of the same demon.

This presented a new problem. How could a sweet, loving person like myself—one who would order a T-bone steak and chips rather than tear a raw living salad leaf between my teeth—harbour anything akin to a demon of vandalism in my soul? It took a lot of soul searching and dialogue to discover that I am an ideas yob, in that I have a demon in me that, when it sees neat and tidy prejudices, clichéd arguments set out in rows with well trimmed dogma, feels like any vandal faced with prissy flower beds and twee tree saplings. It wants to sing “Ere we go, ere we go ere we go” and trample over the lot of them.

Getting to know that demon has been tough—a relationship of both pleasures and pains. But it has saved me from being overwhelmed by my impotent sense of outrage, and it has made me a little better humoured in my assaults on other people’s prejudices. The exercise has been worth it because, for example, that demon has been helping me to write this book. So watch out, reader, and remember that a pinch of salt keeps the devil at bay.

HUNTING DEMONS AS GAME

If your life is utterly fulfilling and devoid of problems this section might seem a little pointless—“if it ain’t broke don’t fix it” and all that. But if things seem basically ok but there are a few little clouds here and their blotting out the sun, then it can be fun or even worthwhile to ask “what are my demons?”

In response you examine your life for any signs that you might over-react to some situation or have exaggerated views.

What a frightfully English book I am writing when I say that, if there is anything in your life which might be seen as unstiffening your upper lip, then you should call it a demon.

For lovers of excess, however, I say "cheer up!" As the last example showed, I made some peace with my vandal demon and have remained just as much an ideas yob as ever. In fact I've probably improved my technique somewhat.

Anyway, let's find the demons first before we decide whether to mount them on the wall as trophies or tame them into lap-demons. So you begin a hunt for extremes that point the way to demonic intervention.

Now this is not necessarily easy, because of the power addiction of young demons described in the previous section. A demon who is having fun lobbing the odd brick into your life and enjoying your blind, mechanical response as it exercises such power over you, such a demon does not want to be disturbed. It would rather you insisted that the problem lay elsewhere, that others or the system were to blame and that you were totally in control. Whereas a string of rejections by girlfriends tends to attract attention and can be dealt with as in the last section, a rejection by a girlfriend, followed by a publisher not responding to your manuscript, followed by delayed promotion, followed by being stood up at a planned meeting—all these can look like utterly unrelated incidents until you see the connection and realise you are being repeatedly rejected in one way or another. They could be the work of a demon!

Another form of disguise is that the repeated pattern might present itself not as a failure but as a

pattern of success. Maybe you are the one doing the rejection: congratulating yourself for having evaded that lover who was after your money, that one who was an alcoholic, that one who was a psycho and that one who could never commit themselves—while overlooking the repeated pattern of break-ups initiated by yourself.

When the pattern has been located, rather than immediately trying to reverse it, see if you can let it run at least one more time under your growing awareness. Get to know more closely how it runs you before contacting the demon direct. If you try to stop the pattern before getting to know it and contacting the demon behind it, the demon can become quite crafty at translating the same pattern into a new form before you recognise what is happening—*“well, no more throwing myself at the feet of lovers who do not deserve a gem like myself. Instead I’ll celebrate my new strength by posting off the manuscript of my first novel—without any introduction of course as I want the publisher to be totally bowled over by the sheer quality of my writing rather than merely feeling obliged to read it.”*

Once a demon or two have been located, you proceed much as before. It can feel like untying knots in your life. It can invoke a growing love of humanity. It can deliver the kiss of life to your sense of humour. It can also be very English, by Gad.

PART THREE

OTHER PEOPLE'S DEMONS



CHAPTER SEVEN

RECOGNISING OTHER PEOPLE'S DEMONS

It is far easier to recognise other people's demons than one's own. My first extended example, of the young man who could not get a job, was based on the assumption that the reader would quickly perceive the pattern and recognise that he 'had a problem' even when the young man was still insisting he'd just been unlucky.

As already explained, demons have their reasons to avoid being noticed, particularly when they are still enjoying the power of being able to manipulate a human without much resistance. Such a demon isn't so worried about what other people think, as long as the host remains ignorant of its manipulation.

The exercise I suggested of scanning one's life for circumstances when one over-reacts is much less difficult, or even necessary, when dealing with others because over-reaction becomes so obvious. The person who goes on and on about immigrants, or men, or fat cats, or teenage sex, or the monarchy, or violent crime – especially when the offending principles have little direct impact on their own lives – such a person clearly has a demon.

Note that the stage when a demon exercises power is far removed from the incarnatory stage, in fact the absence of any physical substance or connection liberates a power-fixated demon to inflate beyond all bounds. Whereas there is a certain wisdom in being anxious about teenage crime when you yourself have a teenage son, the real demon victim is the

person living comfortably in a quiet suburb fuming about teenage crime solely on the basis of media stories and the occasional glimpse of Saturday night party goers being rowdy in the town centre. Similarly the comfortably retired person going on about the loss of jobs due to immigration is more vulnerable than a person in the labour market who is aware of the real situation in all its complexity. Such awareness, however, needs to be looked after: for a sudden threat of redundancy can panic anyone into the arms of a demon when it offers the comfort that it is not their fault because they are being driven out of a job by some faceless crowd of aliens.

Contact with reality can be the best way to de-fuse such demons. The person who is concerned about teenage sex but has a teenage daughter to discuss the matter with, has a better chance to balance media scare stories with insights into real teenager responsibility. However, it can also happen that there is a demon shared between the parent and the daughter, so that the otherwise sensible daughter wilfully builds up the image of teenage sexual licence in order to 'push her dad's buttons'. The demon uses her to increase its hold on the father. I have heard quite sensible conversations between a parent and a teenager, covering quite a lot of useful ground, until at some point the teenager gets a bit fed up and makes some wild remark like "of course they are all sleeping around—that's the only way they can afford their crack habit" and for months after the parent is quoting that one sentence verbatim as if it was the only bit of the conversation that had any value. The question of such shared demons is important and is covered in the next chapter.

In fact, it is so easy to spot other people's demons that we have to be careful how we go about it. If someone's racism has been driving you barmy, then it is rather satisfying to conclude that he is host to a racist demon. You can feel quite smug about that judgement. The problem is the 'driving you barmy' bit, because if you are yourself over-reacting to what is just some old codger's obsession, then it points to a demon of your own as described in the last chapter. Be aware that some people who come out with very racist remarks may well prove very caring towards real people of other races – their obsession exists at the archetypal level but is over-ruled by their innate humanity when faced with an actual fellow human of any race.

When a demon senses that his host is in the company of another person with a compatible demon, then the two demons can start flirting at the human hosts' expense. The ideal demon affair is between what has been described as the two horns of the same dilemma. And the favourite chat-up line is to make the host begin by defining themselves in terms not of their own demon but what they are not—i.e. in terms of the opposite horn.

You may, for example, be a concerned parent who feels that libertarian education has let children down by not providing sufficient sense of structure and security in early years. This is by no means an extreme view but, when some stranger begins a conversation with the remark "I'm not one of those 'flog 'em into line' type parents...", it is easy to jump in with a more extreme response because the remark sounds like an attack on your pro-structure viewpoint. So you reply: "there's absolutely no evidence

that wishy washy parenting that denies all responsibility for a child's actions is any better.." Then the other person feels attacked in turn and the whole conversation is polarised into demonic debate. The truth is that you would be hard pressed to find more than a handful of parents who really practiced either extreme, but the demonic notion is that the vast and growing majority are on the opposite side and that you are one isolated and aware person making a final stand for decent parenthood against this tide of either flogging or libertarian unreason.

This sort of demonic all-in wrestling is encouraged by the media who will illustrate any current debate by taking two people with as little in common as possible and giving them such a short time together that they have little hope of reaching any common ground. The resulting formulaic slanging is considered to be 'more lively' than shared understanding—as if to say a there is more life in a pumping piston than in a butterfly.

If you are faced with a person who says something like "sorry, but I cannot go along with the fashionable idea that criminals are victims of society so must be pampered in luxury prisons at the public's expense" then it is sensible to suspend further discussion until the speaker has identified an appropriate number of people prepared to stand up and say these actual words: "Yes, you are right, I do believe that criminals are victims of society so must be pampered in luxury prisons at the public's expense". Unless this is done, the person concerned has simply defined his position in terms of not belonging to a category of person that does not exist.

In these examples it must be clear that the person hosting the demon is the one who sees themselves alone, or in a minority against a tide of opponents. To such a person it can seem patently obvious that it is those opponents, rather than themselves, who are demon-obsessed—hence such phrases as ‘the fashionable idea’, or ‘the wave of violence’ suggesting that a demon in the form of an erroneous craze is sweeping across society. But, unless you can find real evidence in the form of people prepared to seriously defend violence for its own sake, or whatever, then the demon in question actually belongs to the accuser.

The question of demons held by a large group is properly dealt with in the next section on society's demons, all that is being addressed here is noticing when someone else has a personal demon of the kind described earlier, and how to handle such a person by not letting your demon flirt with theirs. This is essentially an interaction between two people, so we move on to the demons who inhabit couples in the next chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DEMONS IN PARTNERSHIP

It is often stated that ‘opposites attract’, however, in the case of shared demons I would rather say that “similarities attract, while opposites galvanise”.

People can be drawn together by a shared demon: two racists might meet at a nationalist party rally and enjoy each other’s company, two people with uniquely liberal educational ideas might meet at a parent/teacher evening and become good friends. But the real dynamism in a relationship happens when a shared demon is manifest as two opposing horns as in the following examples.

EXAMPLE ONE—TWO PEOPLE WHO CHOSE DIVERGING PATHS

Two people met and fell madly in love—each seeming to the other to be a special person, very different from themselves. Although it was not recognised at first, they did have certain things in common. Both were born to intelligent, middle class parents without much money, both were sent to local state schools but proved themselves to be unusually bright. So both got state-sponsored scholarships to posh private schools and both found themselves in their pre-teens feeling small and overwhelmed in an alien environment.

The girl found herself in a city boarding school far from her country home, feeling utterly miserable but with little option but to try to survive by ‘playing the game’, being nice and adaptable in order to fit in and avoid being seen as an outsider subject to bully-

ing. Being intelligent and able, she proved very successful academically and finally got a scholarship to Oxford University and then taught for a few years at a very classy public school where she made some seriously posh friends.

The boy, ten years her junior, found himself in his hometown's top public school with all the sons of local gentry and rich industrialists, and he felt utterly out of place. It was his home town, however, so he knew his way around and he responded by rebelling against the system, playing truant, getting involved with local gangs and petty crime to prove how 'cool' he was. It lead to a string of dead-end manual jobs that he never persisted with, being basically too clever for routine manual work.

When they met she was 35 and he was 25. She too had chopped and changed her career and was in the doldrums despite her successful education and good qualifications. Nothing quite seemed to fit what she wanted to do.

She fell madly in love with the man, seeing him as everything she was not: a wild, free rebel who had had the courage to stick up for himself and defy authority whereas she had meekly given in and merely done what she was told.

He fell madly in love with her, seeing her as someone with the guts and determination to stick things out and actually achieve something, whereas all he had ever done was run away from opportunity and take the easy option.

So the basis of their giddy attraction was a shared demon of unusual intelligence that had split in two when they each got that scholarship. For the man had split off his intellectual fortitude and left it behind

to become the wild rebel, while she had repressed her rebellious streak and become the hard working good girl. For each of them the other embodied everything that they were not, and therefore seemed utterly wonderful.

This was a very powerful bond for bringing them together, but unfortunately they did not understand the demon lurking behind their relationship. The woman was so sure he was the one who had been 'real' and true to his nature that she could draw comparisons between him, his life and that of her posh friends seeing only how shallow and false the latter were. He, however, was so polarised that he could never really believe how much the girl adored and worshipped him and what he had done, and couldn't help but hear criticism in these comparisons, believing she was putting him down compared with her posh friends. She in turn tried to live up to his wilder ways by slutting it up a bit and this simply confused him and caused further tension, leading to conversations like the following.

Him: And there we were crawling through this gap in the fence Vince had discovered—that's how we got into the rock festival for free, like.

Her: Weren't you scared you'd be caught?

Him: Nah, we'd all had a few beers and we were mates together, too excited to care really.

Her: Sigh! It sounds terribly exciting. Queuing for tickets at the Royal Opera House just isn't quite the same is it?

Him: How the fuck am I supposed to know? I've never had the money to go to no poncy opera house—wouldn't want to even if I could...

Her: No, you don't understand! I wasn't saying there was anything wrong with what you did...

Him: I should fucking well hope not too. Just because your stuck up friends would be too gutless to crawl under a wire fence and mess up their posh suits, doesn't mean you can lay down the law on me, girl. I understand OK, it's bloody obvious that you're just as much a snob as the others...

Thus it was not just a powerful relationship but also an explosive one, and it eventually blew apart in recriminations, tears and mutual incomprehension.

Each, in their way, had put the other on a pedestal rather than communicate fully as humans eye to eye. It would have been better if they had recognised their basic similarities—both came from intelligent middle class background even though one had moved up-market and the other down—and managed to convince the other of the sincerity of their admiration.

But to do this it is necessary to detach a little from the obsession, recognise that there is a distinction between the fullness of one's own nature and the 'achieving woman' or 'wild man' that each became in the other's presence.

And one way such detachment can be gained is by identifying the connection as a demon rather

than giving all the desirable qualities to the other person.

Note that in this case the demon was manifest initially as intense love for the other person. It could equally have lead to intense hatred—indeed both became present as the affair grew more bitter before the final separation.

EXAMPLE TWO—TWO OF A KIND

"I was brought up to work for a living—as a single mother I would have starved if I hadn't worked bloody hard to make ends meet. So I really resent the way my partner drifts along expecting me to pay the bills and with no provision for the future."

Sometimes when you hear couples complaining about each other, you wonder why they ever got together, they sound so incompatible. But then the lady adds: "I'm beginning to feel burnt out. If I had the choice I'd just chuck it all in and be a beach bum." Then you know she has married her unexpressed other half.

The other half complains in turn: "The trouble with her is that she's a control freak, can't let go. She gets so worked up if I don't go along with her plans, it's simpler just to let her choose—but then she complains about having to do all the decision making." But, when asked what he would dearly love to do, says "I'd love to run my own little company. Be completely in charge with full responsibility for it—as opposed to being responsible to others". He too has married his other half.

To say we are all born equal is overdoing it a bit, but I do believe we all have a bit of everything in

us, but that circumstances can push us into a particular niche. For example, the oldest child in a family under outside pressure typically has to bear an unusual amount of responsibility for its younger siblings while the parents are occupied elsewhere. While the youngest child in a family undergoing change—like emigrating or moving house—has to be unusually adaptable and agreeable. If impressed at an early enough age the first will grow up to be seen as “a natural leader” while the other will be seen as “naturally good natured” although, in each case there lurks a demon of the opposite inclination yearning to be expressed.

When two such people come together, the polarity becomes extreme: each seeing in the other what they have been denied and resenting it while being attracted to it. Each becomes a demon to the other as in the above quotations, even if they had for years been getting on perfectly well in the company of others.

What I am suggesting is that the demon of a passive, clinging child is such a big demon for an oldest daughter that it cannot be easily detached from the other person. Similarly the image of a bossy woman is too big a demon for the youngest child to remove from his partner. Such a demon is like a huge piece of furniture constructed in a small house, so it has to be dismantled to get it out. We therefore analyse it into a set of simple, mechanistic interactions—processes that require no demonic intent in the other but are simply what we should expect and be fore armed against. Then the demon can be removed.

This amounts to a confession that the mechanistic, analytical technique rejected in earlier chapters has its uses. It certainly has. But whereas the technique would stop at the point where both parties had objectified their disagreements and so detached from them, I now suggest that it is a good idea to put the parts of both horns of the demon together as a third party. Thus the relationship becomes a triangle consisting of two human and a demon that tries to control the relationship by both uniting and galvanising it.

Take the example of the control freak and the easy-going partner. If both people really were as described, it would be an ideal relationship. But what if the so-called control freak is fed up with taking responsibility and the easy-goer feels steam-rolled? Rather than addressing the demons directly, begin by cutting them down by the sword of analysis.

Someone forced to be responsible learns to think ahead, anticipate likely outcomes and plan for them. Someone forced to adapt learns to be light on their feet, to expect the unexpected and be prepared to take opportunities or avoid dangers as they arise. The former will always be ahead of the latter, with kindly reminders "don't forget the car keys", "remember the parents are coming on Sunday", "we must plan for next August" and so on. Even to the point of saying "My birthday is next weekend and I'd like you to give me a real surprise"—as if any real surprise could be delivered to order in that way. The easy-going person finds that everything they were about to do anyway begins to feel like acting under orders, and the old instincts are aroused not to

make any plans because everything will be ordered for them. Meanwhile the control freak senses this erosion of intent and feels all the more obliged to do the thinking for the two of them.

In this way two people who, on their own, might have behaved with an similar balance between careful planning and letting go, end up totally polarised into tyrant and slave—two demons too archetypal and powerful to be lightly negotiated with.

So, instead of allowing the demonisation to build up, focus on the mechanical processes. Every time the former person issues a reminder they should ask themselves if it is really necessary, and recognise the cumulative effect of such reminders. While the latter should make a conscious effort to act not on the reminder but on their own self discipline. This cuts the demons down to size.

But why not continue the process and get rid of the demon altogether? The answer is that it was the demon that helped these two to fall in love, and it still has much to offer the relationship if properly domesticated.

EXAMPLE THREE—BULLY AND VICTIM

Youngest and oldest child can be a deeply emotional and important distinction to the people involved, but carries little emotional charge to outsiders from the situation. For no-one has any control over the order they were born in.

But a relationship where one person plays a bullying role and the other is their victim can be quite painful for others to observe. Concerned family members and friends will fret that the woman is

too frightened to walk out on her brutal husband, or that the man they used to respect seems utterly dominated by some screaming harridan.

In this case the situation might seem much clearer, because one person is so clearly 'in the wrong'. No-one has a right to dominate and bully another like that. If the victim seems unwilling to flee, it can only mean the poor thing has been beaten into submission and is now too terrified to leave. In a this type of relationship it might seem that only one person has a demon, and it is a Bully demon

But here again the situation is likely to be more complicated. It is not natural to stick with a bully, however frightened you are, unless something is holding you two together—like your own polar demon, the Victim demon.

The mechanism I have observed in such cases is a trading between power and strength. The Victim grows stronger as the Bully grows more powerful. To explain this consider the very clear example of a boy king who orders his slave to carry him. The slave, by submitting to the request, surrenders power to the king—but the exercise increases his strength at the expense of the king who gets no exercise. The extreme situation is of a muscular slave at the mercy of a king who is now too weak to walk and so has no choice but to order the slave to carry him. The king depends on the slave who is, at the same time, utterly at his mercy—and this makes a very close relationship

In more realistic terms in a relationship, let us say the two are planning how to spend the afternoon and the Bully wants to go the theatre while the Victim doesn't much like the sound of that and would

rather attend a football match. The Bully's response is: "Ugh I can't stand the thought of wasting two boring hours in a mob of noisy smelly yobs going crazy over a bunch of idiots running after a ball. We're going to the theatre!"

So they do go to the theatre with the result that, assuming it is a good play, the victim has traded their right to choose for the discovery that the theatre can be quite interesting after all—in other words, the discovery that something one might have avoided or dreaded offers no threat. Thus the Victim has become stronger through submitting whereas the Bully's position is encapsulated in the opening words "I can't stand the thought...". Something that the Bully feels too weak or incapable of doing has been avoided thanks to the Victim's acquiescence, so the Bully grows weaker being even less inclined to go to football matches in the future. Whereas the Victim may have made the positive discovery that one can stand, and even enjoy, the theatre, the Bully's dread of football remains ingrained.

As in the case of the king who initially chooses to give orders to his slave, but who ends up forced to give orders, the Bully can grow more and more trapped in the angry role and even hate themselves for it because they know everyone else feels sorry for the Victim. They may even come under attack from the Victim's supporters. Yet the Bully may also sense that in some way it is not entirely their fault, that somehow the Victim's submission is actually a positive choice that has contributed to the problem.

Victim/Bully is indeed a shared demon that has thrust its two horns into the relationship. As in the previous example one can defuse the personal attach-

ment—Victim good, Bully bad—to some extent by seeing the interaction in mechanical terms. This has already been done when I compared the mechanism to the king and his slave—two interacting roles that are based on a trade between power and strength.

Consider also the example of a car engine with solid bearings: in this case the crankshaft is made of hard, brittle metal (like the Bully), while the big end bearing is made of soft metal like the Victim. But what wears out? Not the big end bearing but rather the crankshaft, for the soft metal absorbs all the grit and takes the flak in the relationship to the point where it becomes abrasive and grinds the crankshaft down. The crankshaft is weaker in this respect, but it is the soft bearing that will be replaced each time with a thicker bearing to match the thinner crankshaft.

CONCLUSION

Yob thrills debutante, professor worships circus girl, little girl entrances daddy, school swot meets biker girl, hippy chick seduces marine or business tycoon—no matter what the original demonic link between the two, it can be too hot to handle in a long term relationship as long as both parties really identify with their roles. If, however they can separate out the demonic parts and see themselves as two rounded humans who are now both galloping on a shared demon charger, then there can be real excitement as well as some measure of security.

An event like *The Sex Maniac's Ball*⁹ would seem utterly depraved to an outsider who only heard stories or saw pictures of what went on, but the

striking quality of the actual event is the sheer sense of good humoured fun shared by people dressing up in (or casting off) such hair-curlingly grotesque outfits. The extremes end up dancing rather than fighting.

Shared humanity is the best antidote to the intense galvanism demons can generate between two people. If they can reach the point where they give up pushing each other into those extreme roles and instead see themselves as two fellow humans acting out a demonic script that is as old as humanity, then it becomes easier to live life like high drama and find joy in the experience.

I can go to the movies and see brutal concentration camp guards beating innocent women and children to death and feel fury which turns to joy as the inmates are released and the guards punished in the final scene. The fury and the joy are what I paid to experience, and I enjoyed it no less for knowing that the people who played the guards in the film were paid no more than the people who played the victims—and both sides would eagerly go through it all again, because acting is their livelihood.

So too, when my heart is torn to shreds by passionate interaction with someone who seems so tragically different, if I can only distil the archetypal essence of the situation from the residue of common humanity we both share, then that essence becomes an elixir of joy. Unrequited love between a duchess and a stable boy, between a professor and a slut, between a schoolgirl and a priest—or any imagined simulations of these archetypes—such is the stuff of grand opera. Audiences pay a fortune for a taste of such passion. If such a demon honours your life with

a visit, don't fight with your partner over the prize but unite in your common humanity and share the elixir.

Play the role, just don't totally lose yourself in it. The resulting experience is called "Life" and it is the very prize that demons who seek to incarnate are ever trying to wrest from us.

CHAPTER NINE

WHAT WE LEARN FROM OTHER'S DEMONS

It was emphasised that the real learning about demons comes not from this book but from working with your own demons. There are also further lessons to be learnt from observing others' demons, so let us see what can be gleaned from the examples in the last chapter.

POLARITIES

When exploring our own demons we tend to identify with just one of the horns of the polarity and focus our attention on the opposite horn—as in the example of chapter four where the man had an initial problem in the form of a demon of lust, and it only transpired later that the problem was actually a tension between libido and control. So the polar nature of one's own personal demons can be less obvious.

When it comes to shared demons in couples, the situation is much clearer to the outsider. That same lust demon operating in a couple would lead to the sort of scenario when a religious leader or priest forms a secret liaison with a prostitute—a very clear polarity in the relationship. It is not always so clear to those involved, however, because of the way some demons conceal their tracks. Although I made the balance pretty clear in the eldest daughter/youngest son example, it could have worked out that the oldest daughter took all the blame, being seen as a bossy, ball-breaker while nobody noticed the con-

tribution being made by the youngest son; equally, the man could be labelled as a passive, *puer aeternus* and seen as the whole problem, without any acknowledgement of the woman's role.

And when it comes to the obsessive racist or whatever, then the demon seems transparently clear to the observer. But, of course, as far as the racist is concerned, he has no demon for he is simply an aware person trying to make a stand against a big danger out there that is threatening his kind.

So the best learning about the polar nature of demons comes from studying couples or pairs of enemies who represent two horns of some polarity. What you observe will tend to underline those points already made.

Firstly that the nature of such polarities is based on an illusion. If you are sitting reading this I suggest you look at your right hand and ask the stupid question "what is most opposite to my right hand?" An obvious stupid answer to this stupid question is that the left hand is most opposite for, when you are sitting you can stretch out both arms to your sides and then the left hand is further away from your right hand than from any other part of your body. But bring the two hands together and you can see that, in another sense the left hand is the most similar part of the body to the right hand—superficially they are identical but mirror images of each other. Thus the right and left hands are simultaneously the most similar and the most opposite of your body parts.

This illustrates the nature of polar opposite demons, and why they compare to two horns of the same dilemma. The oldest daughter and youngest

son are really two extreme cases of one basic problem, namely: what is the correct balance between taking charge and being a follower? The oldest daughter's answer being "sometimes someone has to step in and take responsibility" while the youngest son's answer is "when one who knows what they are doing takes the lead, then there is little point in not co-operating". From these viewpoints emerge two different reactions that develop into two opposing demons infecting two mutually incomprehensible people.

Returning to your two hands at the end of outstretched arms—there they are the best of co-operative partners. But what happens if you break one wrist or one arm gets wounded? A split forms between those two hands. If the wound gets infected then the nearer hand will swell and throb with pain. You forget the healthy hand, it is taken for granted as the inflamed hand hurts and grabs all your attention.

I propose that this is a model for a polarity becoming demonic. Whereas the spirits of libido and control are actively dancing in all of us, it is possible for some sort of wound to develop along that axis of the personality and it will cause one or other pole to flare up and throb. If libido becomes inflamed, then we might get a lust demon as in my example; and if control gets inflamed we could get someone with a problem about letting go sexually and enjoying love-making. In the latter case, an exploration along the lines in my example could reveal that libido was so pent up that it seemed dangerous and so was fueling the already inflamed sense of control.

Do all demons fit this model? If you trace any demon to source will it turn out to have an opposite pole and a wound somewhere along the line between the two?

Looking back at previous examples, the wound in the case of the rebel/conformist couple was very clear: it happened when they were taken away from their comfort zone and sent to posh schools. In the parent/child example there was clearly a wound on the eldest daughter's part because her own inner child was feeling cross that she was giving all the childishness to her partner. In the lust example I did not identify a particular wound but, in my discussion with the person involved, it was felt that the split must have had something to do with an early experience with a punitive nanny leaving its mark.

But do our 'good' demons also have horns? When we approach divination as if consulting a wise demon expert¹⁰, where is the opposite horn? Could it be our own sense of ignorance—for we would not need to consult an oracle if we were sure of the answer. If this is the case, then the problems addressed in my example—of people who either treat the oracle with blind reverence or who fail to treat it with due respect—could be examples of the polarity growing demonic as a result of some wound in what should be a healthy relationship of mutual respect between the oracle and the seeker.

If it seems strange to ascribe horns even to good demons, I would draw attention to Michaelangelo's depiction of Moses as a being with horns. Maybe duality is the condition of manifestation, and possessing horns precedes any descent into evil, it simply marks a being with the power to make itself

manifest. Whether it then turns good or bad depends upon how it adapts to manifestation, whether in our selves or in the outer world.

The lesson learnt here—if my theory proves itself—is that we should always seek out the other horn when dealing with our personal demons. The work cannot continue until we have found the two horns and their common root. So, even if dealing with something as apparently elevated as spiritual experience, in answer to a question such as “how do I allow time for spiritual practice in my very busy lifestyle?” I would advise looking for the opposite pole to the spiritual experience—maybe asking whether one is debasing everyday life relative to spirit instead of seeing it as another manifestation of spirit and thereby weaving the everyday and the spiritual more closely together instead of seeing them as opposites.

OBJECTIFYING DOMINANT DEMONS

The next lesson is a curious one as it concerns something that has crept into my book in apparent contradiction to its thesis. The introductory chapters warned against the temptation to analyse and objectify demons by over emphasising their mechanical parts. In fact I even went so far as to demonise this tendency as leaning towards a psychopathic approach. Despite this warning, in my example of the child/adult relationship, I promote the value of dismantling a demon in order to remove it from its host. The reason for this inconsistency is best explained in terms of demonic polarities.

I began the book by asking you to do something very silly—to talk to the office copier as if it was a sentient, intelligent being. I then went on to something even sillier—imagining that even a run of bad luck could be treated as a fellow being. This is considered silly according to our present culture, and so I needed to push the idea hard in order to break through that membrane of resistance.

However, when it comes to observing other people's demons, or witnessing a demon in a partner, I explained that it is all much easier as such demons can appear blindingly obvious. The problem here can be not so much getting over a credibility gap as the risk of becoming obsessive and going all out for bell, book and candle. Even someone who utterly rejects my terminology can fall into this trap saying, for example "it is ridiculous to believe in demons but, looking at our relationship in the way the book suggests, it becomes patently obvious that my partner has a power complex and is seriously troubled and should be taking medication or getting psychiatric help". The phenomenon is labelled a 'complex' and yet is utterly believed in without any of the intellectual restraints built into my demonic analysis.

Thus my advocacy of the objective approach becomes another example of our constant awareness of polarities. Just as I have recommended that a pleasure demon should be examined in terms of its pain component and that a pain demon examined for its pleasure component, so now I suggest that the harder it is to see some phenomenon as a demon, the more valuable the exercise—while the easier it is to see it as a demon, the greater the value in breaking the demon into its constituent parts.

This does not simply apply to other people's demons either: in the case of the lust demon, remember how it was constrained by examining it in terms of pure physical sensation rather than flowery emotional rhetoric. This analysis had the useful effect of containing it.

In the case of the partners' demons in the last chapter, the focus on the mechanistic interactions involved—i.e. that it is natural for youngest son or eldest daughter to act a certain way and so the two will interact along clear lines—has the effect of removing the element of blame or fault and objectifying the problem so that it can be lifted out of the individual host and seen rebuilt as a third player in the relationship.

The learning here is that the mechanistic analysis of demonic manifestations is not to be cast aside, but rather seen as the other horn of the dilemma. Where we see no life we give the problem life in order to work with it, whereas when the power of demonic personality seems to be overwhelming, then we resort to objectivisation in order to constrain it.

Magic and art tend to affirm and vivify while religion and science tend to deny and objectify—that is why they balance out so well when properly combined in our lives.

ARCHETYPAL FORMS OF DEMON

Demons are very personal. One should really only address one's own demons and leave others' alone.

By all means observe other people's demons in order to learn oneself, or in order to understand a problem you have with them, or in order simply to

help cope with a difficult person, but do not think such awareness gives you the right to tell the other person that they have a demon and what they should do about it.

If demons are so personal, what was the point of my giving examples that could only apply to one person? The answer must be obvious: although the lust demon, for example, was utterly unique to the individual in question, nevertheless it had qualities that should resonate with several readers' experience. Similarly with my other examples: although I would insist that it is wrong to copy slavishly any of the techniques used in those examples, it could still be useful to grasp the essence of them and use that to create your own solutions.

So, although each demon is unique in its interaction with your own being, there are certain archetypal demonic forms that recur in many guises. That allowed me to speak lightly about bully/victim, adult/child, racist and other demonic forms being pretty sure you would know what I was referring to.

These archetypal demonic forms are so prevalent that I dedicate most of the rest of this book to considering the demons that infect society rather than just an individual—with the reminder that those demons might effect each person rather differently and yet there is enough common ground to justify my descriptions.

But first we will prepare the way by returning to first principles and asking "what exactly is a demon?".

INTERVAL



CHAPTER TEN

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?

We have observed life's phenomena and we have opted to share our gift of consciousness with them instead of hoarding it within our self. As with any form of gifting, we then observe where the gift seems to be well used and responded to, and we then adjust our generosity accordingly.

I suggest that the baby who offers his mother the gift of consciousness will generally find it to be gratefully received and repaid many fold in terms of warm human companionship—compared with the response to a child who treats the mother as pure mechanism to be manipulated. Whereas the obedient spoon—although it proves an undemanding listener when we seek to unburden life's sorrows—offers less in the way of companionship and so earns a smaller share of our awareness. These examples illustrate the two extremes we could explore.

In one view all is seen as mechanism or the interactions of inanimate matter. Thus our fellow humans are no longer people, nor even customers but mere users, consumers or tools to be manipulated. The same process of desiccation turns inward so that our own sense of volition is stripped to its mechanical components and we too become machines serving our local needs in an all-pervasive sea of mechanical interactions.

In the other view we offer the gift of our self-awareness to all around and observe it spring to life like seeds scattered across varied terrain. Not only are our fellow humans considered to be every bit

as 'real' people as ourselves, but they are also seen as peaks of awareness rising from an all pervasive sea of consciousness. This sea extends outwards but also into ourselves, so that we see ourselves too as a cluster of little peaks of awareness, with a sense that one of those peaks must mark a true high point and be the real 'me', the spark of self identity.

Those two extreme opposing views—mechanism or consciousness—then demonstrate a quality of all demonic poles by turning out to be the same. For to be a ripple in a sea of mechanical interactions is no different in essence from being a ripple in a sea of consciousness. If this is not clear, then assume now that you are simply part of a great universal mechanism. That last sentence will have invoked in you an awareness of being part of the mechanism which you call "my consciousness". Either that consciousness belongs to the mechanism or it does not—in which case you are no longer simply part of a mechanism but part of a mechanism with an added non-mechanical component called consciousness. So, to be consistent, we conclude that consciousness is inherent in the mechanism—in which case there is little reason to assume it is anything other than all pervasive. And vice versa—consciousness can analyse itself into mechanical parts, and so a sea of consciousness can be seen as a complex web of mechanical parts. Whereas a world that contains both consciousness and mechanism as separate qualities will allow them to remain separate like oil and water, if you insist that all is mechanism or all is consciousness, then you end up with the two being identical.

In this book, however, although I have sometimes pitted one view against the other, the actual recommended practice is to unite both horns of this demon and balance the two in a dancing fashion. Thus, when the world lacks life we breath consciousness into it; and when the world threatens to overwhelm us with the power of personality we pick up our analytical tool kit and dissect the demons that assail us. Life and Death, Eros and Thanatos, Magic and Science, Animism and Materialism—call the horns what you will, the skill lies in the dance.

This process is assumed to be natural, so the only justification for such an unnecessary book is my belief that people need to be reminded of this dance. For I do not see many people who manifest unquestioning belief in pan-psychism or in mechanistic materialism. Most people seem rather to occupy a middle ground, a sort of mystic science where the world is considered to be a material structure obeying mechanical rules but occupied by humans who have been blessed—or cursed—with a unique gift of conscious self awareness. That is why most people would consider it an absurdity to suggest sharing their consciousness with an office copier, because an office copier is not human and therefore would not know what to do with it even if it could accept the gift. But equally most people would be offended to be told that their sense of self is an illusion that might just as well be given to the copier.

Within this middle position there is still a little room to manoeuvre. Some people, for example, feel they can share their gift of consciousness not only with other people but many animals too. Others are less generous and, for religious or scientific reasons

refuse to share it with those considered to be less than human—whose numbers may include heretics, members of other races, foetuses, the mentally handicapped or criminals, for example.

The way one decides whether to share one's consciousness in this middle ground is by a form of trading—making the other being earn their share. Instead of simply giving away consciousness and then harvesting it in the way I am advocating, what people instinctively do is interact with the other with the following unspoken question at the back of their mind: "is the other responding in such a way that convinces me it is human?" When the going gets tough, a sharper form of the question takes control: "is there anything about the other being's responses which would suggest that it is not as human as I am?"

This is the informal basis of the well-known Turing Test by which early experiments in artificial intelligence could be assessed. Basically, the longer others might interact with your machine and not realise it was a human mind, the better your artificial intelligence.

Thus people steeped in western religious and scientific culture can interact with others while holding tightly onto their purse of humanity. Should the other fail their personal version of the test—by making heretical statements, not seeing reason, betraying psychopathic leanings or whatever—then they are denied the gift of humanity and may be killed or experimented upon without qualm.

This is not a bad way of working—indeed it is fundamental to our culture—but it does have drawbacks. How, for example, does one interact when

there are six billion people (let alone office copiers) on our planet? When sheer numbers become overwhelming, the channel of interaction is downgraded from direct personal intercourse to reliance upon media reports or sound bites from distant groups. These contain very little of the subtle information needed to identify true humanity, and so it can seem that we humans are a small minority threatened by an inhuman tide that parodies humanity in a horrible fashion. It is us versus the anarchists, or the immigrants, or the heathens, or the liberals, or the uneducated masses or whatever.

Another problem lies in self deception. When we think we are sharing out our humanity, are we doing so with true generosity or are we keeping the best bit back for ourselves? Do we for example, allow Adolph Hitler to be human? If so, do we grant that he has an awareness as valid as, even if at odds with, our own? Only if we grant full recognition to his viewpoint, and accept that he lived in a world that was indeed threatened by a global Jewish-communist conspiracy, can we say we have truly shared our gift of consciousness. And only when that is done can we truly relate to the demon that he represents in our lives, and only then can that demon be disarmed. This is too hard for most of us—either because we are too poor in consciousness to share it so generously, or else because we actually need Hitler to be preserved as a demon in our lives.

The message in this book should serve as sweet balm for all such troubled brows.

SO WHAT EXACTLY IS A DEMON?

Some people are ready to read on, while others need a little more analysis before addressing society's demons. This chapter is an interval, and for some people it is only during an interval that they get a chance to read all those lengthy programme notes. So you will find a little more detail on the nature of demons and their relationship with us and the world we live in by turning to Appendix II.

PART FOUR

SOCIETY'S DEMONS



CHAPTER ELEVEN

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIETY'S DEMONS

In the late 1980s I was invited to join a small team consisting of an economist, a computer programmer and an astrologer to do some mathematical modelling for research into the stock market movements. To give the project a certain energy boost we each subscribed five hundred pounds towards a pool to be traded on the options market, and we were gratified to see the value of our investment rising over several months towards the point where our astrological model suggested that we should close our trading.

The model suggested a particular week as being a good time to sell, but the economist who had plenty of experience and a good understanding of market movements said that he would choose the actual moment to sell, because critical last minute gains could be made by choosing the time well. As the days of the week ticked by we saw that he was right and we were still making gains. So on Thursday he gave instructions to the dealers to sell our options on Friday.

Unfortunately Britain was hit by a freak hurricane that night and it caused so much havoc that the stock market did not open on Friday. The sale was postponed until Monday. But the date was October 1987 and Monday saw the famous "Black Monday" stock market collapse and, because the options market opened half an hour later than the normal market, we lost all our money. Ouch.

A religious person of a certain persuasion could interpret our experience in terms of God's wrath, saying we were being punished for our greed. This stems from a Platonic model of a higher reality informed by God's will, of which our earthly machinations are simply the shadows. A materialist could interpret it as an interesting coincidence—assuming that our experience was similarly the shadow of an objective material universe beyond our consciousness whose discrete components cannot interact across space and time and so can merely coincide. A superstitious person might see it as an indication of a curse or hex having been placed upon us by some ill-wisher, maybe envious of our success, while another form of superstition could have labelled us as unlucky. In these cases we still have another order of reality beyond the senses where curses and luck hold sway, but here there is no assumption of superiority or greater reality as in the Platonic models.

But could I claim that this apparently orchestrated disaster was the work of a demon?

In terms of the story so far, I could not. Because I have been suggesting that recurring patterns of events can be seen as indicators of demons, not a single happening. If this was the umpteenth time a piece of careful research had brought us to the brink of success and then each time a surprise event had destroyed our triumph, then the situation would be a fine candidate for demonic analysis—but this was not the case. Like anyone, I could marshal a number of unhappy speculative ventures over the years, but nothing that could add up to a sense of malign intent or pointed communication.

Nevertheless, it made a good story and I have—as they say—dined off it on a number of occasions since. It was even improved upon in an anti-occult polemic written by some evangelical Christian in the early 1990s¹¹ where it became a story of a group of evil black magicians trying to manipulate—rather than merely predict—the stock market and so leading to a hurricane and a crash. If only!

I believe it makes a good story because it has an archetypal quality. Is this not the stuff of fairy stories: *The Goose That Laid The Golden Eggs*, where gain turned to ruin because of human greed? There is a whole tradition where some treasure of magical object is found and is exploited ruthlessly by a number of wicked, greedy people who end up ruined, whereas in the hands of a simple innocent person who asks for nothing, the treasure is revealed.

This archetypal quality, this resonance that can be depended upon to generate a good laugh whenever my story is recounted to a group of people, suggests to me that the situation does indeed lend itself to demonic analysis, although not in the terms so far described in this book. The demon in question is not particularly my demon, nor was it a shared demon between the members of our little research team, but it is an example of a demon in our society.

The idea that any person will come cropper who seeks to manipulate Fortune for their personal gain goes back a long way, and that is why it finds itself in all those fairy stories. I suggest that it exists in all of us, though it may not be active. It was not in my thoughts as we embarked upon our experiment together—as I said it was not one of my personal

demons—but it now has gained a little foothold. For if someone else suggests a stock market get-rich scheme I remember my experience and am probably more cautious now because of it. It is not so much that I am gripped by superstitious dread and cannot participate, but rather more that a voice in me argues that, if it were that easy to make a fortune, then many more people would already have done it.

If I am thereby able to revisit my story and see it as the work of an ancient demon deeply rooted in the psyche of mankind, does this help? If it had been a personal demon of mine or a demon shared by our group then, using the sort of techniques already described, we might have done some work on ourselves and acquired greater wisdom for future stock market trading—or even sufficient wisdom to give it up altogether. But what can we do about a demon whose seeds are spread throughout mankind?

It might be worth revisiting the alternative approaches to see what sort of benefit they can offer.

The religious belief that, say, God was teaching us a lesson could bring on a state of depression where I see myself as so unworthy in God's eyes that probably everything I do will be flawed; it could equally encourage a searching of my soul that would lead to spiritual progress; and it could lead to any number of intermediate states between these extremes.

The scientific belief, that our subjective experiences were simply shadows of a greater objective reality ruled by chance and devoid of blame or intention, could lead to relief from any burden of guilt or sense of wickedness; it could lead to a sense

of despair at our powerlessness or any number of states between.

A belief in luck could lead to the unhappy conclusion that I was born unlucky or the happy one that it was no more than a stroke of bad luck, while the search for the person who had put a curse on us might lead to paranoia or renewed friendships.

None of these approaches promise anything so comforting as a winning formula, but all offer some hope of coming to terms with the situation so that one could get on with life less burdened.

To expect any more of the demonic analysis in the following pages would be unrealistic. But it does commend itself for being an economical as well as a fresh way to view events, for it does not depend upon a belief in other orders of reality—whether spiritual or material.

All it requires is a recognition that the motions of our universe are capable of forming eddies of conscious awareness here and there. I find this awareness in the motions of mine own mind. That pile of old rags over there stands up and harangues me—it turns out to be a tramp and therefore the rags have assumed awareness. Whereas my pleasant seeming neighbour at a dinner party turns out to be a politician—and all illusions of intelligent self awareness evaporate at a stroke. I can divine purpose and intelligence in the movements of evolution and ecology, and an understanding of this intelligence has predictive power to justify its value. In Appendix 2 I extrapolate from the widely accepted idea of a chemical soup whose random movements lead to the evolution of life and awareness, and proposed that processes within an information soup would

do the same. Human societies are one example of an information soup, and I suggest that living, purposeful demons would emerge within our society and survive in that ecology by promoting their own interests.

And I can understand how certain types of experience combining desire for gain and sudden reversals of fortune can crystallize into stories worth repeating at dinner parties (and recounting in books) where they will prove to match the crystalline structure of stories long forgotten in the listeners mind and will attach themselves to those stories with a laugh of recognition from the listener and thus the seed is brought to life and spreads from mind to mind as a little ripple of awareness manifesting the intention to propagate its kind.

So let us look further at society's demons.

CHAPTER TWELVE

WORKING WITH SOCIETY'S DEMONS

Considering the examples I gave of other people's demons and how they are manifest, it becomes obvious that there are certain demons or families of demons that crop up all over the place, whether in local groups, nations, Western culture or all over the world. These include racism, capitalism, communism, terrorism, fundamentalism, freedom, democracy, religion, materialism... the list is endless. But what can I do about a demon that is not merely resident in mine own soul but all around me?

It is a bit like asking what a gardener can do about dandelions. If they are his own problem—e.g. his garden is infested with them—then he has also to face the fact that they are also a problem throughout Britain. So does he give up?

That is a solution, to cease worrying and maybe even learn to enjoy eating the leaves and making dandelion coffee out of his uninvited crop. But the usual answer is to take steps to eliminate the weed from one's own garden. This requires persistence, for even if there is not a single dandelion or seed left in his plot, next year's crop in neighbouring fields will bring fresh seeds in on the wind. This does not altogether negate his efforts, for it is still easier to remove weed seedlings than it is to deal with deep rooted established plants.

The fact that this local solution does almost nothing to solve the dandelion problem faced by British gardeners might seem depressing. But that would be to ignore the benefit to his own garden.

It would also deny the optimistic hope that word might get around that you have cleared your own patch, that dandelions can be resisted. A hope that a new crusade might stir the hearts of other gardeners, leading to a widening circle of dandelion-resistant gardens and a corresponding reduction in the threat from passing seeds. It becomes conceivable, though unrealistic, that British gardens could at last be liberated from the threat, and that the dandelion would cease to be a weed in Britain and become a treasured garden species instead.

So also with society's demons. Our explorations of them might prove useful insofar as they reduce the individual reader's risk of infection. We might even dream of a future society that recognises these demons for what they are and forms a new, healthier relationship with them. But to look for such immediate solutions in these pages would be to miss the point.

Let us start with a dangerous example: vandalism. It is dangerous in this case because, as I confessed in chapter six, it is a demon of mine own, so anything I suggest could already be infected by the hold it already has on me. However, the fact that something is dangerous is no excuse not to do it—I will be addressing the safety demon later. So let us explore the two approaches suggested in chapter three.

In my favoured, left wing approach I would act like the gardener who begins by solving his local dandelion problem as best he can. I would continue with the work I described of understanding and integrating my own vandalism demon, not so much until vandalism no longer made me angry, but rather until the anger it invoked was in better proportion

to the damage that had been inflicted. Rather than wanting to retaliate as a mass murderer of vandals, I might seek ways to catch the offenders and make them repair the damage, or else direct my energy into more positive anti-vandal programmes.

When I tried to explain this approach to someone last week they responded angrily that it was right to feel anger at this "mindless destruction". Their words, as well as their intensity, told me that the speaker had the demon in him, for how else could he know that a vandalised telephone booth resulted from a mindless act? Might it not have been the final act of revenge from an otherwise worthy citizen in response to very bad service from the telephone company and being fobbed off with unhelpful automatic answering systems until his money ran out? Might it not equally reflect the telephone operator's business plan involving sending out teams to vandalise its own boxes in order to engineer justification for withdrawing a public service that is becoming more expensive to maintain? To assume unquestioningly that the act was mindless means that one is receiving information from a voice other than one's senses—a demon such as the one that infects myself.

This subtle example shows how careful we must be about launching a campaign against a demon in society before we have understood its place in the ecology of our own mind. Either you integrate the demon to the point where obsessive anger has been replaced by appropriate anger which will fuel a campaign informed by wisdom—thus delivering a well targeted attack against the demon—or you take the right wing approach, fuel your obsessive anger and

deliver a campaign to further demonise the vandals and launch a national vigilante lynch movement to scare the hell out of them, to the point where the streets and parks you once sought to protect become a battlefield. As was warned, you then face the problem of how to control the vigilantes who finally rule the streets and therefore fail to find any more vandals on which to exercise their fury.

The problems suggested by this example underline my pledge not to propose grand remedies against society's demons on these pages, but rather ways to inoculate ourselves against their more pernicious effects, maybe in the hope that, if sufficient others do likewise, then the effects might themselves be ameliorated.

So where, in the following pages, I produce an example that really sets your soul on fire, take it not as a cue to put your foot on the accelerator or take up arms against the demon. Rather take it as a signal to apply the brake, turn within to find what it is between you and the demon that permits it to set your soul on fire. Address this first before taking up arms.

And when my examples seem silly, exaggerated or trivial, allow that others might be inflamed by them and respect us all—demons and humans—accordingly.

HOW SOCIETY'S DEMONS OPERATE

In chapter ten it was pointed out how patterns within our subjective experience can constellate into conscious self-awareness—as exemplified by our own sense of selfhood. Just as it is possible to talk to

ourselves, we find we can talk to other beings who appear like ourselves. Experiments with dreams and lucid dreams confirm that it is not necessary for those beings to possess their own bodies in order to enter into dialogue with us—indeed the study of demons can be conducted without any recourse to other worlds or higher objective realities as described by religion and science.

It would seem that the complex patterns of information exchange involved in our own awareness can be matched elsewhere in our brains to create other forms of consciousness. By extension, similar exchanges of information in other systems will also form their own minds—just as life, we are told, emerged from the motions of a chemical soup, so will any complex information soup tend to generate self-perpetuating and self-serving patterns that we call 'demons' in this book. Thus we observe intention, desire, propagation and opportunism in ecological systems, the processes of evolution and even in the disembodied flow of ideas (we could, of course, also choose a less cerebral viewpoint and rather not see those qualities).

In the following chapter, accordingly, we look beyond our inner worlds and observe the image of the world we live in as reflected in our subjective reality, and we find movements of information in the ebb and flow of ideas and cultures and we observe signs of awareness, intent and intelligence arising from these movements as ideas compete for survival in the ecology of human culture.

A philosophy can infect our brains in the way a bacterium infects our bodies. Just as a cold virus prompts our nervous system to make us sneeze, and

thereby spread itself to other bodies, so will certain ideas inflame the minds that fall under their spell and cause their host to expostulate and spread the idea. It matters little whether the host opposes or supports the demon in his brain, just as long as he reacts strongly to it—that is why the fundamentalist Christian is just as much a support to Satan as any death-metal fan.

DEMONS OR ANGELS?

As in chapter four, which gave examples of personal demons, I present a wide variety of types including some that would be considered more angelic than demonic. As before, I suggest that the distinction between good and bad demons is less fundamental and that it is more important to look for the horns effect whereby an apparent wicked demon may present itself to its host as an angel, or vice versa, and where something clearly bad may contain its own antidote while something apparently spotless conceals a poison.

Remember also that the object of looking beyond good and evil in this way is not—as some demons might insist—to blunt our moral sensibilities but to refine and sharpen them. Moral relativity can be a powerful tool in disciplining demons and is therefore under attack from several quarters. To help master this discipline I suggest you experiment with the iterative approach outlined below.

If we compare moral dilemmas to mathematical equations, then we see an evolution that is reflected in the respective moralities of the Old and new Testaments of the Bible. The simplest mathemati-

cal equation needs no solving as it is a statement of identity such as " $x=3$ ". This is equivalent to the Old Testament commandments that require no solution, simply obedience. But in the New Testament we are invited to explore less direct moral judgements such as "let him who is without sin cast the first stone". This is analogous to a simple linear equation which could be solved because we know there is always an answer. The answer to such moral dilemmas being "what a perfect being like Jesus would do in this situation".

Aleister Crowley, however, argued that we are moving into a new aeon where new moral standards and approaches begin to apply. I have suggested in my other writings¹² that this 'Thelemic' morality, to use Aleister Crowley's term, addresses more complex problems that, like non-linear equations, may have no solution, one solution or many solutions. One approach to such equations is solve them by iterative methods—guessing at a solution, trying it and, if it is not exact, refining the solution and trying again in the hope of growing ever closer to a correct solution.

In moral terms it might work like this. You witness the rise of Naziism and see it as so evil you decide that "all Nazis must be killed". You begin to fight them alongside other anti-Nazi warriors. But then you come across someone like Schindler as depicted in the film *Schindler's List* and realise that killing him would probably compound Nazi evil rather than reducing it. So you revise your rule from "all Nazis must be killed" to "Naziism must be destroyed, even if it means allowing some Nazis to live". You are free to do this because the original rule was your own

chosen solution, and you therefore own it and can alter it if it does not prove a perfect solution. But your change of stance would seem wicked to those fellow anti-Nazi warriors who were operating according to earlier forms of moral judgement, because for them the law "all Nazis must be killed" is not their decision but an absolute decree. By changing it, you are demonstrating that you have been corrupted and seduced into abandoning your moral code. They might even decide to kill you.

Again, when the battle is won and it is time to rebuild Germany, someone who sticks with the second formulation, that Naziism must be destroyed, might sack all the competent people who were running the country and so create even more chaos. Whereas a moral relativist could see that certain dedicated members of the Nazi party only served the cause by ensuring regular supplies of food to the populace, or medicines for front line troops, and that such skills would be far better preserved and redirected. This very dilemma is active now in Iraq where the question arises whether to purge utterly all of Saddam's government structures and thus feel that war has been justified, or to realise that those structures contain not only wicked people but also some who earned their position through sheer competence and who have a lot to contribute to the new order.

This iterative approach is recommended when analysing demons. Rather than deciding at once that a certain demon is evil while another is good, just work through each demon's characteristics and note which you find offensive and which are endearing. If the French right-winger Jean-Marie Le

Pen makes some violently anti-British diatribe do you respond by declaring war on France? No, you would do better to declare war on Le Penn—in that way you discover that most of France was already on your side.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DEMON BEST SELLERS

This chapter provides examples of demons that infect large numbers of people—especially those that infect our culture and maybe other cultures too.

And the end of the last chapter provided a good cue for our first class of demons.

RACISM, NATIONALISM AND NEPOTISM

My most powerful racist experience took place in a North London bookshop adjoining a restaurant. As I waited for my meal to be served I wandered into the bookshop to browse. All the usual labels were there that you would expect in any small bookshop: Travel, Biography, Fiction, Cookery, History and so on. But when I looked at the actual books I had a surprise. The cookery books were all Jewish cookery, the travel was all about Israel, the history was all Jewish history and the biographies were of great Jews and the fiction seemed all to be Jewish fiction and so on.

I wondered what someone who frequented this shop would learn about non-Jewish people and their behaviour. There were many books about the holocaust and anti-Semitism—would this shop not give a biased view of the rest of the world?

It was the most racist place I had ever been in and yet the atmosphere was not one of hatred but more of love. I did not feel, as a gentile, that the purpose of this shop was to exclude me and my kind but rather

to celebrate Jewishness by focusing it so intensely onto these shelves.

Racism, as commonly perceived, is one of the ugliest demons around, with its retinue of final solution gas chambers, apartheid thuggery, ethnic cleansing camps, swastika daubed cemeteries and bags of excrement being pushed through the letterboxes of Asian family houses. And yet I see little wrong at its roots.

In chapter eight I revised the old dictum that opposites attract and suggested that similarities attract while opposites galvanise. I myself feel quite comfortable in the presence of white middle class, middle-aged males who went to public school—a group one is supposed to despise. If they are also Oxbridge educated, somewhat introverted and thoughtful liberal types with a wicked sense of humour then I could feel profoundly comfortable in their presence. And if I was recruiting a group of people to work with I might well favour such candidates over less familiar material—provided there were no other considerations to inform my choice. One such consideration, of course, is that I might be taken to court for excluding others on racial and sexual grounds. Shame.

Nepotism is a related, though tamer, hate demon in our society. When we hear that the board has appointed the Chairman's son-in-law to a key role in the organisation our eyes raise knowingly to heaven, we shake our head and sigh. But how sensible it can be to work with someone you already know, someone who will be more easily accessible because family ties become a binding rather than a separating factor in the relationship. Again it

depends only on the question of whether all other factors were equal.

I actually respect the human instinct to gather with one's closer kin. Like the bookshop celebrating Jewishness, I see it as a celebration of kinship and an important factor in human survival and growth. The problems arise as we move from such inclusiveness to a corresponding exclusiveness. No-one told me to get out of that bookshop because I was non-Jewish. The fact that I couldn't find any good books on cooking pork evoked a certain sense of exclusion, but the demon was within me rather than inherent in the atmosphere. So also with nepotism, racism and sexism in the context of recruitment: I do not have a problem when it is seen as a factor to include a certain candidate, but I do object when it becomes a reason to exclude an otherwise worthy person.

That, of course, is not the whole answer because it focuses on the particular. We are, therefore, still dealing with the demon at a personal level. To address it as a demon in society we need to move up another gear and explore the need for positive discrimination.

Although I argue that sexism, nepotism and racism have a right to inform (but not to dominate) individual recruiting decisions, those same demons play a role in society that could endanger their rights. If, for example, you are recruiting for an organisation and you focus on making it the finest organisation of its kind, and this focus results in the company becoming a preserve of Oxbridge educated white males, then a problem arises if it becomes seen as racist, sexist and snobbish. The very excellence of the organisation then becomes a demon and joins

forces with those demons to strengthen the accusation. It would actually be better for society, in its battle against racism, sexism and snobbery to create a somewhat less excellent organisation—even elegantly second rate—but one with more balanced management reflecting society as a whole.

Or would it? Here I invite the reader to explore further and to extend the enquiry to ask whether, in reducing an imbalance towards Oxbridge education, we might not also reduce an imbalance towards education itself and include those intelligent souls who never had the opportunity to go to college. Then might we not extend the balance towards those whose lack of intelligence or desire for education meant they never had the opportunity even to qualify for education. The enquiry is not as trivial as you might think, for such people would not only be representatives of a neglected segment of the population, they might also contribute something fresh and interesting to the organisation. Given also that a certain proportion of the population are criminals, to what extent is it acceptable to exclude those who do not suit your own moral standards?

Just as it gets interesting, I pass the problem to the reader. What could be more generous?

FASCISM, REGANOMICS AND THATCHERISM

The life and ideas of Adolph Hitler has been celebrated in thousands of books, let alone films, radio broadcasts and other media exudations. He is without doubt the greatest and most influential politician of the twentieth century if not of all time—an

observation intended to reflect contempt for politicians more than any regard for Hitler.

So it is hardly surprising that an ambitious Tory named Margaret Thatcher decided to follow his example by using "law and order" as the rallying cry for her campaign. Remember what has already been said about demonic horns: one mechanical consequence of a political focus on law and order is that it will bring down the rule of law and invoke disorder in a nation—an achievement admirably demonstrated by Thatcher's premiership.

The mechanism is as follows: people will only be motivated by a call for law and order if they feel threatened by lawlessness and disorder. So the campaign begins by instilling in the population a sense that this is prevalent by re-spinning all facts to underline this message. Thus "thank heavens our criminals are mostly behind bars" becomes "British prisons simply cannot cope with the surge in violent crime"; single mothers are transformed from hard working martyrs to a criminal breeding culture; immigrant workers are no longer thanked for helping our economy but rather lambasted for taking our jobs, and so on. The fact that less than one percent of the population suffers any serious crime in a year becomes "nearly 600,000 people suffer serious crime every year and that means over sixteen hundred people per day!".

People who are not scared have no reason to vote for fascist governments other than as a form of style statement—and fascist governments do have the monopoly on style. So, just as in the case of terrorism, the fascist government invokes the demons it needs to gain power. It persuades the people that the

streets are populated by night with unruly thugs, then it sends out its young troops recruited from the prison population to police the streets with clubs and knives. The result is that the streets are now indeed populated with unruly thugs.

Creating disorder by preaching order illustrates the horned aspect of demons, and it typifies a reversal of values inherent throughout demonic government. One of Thatcherism's greatest triumphs was to displace traditional British notions of fair trade and decency with an idea that you had to allow excessive pay at the top of organisations "in order to recruit the best people". How it was that the financial world that, until the onset of Thatcherism, had displayed a modicum of intelligence or at least of low cunning, could be duped into believing that the best person for any company was the person prepared to inflict the greatest financial damage upon it might seem a mystery, but will be explained shortly. This single notion turned upside down the most fundamental rule of business which is that, when others are asked to put out tenders for a job, the contract should go to the one who charges the least for the equivalent quality of product or service.

In terms of the demonic support needed to support Thatcherism, however, the strategy was transparent. The unsung heroes of the "kill for a thrill" culture espoused by her followers were the criminal classes. If she could replace honest, accomplished business leaders with the sort of thugs and subhuman scum that would otherwise gravitate to the drug trade, armaments, extortion and her back benches—such people would create a killer economy that could gorge itself on the privatised spoils of her slaughter.

Who cares if the country is dragged into the gutters as long as people like her were left with more than enough money to emigrate out of the mess they'd created.

There was one snag, however, in that the criminal underworld was itself infected with a quality which lay way beyond the comprehension of any Thatcherite, namely 'honour'. So the scum that came to be injected onto the boards of Britain's newly privatised industries was of the lowest and least competent order. A further triumph for Thatcherism, however, because the least grain of ability or intelligence might have served as an antidote against its infection.

As to why the financial community was so easily duped: the answer was that Thatcherism was also available in powdered form. It was said that her premiership invoked a certain euphoria in the City, this was true insofar as the euphoria was delivered via cocaine. It was a City necessarily out of its mind that so eagerly lapped the excrement from Thatcherism's festering haemorrhoids. I recall a TV documentary of the day concerning crack cocaine and its ability to transform a languid hippy drop-out into a petty thief serving a habit that could cost hundreds of pounds a day. A fantastic stimulus to security trade, insurance business and the economy, amounting to the ultimate Thatcherite dream—forget the propaganda, just hand out the powder!

To compare Thatcher's rabid ravings with those of Adolph Hitler is to miss the point, for she practiced only a third rate form of Naziism that lacked the latter's respect for traditional human values. Insofar as her demons were able to corrupt and overthrow the

very institutions designed to shield us from such filth, we can see Thatcherism as the political equivalent of its contemporary plague, the AIDS demon.

In the interest of the fairness and balance which characterises my writing, I should point out that in The Carlton Club, Whites and other asylums of bad taste there might still be the odd rabid invalid bleating that Thatcherism was something less than a total disaster for Britain. But such voices would do well to hush themselves, for they inevitably betray the speaker as one whose palms had been well greased with the spoils of a our nation's ruin.

British society is on its deathbed thanks to the Thatcherite cancer rotting its organs while maggots like Blair gorge themselves on the gangrenous residue of her destruction. It is probably too late to save our country, or the world, but this book can at least teach you to how to put on a condom and hold your nose before you fuck the corpse.

BUSINESS, MONEY AND THE WORK ETHIC

Trade is a noble human activity and I am proud of Britain's contribution to its rise during the nineteenth century. A tradesman is one who has the talent to make a product that people need and to make a living providing it. Indeed one can make a lot of money in this way, but it is not the same as being in business, where the object is not to exercise any talent or provide any service but simply to make money.

There is little, then to distinguish the businessman from the criminal, except perhaps that the criminal will limit their activities to those that have

achieved the modest level of legitimacy of having been defined as criminal by society. Indeed business flourishes best in the wake of a high criminal culture as in Chicago following the gangster era (I do recommend readers to invest long term in the Russian economy for this very reason) and this example was what inspired the madness described in my last example.

Unlike trade, however, business builds nothing up but relies upon slash and burn sources of energy. That is why the financial markets consistently reward failure—if a company is about to be taken over, if it sells off its subsidiaries or sacks lots of staff, then its shares will rise. A CEO who makes half his workforce redundant is praised as being 'tough' rather than a failure. Whereas an honest trader, when trade becomes slack, will increase his efforts to maintain customers, the gutless businessman will shrink the organisation and wait to bask in the City's applause.

You may judge a demon by the company it keeps, so the fact that such useless, greedy and inane individuals end up with lots of money while loving, talented writers of self help books on demonology do not, may point to a flaw in the character of money itself.

I gather from one of those acamediac experts that are dug up for programmes like BBC radio's "Start The Week" that nearly all the world's major currencies originate from an ancient estimate of the value of a sheep. Sure enough, the money demon has retained this inheritance from its distant past because it remains a herding animal. The more money you put on deposit, the larger the interest

it will attract. Despite every left wing political programme to disperse money more evenly throughout the population, it will consistently flock to those places where most money is already gathered, so that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

The poor will also have to work harder because, once half the workforce has been sacked they have to make up the loss or be sacked themselves. This would not trouble the idle businessman as he lies around wondering what asset to strip next, except that he is in turn plagued by another demon called the Protestant Work Ethic which demands that he should pretend to be slaving away because only work is noble. So he will fill his day with senseless meetings and then, rather than face the burdens of human contact with any family he might still have, will also arrive early and sit around late into the evening claiming that it is the only time he has the peace to get any work done.

Long, inefficient and ineffective working hours are another failure that goes rewarded in the topsy-turvy mania of British business. With a bit of luck, a smattering of divine justice and good taste, the bastards die of sloth, gluttony and heart disease but, demons being independent minded types, it is usually the workforce that does the decent thing and dies on their behalf.

It is interesting sometimes to consider a demon in the context of its cultural environment. Just as it is possible to say of some criminals or delinquents that the blame for their behaviour lies partly in the circumstances of their upbringing—poverty, violence, alcoholism or whatever—so also we can ask whether a demon like business owes part of

its obnoxious behaviour to the cultural milieu it is brought up in. In Chapter 1 I suggested that our predominately religious and scientific culture militated against my animistic approach—not allowing us to believe that animals and natural phenomena could possess souls, and insisting that it is either wicked or foolish to trade with demons by sharing our soul qualities with them. I pointed out that this ‘psychopathic’ approach allowed us to exploit nature freely for gain, and it extended to a denial even that we have souls and thereby allowed us to exploit and manipulate our fellow humans for our own benefit.

The way that business operates in this context is nicely illustrated on the website www.kentuckyfriedcruelty.com where we see video evidence of the cruelty inflicted on chickens by the suppliers of meat to the giant KFC food empire. It is suggested that management, under intense pressure to maximise meat production at minimum cost in wages, found that they could force down wages to minimal levels by allowing workers to vent their anger on the chickens. We see video recordings of live chickens being smashed against walls and stamped to death—not just singly but as continued acts of violence as workers stamp their way across flocks of birds. People too angry, bitter and vicious to be employable elsewhere are recruited by allowing them free rein to vent their feelings in this way, and they are as a consequence prepared to work for very low wages. What’s more, such people prove highly productive in business terms because they are driven by anger to greater efforts as they pack the chickens into crates for transport to slaughter. Whereas normal people would pack the chickens

with some care, these select workers grab them by handfuls and ram them in so hard that the chicken's bones get broken—an even greater business boost for KFC as broken birds pack closer. Management is delighted by the double benefit of lower wages and increased productivity, and so KFC awarded the company its prestigious Supplier of the Year merit and you can be sure that colossal bonuses were handed out to top management.

Thus KFC bosses guffaw all the way to the bank as chickens are kicked and trampled. Meanwhile unsuspecting parents around the world feed their children without realising that the secret in Colonel Sander's secret recipe is a heady blend of rage, violence, torture and exploitation.

Nobody cares about the chickens because, remember, it is wrong to believe a chicken has a soul—there is nothing in the bible saying it is wrong to stamp on them. I worked for the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food once, and their justification of death camp chicken farming was that "it is meaningless to talk about happiness in a chicken. The only measure we have of wellbeing is how fast they lay eggs, and these chickens are breaking all records."

Sure enough, the British government reaction to such tales of torture has been prompt and pointed. They have rushed through legislation outlawing animal rights activists. In their eyes there is only one criminal in this scenario and that is the traitor who took a covert video camera into the chicken farm and thereby infringed the workers' human rights. At least that is the public story, one suspects that considerable sums of money helped elicit such a friendly response.

THE PROFESSIONS

Humans are wonderful, they can do anything.

Drop one or two on a desert island to their own devices and they will soon be inventing, cooking, building shelters, project managing, leading, healing, sculpting, counseling, fishing and any other activity demanded by the pressure to survive and stay sane. They may do some of those things very badly, but that is not the point: any person who, in our culture, insists they "cannot cook" will soon find themselves cooking to survive. Our greatest evolutionary advantage over other species is that we have failed to specialize and can, therefore turn our hand to anything.

Humanity is like a vast mansion with thousands of rooms, each one a skill and each with an open door. But every now and again a group will gather in some room and decide to close the door. From then on others must knock and ask permission to enter, because a new profession has been created and each new profession is a new demon, separating them from the rest. The reward is "professional status", itself a demon, and it is bought at the price of becoming a specialist and therefore less than human.

Amateurs do a better job because, as the name suggests, they love it. They also keep the doors open.

I think this book is a bit amateurish.

Good.

DARWINISM AND MARKET FORCES

We are beginning to notice ways in which diverse demons can co-operate. The gluttony of business and the asceticism of the Work Ethic form two horns of a demon that has lead to a workforce stressed to the point of exhaustion by the sheer effort required to remain fretfully idle and unproductive in a world so full of opportunities for fulfilment and bliss.

Another little bunny in this warrenful of cuddlies was provided by Charles Darwin when he formulated his theory of evolution of species. No matter what he really said—it's the demon that counts in this treatise—his legacy rides on in terms of a most seductive proposition that only the fittest will survive in any natural, unregulated system.

That word 'fittest' is a smart piece of copywriting spin and it lead to the pathetic spectacle of 1980s business eunuchs getting together in ra-ra conventions and shouting such nonsense as "Are we pussy cats or are we TIGERS!", "are we minnows or are we SHARKS!".

The pathos of such blusterings lies in the fact that tigers are actually an endangered species, whilst pussy cats, bless them, have leapt to the number one position as the most popular pet in Britain. Even some shark species have rather more than one fin in the grave, while we can be pretty sure minnows are booming—if only from the blessing of the business wimps' contempt.

For the fact is that evolution's fittest do not look particularly magnificent. It is not tigers and sharks that come out the winners but rather those akin to cockroaches, rats and a certain naked ape. Apply the

rules of selection in other unregulated fields and a similar result appears. It was not the finest operating system that rose to dominance of the personal computer market, but a clumsy brute that knew more about propagating itself than about serving people's needs.

Thus market forces, without the eugenic scalpel of regulation to refine their progeny, prove to be the midwives of the mediocre. Another demon to seduce then disappoint us.

CHOICE, FREEDOM AND LIBERTY

Time to consort with angels. Few people have a good word to say for fascism, nationalism, Naziism and so on, there remains a handful of deranged sickos for whom business is not a dirty word and even money has its supporters—but who would doubt that freedom and liberty could be anything but spotless in their dedication to greater human happiness?

I too rather like freedom, but choose not to idolise it because I recognise it as the other horn of the demon that embraces both freedom and control. As the last example illustrated, free market forces mean that the market is free to serve its own ends at human cost, like a cancer that grows independently of the body's own needs and necessary control processes. Total freedom can be insufferably bland compared with the delights of pitting yourself against the rules of the system—just imagine playing chess without any board to define and limit the possible moves.

Choice, freedom and liberty belong to a class of demons that are the most rewarding and desirable

when you don't possess them. Taking a tip from our work with personal demons, when exploring angelic beings that seem to offer more benefit than nuisance, the more revealing approach is to focus on the negative and ask this question: "when people want freedom, what is it they are wanting to be free from?" or "when they want choice, what are they choosing to avoid?"

For an apparent gift of freedom or choice can be a way to control others, as when the phone company disguises its price rises behind a smoke screen of payment options so complex that you would need to hire a financial consultant and cover his charges before any saving could be made. Another example is the politician who offers choice in our access to the health service when the only choice worth having is the one not offered—the choice not to be ill in the first place.

The notion of freedom plays a somewhat sinister role in my next example, so it is reasonable to ask why it is so adored in our culture. It may have something to do with the Cold War and an attempt to find some clear defining characteristic that distinguished us from the Soviet Empire. A notion of freedom was invoked and became a rallying cry that is still used to send troops to Iraq. But can you be free in western Society without loads of money to buy your freedom, and does the money itself not impose its own form of tyranny? Russian workers used to be free from worries about job security and how to afford their children's education and they no longer enjoy that freedom, although they are more free to complain about government now.

Was it GK Chesterton¹³ who advised "Don't ever take a fence down until you know the reason it was put up"? It is in truth my love of freedom that makes me want to know it better, understand what it really means, rather than take it for granted as something purely good.

BEST SELLERS AND CELEBRITY STATUS

Businessmen dislike the concept of a bookshop because it offers thousands of titles, only a handful of which are bestsellers, and it requires to be staffed with a person whose IQ stretches well into the cost-ineffective double figure region. They therefore want to replace bookshops with Bookershops where the only goods on offer are the current Booker prize nominees and past winners of the prize. When I suggest that this would not offer much choice, they get all huffy and say that there is plenty of choice because each title would be available either on its own or in a deluxe pack with the video, or in a supreme pack with video and T-shirt or even in the five star bumper value pack comprising hard cover edition plus video, T-shirt, computer game, printed stickers and cuddly bath toy.

Behind the fairly innocuous label of 'best seller and celebrity status' lurks what must be the most sinister demonic phenomenon of our age.

Imagine a frozen lake, its surface covered with a layer of ice. People gather on that ice and begin to interact. Groups form and popular groups grow in numbers until—crack—when a group grows too big the ice cannot stand the concentrated weight and they all go under. This process provides negative

feedback, a healthy control mechanism that keeps any one group from becoming dominantly huge. It illustrates what I mean by freedom and control being two horns of a single entity, potentially demonic in their extremes and yet the stuff of life when balanced.

But there is an opposite mechanism, positive feedback, that fosters imbalance and excess where negative feedback fosters balance and restraint.

If a book becomes a bestseller, many people will buy it just because it is a bestseller and for no other reason. That is why bookshops always have a prominent display near the door labelled "Bestsellers".

Do you believe me?

Then be careful, because it isn't quite true. The demon is already at work. It is more true to say that many people believe that many people will buy a book simply because it is a bestseller, and many of those people are those who sell books. It is that belief which prompts them to put up a handy, easy-to-find shelf labelled Bestsellers. What then happens is that busy folks wanting a good read come in and the first shelf that catches the eye is the one full of bestsellers—which suggests they can't be too bad—and in the limited time available they find something that might be worth reading on those shelves and they buy it. Compare that with the statement "they bought the book just because it was a bestseller" and you see it is a distortion of what is only literally rather than meaningfully true.

I have illustrated the pernicious effect of positive feedback: best sellers begin with a sales advantage, then the belief in that sales advantage leads to book-sellers presenting them in such a way as to exag-

gerate the advantage and so they sell more and the effect is further increased.

This is just one of several such mechanisms. Another factor is that big sales enable economies of scale and the best seller can be offered cheaper than learned tomes like this one—another boost to its sales.

What if, instead, books were taxed in proportion to their sales, so that you had to fork out a couple of hundred quid for the latest Harry Potter?

The bestseller phenomenon applies across a whole range of merchandise and we see it on shopping websites that list "our top sellers" on the home page. You even see it in areas where some negative feedback might be anticipated—for example one might think that people would be less inclined to buy a fashionable item of clothing when told that many others had already bought the same.

The same effect extends beyond merchandise to personalities. If someone becomes famous for any reason, then their fame itself becomes a source of fascination and they can become celebrities—simply famous for being famous.

What if the intellectual property laws became developed to the point where you had to pay money to mention any person's name, and the price was in proportion to their fame?

As with the tax on bestsellers, it would amount to imposing a negative feedback mechanism onto the positive feedback inherent in best seller culture. It would be criticised as an attempt to constrain the freedom of the market.

The celebrity effect offers a lot of amusement and helps certain people make a lot of money, but I see

it having a very harmful impact on society. For it is acting like a cancer. The human body, as an example of a natural well functioning organism, has many features more akin to the oppressive regimes of Hitler and Stalin than to the freedoms of Western democracy. An infection, wound or invasion of the body is picked up by the body's equivalent of an all-pervasive secret police within seconds and it triggers an onrush of storm-trooper defence forces and the entire power of the body's immune system soon comes into play. This is a mighty oppression of freedom being enforced in order to maintain our freedom from infection.

But when the central authority of the system is breached, when cells become free to multiply at random rather than according to the body's draconian planning restrictions, then the result is a tumorous cancer, an exaggerated high speed growth at the expense of neighbouring tissue. This cancer is itself an exemplar of the perfect business model, a company is admired and valued by financiers when it becomes a cancer on society, overwhelming competition, winning dominance over resources and growing exponentially at others' expense.

Maybe the real damage inflicted by the freedom demon is that we gaze into its bright face and are too dazzled to recognise the value of the other horn, restraint.

ADVERTISING

Time for a trivial example to lighten the load.

There has only ever been one thing worth stating about advertising and it is the wisdom encapsulated

in the traditional saying that "a good wine needs no bush". For the only thing an advertisement ever tells you about a product or service is that it is junk. If it was any good at all it would not need to be advertised.

The public understands this, that the millions spent on an advertising campaign means millions not being spent on improving the good's quality or the standard of delivery, marking a product to be avoided if possible. But here we find the same problem arising as in the bestseller example.

Businessmen are dim enough to believe that a picture of a dusty road and broken down petrol station, with a line of copy underneath telling you that cigarettes are bad for your health, will somehow make people want to buy their lousy cigarettes. Crooked advertising executives will produce statistics correlating advertising spend to sales to 'prove' that this is the case. Even some members of the public believe that 'advertising works'—so here is a demon needing the corrective cane of analysis to keep it in order, as explained in Chapter 9.

If you buy any retail trade paper you will notice a different type of advertising, adverts about adverts. Instead of simply showing the same picture of the dusty road, the advertisement will contain words on these lines:

"Be prepared! The Gasporama Cigarette Corporation is launching a twenty million pound multimedia campaign this June. Make sure you are ready for the surge in demand—sales promotion display units available now."

The lie here is that BECAUSE advertising works and BECAUSE a multimillion pound campaign is being launched, THEREFORE there will be a torrent

of people demanding Gasporamas and THEREFORE the shop must get ready to meet this demand.

The truth is that people will simply come into the shop wanting some fags and BECAUSE the shopkeeper has placed a dirty great Gasporama display right by the door and BECAUSE he has so stocked up on Gasporamas it becomes a bit harder to find the decent cigarettes which are temporarily tucked away elsewhere and probably understocked anyway, THEREFORE they will probably walk out of the shop with a packet of crappy Gasporamas that day, THEREFORE once again the sales figures have convinced people of limited reasoning ability that advertising works.

While analysing the advertising demon it is also worth noting the decline in standards. There was a time when one could defend advertising as a minor art form, something that added a little colour and humour to our lives. This illusion grew up in the 1960s when prosperity led to a boom in advertising and many young people were recruited into the agencies to make up the work force cheaply. As it happens, the youth culture of the 1960s and 70s majored on the demon of nonconformity and originality: even when people wore uniforms, they were items like tie-dye shirts whose very manufacturing technology precluded duplication. As a result, advertising became known as a medium for bright creative ideas—the term 'creative industry' still hangs sadly around like a peeling poster. But the error was to believe that originality was a characteristic of youth, rather than of a particular generation, and so the agencies have continued to recruit young people to their teams and pension off the older ones.

The generations maturing in the 1980s and 1990s, however, swung to the polar demon of conformity and endeavour. It became more important not to rebel but to wear the right clothes, go to the right colleges and buy the right accessories at that time, while fashion itself became so bland and uniform that it was only by attaching the maker's label to the outside of garments that any distinction could be made at all. This was a generation much more focused on career and the right image, worthy contrasts to the hippy era but not a recipe for magic advertising concepts. Thus the creative industries have declined into a bleating flock of self parodiers. A few years back the only criterion for good copy-writing was that every time the successive letters COM appeared in a word you had to put a dot in front of them and write them in capitals in order to prove how switched on and up-to-the-minute the product or company was; at the time of writing this book the key to copy acceptability is still (when will they learn?) to make some reference to size either mattering or not mattering.

But of course, the lack of creativity in advertising does not matter one bit from a business point of view. As explained, it is the illusion of its effectiveness that really matters as mankind rushes to the loo in the advertising breaks.

THE MEDIA

I suppose the media should follow upon advertising in my list, just as journalism picks up where PR fails.

There is only one thing that need be said about the media, namely that it is the plural of 'medium'. We all know what a medium is: it is a person who claims an ability to communicate with the dead or, more generally, one who is a mouthpiece for discarnate spirits. Thus the media form a channel of communication for demons, in the terminology of this treatise.

As for the media's propensity for communicating with the dead: being something of an old trendy, I have been known to read style magazines and supplements with a certain intensity of purpose, driven by the desire to identify bandwagons in time to avoid them. For the media are carrion feeders, and the moment any thing or person becomes a media event it is a sign that they are dead. Dead in the sense that their human spirit has departed. When the papers claim that "everyone is talking about X", you can be sure that X has become an embarrassment. Avoid it.

As for channelling demons... see chapter fourteen.

The media despise mediums—if you see my distinction—and will take any opportunity to expose them as frauds, or as feeble-minded people driven by unconscious complexes. This is understandable insofar as we understand that media is simply the plural of medium—after all, media people prefer to believe they are powerful opinion formers rather than merely a channel for society's demons.

In a few concise words I have told you all that needs to be known about the media, thereby demonstrating my superiority over them. Being of a modest disposition, however, I feel moved to humble myself

by demonstrating that even I am prone to the same weaknesses. I will, therefore, blather on a little.

In the money example above I came to understand a very ancient demon by studying its past, how its distant origin among sheep has left a legacy of sheepish behaviour. The media being a youngish demon, it might be interesting to try the same technique.

Who is the father of the media, and how was the young child treated? I'm pretty sure that it was Marshall McLuhan who named the child, but it seems likely that Hitler's propagandist Goebbels was the true father. For it was he who saw how the press, radio, television, film and advertising could be rolled into a single entity to serve a single purpose.

Before that there were newspapers, radio and films, and there had been sophisticated use made of each medium by Freud's nephew in America, but it was really Goebbels who rolled the whole caboodle into the singular noun as it is often used today.

Whereas the individual media saw themselves as having a role to inform or entertain, Goebbel's genius was to bend the lot to serving power—Hitler's power. In such terms we can see the media as an abused child. Individual journalist and others may still see their role as being to investigate and inform, but the truth is that the media still serve power, for why otherwise would it be every tycoon's ultimate dream to own some loss-making rag or television company?

In the section on personal demons I pointed out how they like to find a cut or division to enter and infect the host. In society the media play a major role in creating divisions for other demons to inhabit. The mother sees a TV program about the dangers

to children on the streets and so her child is forced to stay indoors where there is nothing else to do but watch even more television. By discouraging us from going out and meeting other humans, the media create gaps between humans, a lack of human contact, and this leaves an enormous hunger for we are a herding species.

The media then satisfies that hunger by taking the place of human interaction. We are encouraged to watch reality TV instead of going out and watching reality; to read about people in chatty magazines rather than chat to people ourselves. Even journals once considered thought-provoking now provide a list of contributors names on the cover rather than titles or ideas—as if the name of some academic or author really meant more than their thoughts.

The media demon is finding a secure niche in our society's ecology: it is to replace human contact and gain a monopoly on human interaction, thereby to dictate how every one of us sees the rest of society.

ACAMEDIA

There is something more to be said about the media as demon. It shows how demons, like people can be approached from different perspectives and reveal different aspects of their character.

One view of the media is that it forms some sort of balance or complement to academia, in that it is imagined to be "the voice of the people" as opposed to the voice of stuffy establishment experts. This apparent opposition is, however, just an example of a single demon manifesting two horns.

When I was at Cambridge I noted two types of intellectual. One type spoke and behaved like the model of the academic intellectual, while the other adopted a contrary stance declaring that they couldn't wait to get out of this stuffy academic ivory tower and deal with 'real' people. By 'real' people, such intellectuals mean people stupider than themselves. And it is such intellectuals who run the media and they do so on the continuing assumption that their public is stupider than they are. This assumption is what links them with their roots in academia. Indeed, whenever they decide to counter-rebel against their own rebellion and do a 'serious' programme or article, then they revoke their allegiance to 'real' people and rely purely on academics to flab out the content.

I have long argued that the only papers which might legitimately describe themselves as 'the voice of the people' would be *The Guardian* and *The Independent*—for only such papers are both read and created by the same class of people. All others—especially the tabloids—are produced by educated people acting stupid in an attempt to manipulate an assumed idiot readership.

This has something to do with an aberration among Anglo-Saxon intellectuals who note that intelligence can be a hindrance to a good sex life. This possibly accurate observation mates with the erroneous deduction that being stupid must therefore improve one's sex life, and so we get otherwise clever people pretending to take an interest in football and reality TV shows.

Once we recognise that academia and the media are just two horns of the same demon, then their

apparent rivalry becomes just a game. Less happily, we note that the media inherits the defects of academia. As I explained in my 2001 Occulture talk¹⁴, academia was born out of the religious establishment and it has inherited religion's emphasis on style. Just as religious wars are essentially style wars—the underlying gods and moralities being more or less the same—so has academia inherited a tendency to elevate style over content. So no thesis, however perfect its content, would be accepted if it was not presented in academic style. Conversely, the less content it has, the more an academic study will be revered. Accordingly, we find that the media too is obsessed by style at the expense of content.

That is why I prefer the term acamedia to identify the single demon in all its poncey manifestations.

RELIGION

I'm terribly keen on this demon and heartily recommend my readers to pick up a pet God when they can, as it will offer considerable advantage.

Taking two high profile religious people—Bush and Blair—we find much to envy in their decision-making processes. When considering the prospect of war in the Middle East, both experienced a surge in pleasure hormones at the prospect of bombing the blazes out of Iraq. Whereas the poor atheist, rationalist or humanist might have taken such an experience as a sign of latent sexual deviancy, they were able happily to conclude that it was a signal from God telling them that invading Iraq was the "right thing to do". In the case of Blair, the wishes of those

who had elected him were as nothing against the word of the God that he had himself elected.

It is hard to see any down side to such comforting demonic company, but you should be warned that the habit of leaving decisions to God does erode the development of intelligence. As when Bush responded to the planes flown into the World Trade Centre by first stating ominously that from this day the world will never be the same again—thereby identifying the one factor that that day shared with every other day since the earth started its rotation—and then getting on to his Christian nonsense about joining in a glorious crusade against the infidel hordes in the middle east that had attacked America. Had he only spared a few minutes to consider the treasures of Western Culture and what it had to offer the world then he could simply have said "today the burqa has declared war on the thong"—words that would have had every decent, educated liberal across the globe saluting his flag in missionary zeal.

Less seriously, there are countless examples like the famous Jonestown massacre where even a supposedly loving god like Jesus starts recommending that it would be a good idea to murder lots of people.

This raises an interesting question about where in the brain demons dwell or have their roots—assuming that it is somewhere in the brain. It has been assumed that they must be rooted in the deepest, most primitive and reptilian areas of the human brain—for how else could religion drive us to such diabolical acts of mass murder, torture and cruelty? But strong counter evidence points to a location at the

other end of the scale. For it has been found that soldiers in the screaming terror of battle are less rather than more likely to turn into killing machines.

The statistics are something like this: in the heat of ground battle only one in five soldiers actually fires his gun and barely one in fifty actually shoot to kill rather than aiming away in order to scare the enemy. We are not talking about pacifists or just those forcibly conscripted, but we include dedicated soldiers who took up arms against an enemy with a strong sense of doing the right thing (like Blair and Bush, but prepared to face the consequences themselves). In the terror and confusion of actual conflict the higher centres of the brain close down and the reptilian brain takes over but, as these statistics reveal, this lower brain is more concerned with preserving the human species than it is in defending the nation, the religion, freedom or whatever first took the soldier to war.

We conclude that, if demons have in any meaningful sense, a place within the brain, it must be a place in that part of the brain we consider most high, human and spiritual. The place where visions of a greater world, of spiritual harmony, of heaven on earth and righteousness reside. This, however is also the part of the brain where our demons reside, the part that divides us from our fellow human beings and labels them as infidels, anarchists, devil worshippers, savages, sub humans and so on.

So to discover your truly human core, you must turn your back for a while on your highest principles and simply look into another person's eyes. I recall a recent dinner conversation with an acquaintance who went on about the parlous state of the world,

the crime, the dishonesty, the lack of moral leadership and so on and so forth. Feeling my sense of optimism being overwhelmed I got up to prepare the next course thinking to myself "yes, but coffee still tastes good".

If I had said that aloud I would have been met with a torrent of data about corruption and exploitation in the coffee trade, invoking a sense of guilt at enjoying coffee, so I kept quiet. But I recognised that the aesthetic complex of experience encapsulated in the phrase "but coffee still tastes good" linked me more closely to an impoverished and exploited coffee farmer than any well meaning political activity or rhetoric. I could come to him as exploiter, as sympathiser or as destitute traveller and he could make me a cup of coffee with his best beans stolen from the crop and our eyes could meet across the steaming brew and our souls could touch without a word being spoken.

Look, therefore, for our common humanity and defence against demonic hordes not in the high flying visions of spirit but rather in our bodies and our senses.

I should, however, add a cautionary note—for the argument has focused on where demons reside in the brain. There is, however, a definite tendency for a certain class of demon to reside in the body. I refer to the sort of trauma demons addressed by physical therapies where, for example, a long standing back problem can be traced to its psychological origins. Some of my advice applies equally to such demons, but in general they may be better dealt with using the specialized therapies—such as EMDR—designed for the purpose.

TERRORISM

Didn't you just love those aeroplanes flying into the New York twin office towers?

They looked terrific, and it cheered me up no end to think that at last here was proof that ordinary people can hit back against the establishment with just a small knife and a lot of indignation behind them. Most people who did not have any personal involvement with the disaster—and that makes around six billion of thus—must have felt that way. I bet the architect of those towers wished he had thought of it—they looked so much better with smoke coming out of them.

Certainly the media folk did, they kept showing and re-showing the pictures of the event all through the day with a glee that suggested that it was the best thing that had happened for ages, that what with anniversaries and mensiversaries this one would run and run and they would not have to sacrifice another princess for years.

It could also be said that the event was a human tragedy, but I need not do so here because others have already said that and it is obvious anyway. Let us concentrate on the fun, because that seems to have been curiously overlooked.

A peace conference was held in London following the event, and media spokespersons at the conference all condemned the act unreservedly. They were then asked why it was that the media gave so much publicity to such wicked, criminal acts and did not focus more on the good deeds, the stories of human love and triumph in our world. The answer

came as expected, that such positive stories did not sell newspapers, that the public had more interest in crime and terror and that they, the media must provide it in order to earn their living.

In which case, why had I heard or read no words celebrating what Al-Quaeda had done? At great personal sacrifice the people involved had provided the public with the stories it favoured, and the media was gaining enormous revenue and power as a result. The vast majority of us six billion had gained in excitement and or revenue, but where was the sense of gratitude and acknowledgement? Instead of praising Al-Queda, the press bit the hand that fed it. I only managed not to be swept away in the undertow of public sympathy such treatment invoked, by being aware of the demonic puppet masters pulling the strings.

When some faceless corporation has trampled on your quality of life and blocked your angry response with automated telephone answering systems that loop you around their sweet talking circles of hell until time and money gives out, have you never yearned to drive a jumbo jet into their headquarters? The only thing that can shake their fiscal fortress is a notion that it might be possible for the public one day to get through to them.

All that can be said about the mind of corporate business is summarised in the scene from *The Third Man* when Harry Lime looks down from a high Ferris Wheel and says, in answer to the question as to how he can bring himself to deal in counterfeit drugs: *"Would you really feel any pity if one of those dots stopped moving forever? If I said you can have twenty*

thousand pounds for every dot that stops, would you really, old man, tell me to keep my money...?"

All hands to bringing down the Ferris Wheel, I say. C'mon bin Laden, do our dirty work for us.

I'll be cross about terrorism when it hits me, OK. But until then I am simply aware of who benefits most from it and has the most to gain from it. The answer is firstly the government, secondly the media and then maybe, way down the list, some cause that the terrorists believe in.

SAFETY

Another little monster in angel's clothing.

How thoughtful of Mummy to rush ahead of us like a mother hen anticipating every possible threat to save us from the least hurt or scratch—but what a waste! For we have a superb instrument in the human mind and body that has been developed over millions of years to cope with dirt, scratches, disease, accidents, abuse, shock and trauma. To protect such a triumph of bio-engineering in that way is as ghastly as it is to buy a Lamborghini purely as an investment and keep it standing on pillars in a constant temperature environment.

Thus life's great defender—the safety lobby—has become life's great denier. An irony so utterly in keeping with demonic behaviour polarities as to appear positively un-ironic.

So we find that teachers may not take children on adventure holidays lest adventure befalls them, and that parents and children at the school fair are forced to consume the food industry's chemical

slops because mothers' home made cakes might not come with hygienic certification.

I'd like to bulldoze the whole lot of them into some disused quarry, take a spoonful of harmless white powder—let's say flour—sprinkle it over them and watch the whole lot die slowly of fright.

Does that make me a safety hazard I wonder?

THE DARK AGES

I've remembered something even worse than being a safety hazard! I can imagine some rentabofin acamediac twit commenting on this book and saying "this is just the sort of wishy-washy mumbo jumbo that could undo all the progress made since the Enlightenment and bring about a return to The Dark Ages."

Oooo eeeee oooo! The Dark Ages! What a terrifying threat! Is there any reader brave or mad enough not to grab a pair of tongs and take my book to the nearest furnace for instant destruction?

So what is this terrible Dark Age demon that we are threatened with whenever the public shows signs of a revival of interest in magic?

In my book *SSOTBME*¹⁵ I drew attention to a cycle in our history in which our intellectual culture is dominated by religion, then science, then magic then art then back to religion and so on. It seems to take about 500 years in each phase. Thus I saw the 500 years before Christ as a high point in scientific rationality and scepticism—taking examples from classical culture and Chinese culture of the day. But it was superseded by a revival of magical thinking during the 500 years after Christ—a typical example being the way Chinese and Arabic chemical technol-

ogy matured into alchemy at that time. Then there were 500 years where art was dominant—leading to troubadour culture, chivalry and the setting of great legends—until religion became dominant roughly between 1000 and 1500 ad. Then religion gave way to science between 1500 and 2000 ad and I suggest that magical thinking is again on the ascendant.

In these terms we are due for a new "Dark Ages" as a matter of course. But what does it mean in practice? What was so dark about them?

Well the first claim to darkness is simply the polar opposite of the Enlightenment. Anything that takes us beyond scientific rationalism scares certain people out of their wits. They were also dark because less history was recorded at that time—and that is considered deeply perverse in the eyes of historians whose livelihood depends upon lots of history happening and being recorded.

What does "less history" mean in practice? It means fewer big global schemes, fewer cathedrals, mighty empires and institutions, fewer great heroes and rulers and less of everything memorable to the historian—no more KFC death camps, just villagers with farm stalls. This is interpreted as a decline in culture, a return to barbarism and brutality—whereas it could simply mean fewer big demons in our society and a return to human-scale achievements and human values.

I who think a smile from a happy family is worth quite a number of cathedrals and mighty business empires, am less scared at the prospect of a return to Dark Ages. Brian Bates quotes evidence in his book *The Real Middle Earth*¹⁷ that the British during the Dark Ages allowed the great Roman buildings

and towns to decay not because the people were too stupid and brutalised to maintain them, but because they did not approve of them. They saw them as remnants of a decadent, failed civilisation.

This is quite inconceivable to Enlightenment junkies: how could anyone not want all the advantages of modern civilisation? A world without globalisation, television, global warming and superpowers is quite terrifying to them. But what if people simply grow tired of these old demons and long for simple, economical comforts of human companionship instead? People make a dishonest argument when they challenge us to abandon the luxuries of modern living: I possess a mobile phone and a car because I live in a culture that makes it hard not to own such luxuries. It does not mean I might not prefer to live in a culture that did not require them.

We are lead to believe that the Dark Ages were a time of continuing untrammelled violence, of Viking raids, lawlessness, rape and pillage. But these accusations are made by a culture with its own demon-infested sets of values. Consider the current war in Iraq and the outrage caused by Lindie England and her chums sexually humiliating Iraqi prisoners. It was an outrage to see soldiers doing that because, in our culture, the job of soldiers is to kill, destroy and maim. Millions have been spent by the government to overcome these young people's human instincts and brainwash them into killing machines, so what could be more disturbing than photos of soldiers taunting Iraqis instead of slaughtering them?

Call me old fashioned if you will, but—given the choice between having my home and family blown to bits by US weapons of mass destruction, and

being stripped naked and made to pose wearing a dog leash—I know which I would opt for. We are assured, however, that such is Iraqi culture they would in fact rather die than be stripped in this way. If that is the case, I'd say more blame lies with their religion. If they find nudity so humiliating, I suggest they spend less time at the mosque and more time working out at the gym.

Whereas fire-power and destruction is glorious in the eyes of Bush and Blair, Lindie England shows greater sensitivity to the niceties of conflict. Sexual humiliation should be what war is really about, because it returns conflict to human scale. Compare the grisly outcome of America's brutal battles in Iraq and Vietnam with their conquest of Britain in the 1940s. American soldiers, we were told, were "over paid, over sexed and over here", while the defining feature of wartime regulation knickers was "one yank, and they're off". It was hard on the British males who lost out to their big, handsome and wealthy challengers, but since then our nation has been as faithful to and doting on the USA as a puppy, because that is the way conquest should be carried out. Strip those soldiers of their weapons of mass destruction and their clothing; pump them up with steroids and Viagra, oil their bodies and parachute them down wearing leopard-print g-strings with perhaps one survival dagger as style accessory. All opposition would melt.

So also in the Dark Ages: it is not easy for the British male when a boatload of hunky Vikings turns up, all bronzed and weather-beaten with exciting tales of derring-do to wow the ladies, but there are compensations for the more creative loser. There is, indeed,

pain in seeing your woman being screwed by an alpha male—especially if she is manifestly enjoying it—but you can always watch and wank.

Of course such invaders' activities are recounted and passed down with disgust and anger, but we are at least talking of conflict on a human scale and constrained by human needs—not like the megadeaths and mass destruction orgies demanded by Bush and Blair. There is a different quality when crime is motivated purely by a desire to gain sustenance from those better off, than when it is fuelled by political demons such as class warfare, racism and nationalism.

So I see the coming thousand years of Dark Ages as something rather cosy: a return to small communities; craftsmanship in place of mass production; farmstalls in place of battery farming death camps; punch ups in place of megadeaths; woodland shrines in place of cathedrals; trade in place of an economy; magic and art instead of science and religion; time to thatch houses instead of traffic jams; a home hearth in place of global warming; wandering minstrels instead of books like this.

It's funny how our society balks at such a prospect—until you realise that our society is just another demon.

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

I attended an English preparatory school at the end of the 1950s, and was taught a certain amount about being a gentleman. This education continued

into the 1960s when I moved up to public school, but began to lose momentum as the concept of English gentlemanliness gave way to the concept of swinging London and all that. By the early 1970s when I was teaching at Eton College, it had become so embarrassing to be mistaken for an English gentleman that even the Eton boys were adopting accents and postures to distance themselves from that pariah image.

Something interesting happens when a culture is defeated in this way, and I don't know what is the best metaphor to describe it. On the one hand the process is like a laying down of archeological strata: when the gentleman is overwhelmed by the swinger it is as if the former is covered over by the latter like a layer of new topsoil, and yet the gentleman still lies buried beneath this layer and feeds the roots of strange new growths. On the other hand, when the swinger ousts the gentleman it is as if a family has found a new pet, and the old one is thrown out onto the streets to fend for itself.

In either case it is my observation that the apparently banished culture does not just vanish away, but that it hangs around, turns wild and appears in strange new forms. When it is no longer fashionable, revered, respected and talked to, a demon becomes a wanderer in the waste and grows fierce and feral.

Because the concept of the English gentleman is now so long departed, I need to tell you something about it. All people can remember now is that it was something about being "a decent chap" or a "good sport" and it is assumed that meant knowing which items of cutlery to use, going to the right schools and wearing the right clothes.

This idea is wrong. What was drummed into me was a model of gentlemanliness that is encapsulated in the following story. Because of some act of heroism, a junior soldier was invited to dinner at the officers' mess and found himself quite overwhelmed by the splendour, the grand table setting, the gleaming silver and smart uniforms. He had no experience of dining on this scale and had not learnt the requisite etiquette and had never come across finger bowls before, so he assumed the water was there for him to drink. So he picked up his finger bowl and proceeded to make the appalling social *faux pas* of drinking from it.

All around him junior officers bristled with distaste at such boorish behaviour. The brigadier at the head of the table, however, noticed his potential discomfort and so picked up his own finger bowl and also drank from it. As the most senior person present this set the stage for all the others to do likewise, thus the junior soldier was spared humiliation and settled down to enjoy the rest of the dinner. That brigadier's behaviour was presented to me as the essence of gentlemanliness.

If that is truly the essence of being a gentleman, then we can see the same spirit permeating the political correctness movement. It is an attempt to anticipate the least discomfort of the disadvantaged and to moderate one's own words and behaviour to put the other person at ease. As such it is the model of gentlemanliness and yet it somehow doesn't quite work.

Whereas the brigadier's gesture had an informal human ease about it—like the door casually held open to facilitate the passage of one laden with

baggage—political correctness has a more calculating, earnest and oppressive feel. It is as if the brigadier, instead of simply setting a precedent, were to stand up, call for silence and then make a short speech in which he declared that, from now on, it was a rule in this officers' mess that finger bowls were only to be used for drinking water. Such a gesture might actually have embarrassed the junior soldier even more, by drawing heavy attention to his break with tradition.

The very formality of political correctness has the quality of further emphasising the disadvantage of the disadvantaged person by suggesting that they are so desperately handicapped as to need the help of their betters to cope with their problem—as if their betters were responsible not just for their own behaviour but also for the feelings of the disadvantaged. "I am going to describe these people as 'alternatively abled' because I do not believe they can cope with the fact that they are just a bunch of fucking cripples".

What has happened, I suggest, is that the once benign demon of gentlemanliness went out of favour and found itself kicked out of our culture, wandering in the waste and having to fend for itself. Without the warmth and civilising effect of the sort of conversation and attention I am advocating in this book, it grew fierce like a dog gone wild and yet learnt how to survive until it could find a new niche and work its way back in a new form as political correctness. What has survived is the basic intention not to cause hurt, also the mechanisms of altering behaviour and speech patterns to put others at ease,

but what has been lost is the human understanding and warmth of the old demon.

This example illustrates an important principle in the study of society's demons. Rather like the nostalgia example of chapter four, in which it was explained how inner demons can evolve when a part of a person's growth is arrested by shock or wounding, this example shows how demons can evolve in society when a well respected principle goes out of favour or is repressed.

Consider, for example, the decline of Christianity in the nineteenth century following the challenge of science and Darwin's theory of evolution. The religion could no longer dominate our belief systems in the way it had for centuries, and yet its influence was in no way diminished as it re-emerged in new grotesque forms. The ethical principles of Christianity returned in the form of socialism and communism, while the denial of the body returned in the form of a Victorian prudery that still dominates our media and society despite the work of Edward Carpenter, DH Lawrence, Havelock Ellis and others. I suspect we live in a far more Christian society now than the Victorians ever did, precisely because so few of us go to church.

A similar effect can happen after a war when one culture over-runs another. Whereas the victorious culture claims the territory, it soaks up the blood of the defeated culture and can become possessed by it. Robert Pirsig, author of *Zen in the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* notes how the cowboy culture in America has taken on the ethos and style of the Red Indian culture it conquered¹⁸, and I note how curry

has replaced roast beef as the number one favourite British meal.

OUR GREAT INSTITUTIONS—GENERAL COMMENT

I remember making some remark about 'science' as an entity when I was at university—as in the sentence "science liberated us from the dogma of religion". The response to my remark was "there is no such thing as science, there are only scientists." That view is the polar opposite of what I am proposing, for I believe that there are advantages in seeing that swarm of scientists as a culture supporting an abstract entity called science that has evolved over thousands of years in the information soup of human society and shows signs of a rudimentary intelligence and instinct for survival.

I put myself in science's shoes and ask what would I do to ensure my survival? One is that I should sustain human need for me. I can do this by promising riches and then delaying their delivery—as in the 20th century promise that nuclear power would deliver unlimited virtually free energy, and the 1950s dream that we would soon have televisual walkie talkies on our wrists—a dream that is still not delivered by the latest cell phones half a century later. The other main way to sustain need is for science to create problems for humanity that require more science to solve them—problems such as pollution and medical side effects. Secondly, having attained dominance by ousting religion, I would defend myself against all alternative world views by establishing canons of truth that are closed to creative or revolutionary thinkers—as in the peer

review process—so that dissent becomes equated with error.

If we do not believe in science, but only in individual scientists, it would raise the uncomfortable question as to who are these evil scientists that deliberately withhold their gifts in order to foster humanity's addiction to science. In my version, however, we see that the vast majority of scientists are actually well meaning folk involved in purposeful activity with at least half an eye on the good of society. I have already given the example of a medical profession that is making nervous people sick by planting dangerously negative suggestions on packets of cigarettes and eliminating the healthy Marlboro County imagery that used to support their wellbeing and make them feel good.

Considering the pharmaceutical industry one only has to ask who does it serve and the answer is the shareholders. And how best to serve the shareholders? By creating cures that do sufficient damage that ever more cures will be needed. This raises the question, however, that the rate of kill achieved by the pharmaceutical industry might be optimised from the point of view of shareholder return, but it might not be a rate of kill acceptable to society as a whole¹⁹. Again, the industry does all it can to lobby governments to outlaw traditional healing methods such as folk remedies and herbal medicines, because anything that can cure people without raising the industry's own profits is seen as a threat to its survival. The ideal situation from the pharmaceutical industry's point of view is to have the entire human population living off nothing but their own patented pills and potions sold at premium prices—a

vision that is far less nourishing to those refuse to own shares in the demon.

The advantage of my approach to these problems is that it saves us from the witch-hunting approach. We need not waste time and resources trying to locate the evil geniuses in the industry that are feathering their nests by making sure that humanity is not allowed to cure itself by natural or traditional means but is rather kept in a state of drug dependency. I suggest that such people are only 'doing their business' and have no specifically evil intentions against mankind. Instead we should recognise the industry as a demon simply doing its best to survive in its own terms, which happen to be in partial conflict with the needs of society.

As such, my method raises the possibility of policing society's demons, of placing constraints on institutions in order to reduce the damage they can cause.

Beware, however of jumping to legal solutions, for the law is another such demon and its character is due partly to the low company it keeps. For where would the law be without criminals to justify its existence? The law ensures its survival by writing laws that classify ever greater numbers of people as criminals—it is not necessary to steal a car to become a criminal, you only have to drive it too fast, or without a seat belt, or when on the phone, or to ignore a traffic light or to leave the car on a yellow line or one of any number of minor lapses or omissions that will suck you into the embrace of the legal system.

More lucrative forms of crime—such as mugging or robbery—are encouraged by instilling in the pop-

ulace a fear of reprisal. If I hit a thief or mugger in self-defence, then I risk prosecution for assault, or for child abuse if he is under age. There are stories of robbers who trip on a stair carpet, sue the householder and win enough damages to buy the house sold to pay for those damages—such stories may be exaggerated, but they reflect how citizens see the legal system and its collusion with the criminal community in maximising its hold on society.

The law has another ally in the previously mentioned safety demon. Although we welcome the prosecution of a fast food empire for not labelling its coffee as dangerously hot—for anything that helps individuals to hit corporations is to be applauded—nevertheless it would be a good thing if the lawyers who defended such claims were to be themselves imprisoned for contempt rather than let them profit from such scams.

Worst of all is the alliance between government and the law. What could prompt them to propose that citizens should be forced to carry identity cards? "I have nothing to fear from carrying my identity" is the sheep-like response of the mindless, but just consider what it means in practice.

If you are robbed and your wallet is stolen, it is natural to go straight to the police station to give details in the hope that the criminal can be caught before any further damage is done. But what if your identity card was in the wallet? You go to the police and the first thing they ask is to see your identity card. When you say it has been taken, they give you a dark look, point out that it is an offence not to carry a card and ask you to wait in the next room. Forty minutes later someone enters and the first

thing they ask is to see your identity card. Angry at the delay you explain it has been seized and that is why you are there and shouldn't they be out on the streets catching the muggers before they get away? Again you are told that it is a serious offence not to carry a card and a long interrogation ensues about yourself, your business, where you live, what you were doing on the streets and so on. No questions are asked about your assailants.

Surely the police wouldn't act like that? But consider the situation from their point of view. They are under government pressure to maximise the number of convictions per offence as cost-effectively as possible, and they have a choice. Do they send out policemen onto the streets in the unlikely event that they may be quick enough to catch the muggers, or do they concentrate on the person who has walked through their door without an identity card—an clear undeniable offence that can be dealt with on the spot. Thus the government and the law work together to favour crime, and crime in turn serves government by scaring citizens into submission to its laws and voting for its increased powers.

In the next chapter we consider further how demons in society work together in this way at the same time as they compete for power over us. If we can resist the temptation to look for individual scapegoats behind these evil actions, then we can focus instead on the demons driving our institutions and seek to form a more conscious and equitable relationship with them.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE SECRET COMMONWEALTH OF DEMONS

Let us add a little paranoia to the dish, a dab of mustard on the edge of the plate into which readers may choose to dip these pages' chips of wisdom, all the better for to savour them.

Paranoia, like any other demon, should hold no more terror for us now we have learnt how to chat with demons, build up a relationship, and also how to restrain them with analysis.

Indeed, the message of this book so far should have done much to loosen the grip of paranoia on our minds. As the examples on the previous pages illustrate, once we learn how to recognise demons, then we are liberated from conspiracy theories. For I have demonstrated that the evil inherent in our institutions—everything from health care to business, from religion to terrorism—is best understood not as the property of the individuals who serve the demon but rather of the demon itself.

Individual journalist, politicians, businessmen may be fully rounded human beings who really believe they are doing their best for society, and yet they contribute to organisms that serve their own purpose beyond society and often at odds with human needs.

So when the medical establishment uses political leverage to force tobacco companies to eliminate the healthy positive imagery from their cigarette packs and replace it with negative health suggestions designed to undermine the benefits a smoker used to expect, then we should not waste time seeking out

the evil geniuses behind this cunning strategy for reducing the nation's health and therefore further increasing the influence of the medical establishment. It is not the deliberate intention of any doctor to do this, in fact even those who pen the government health warnings believe they will have a good effect by stopping the person from taking a cigarette (while in reality they still smoke, but feel they are going to die). But, for all their individual good intentions, it is the demon of health care itself that is undermining our society. To blame the doctors would be like punishing the individual organs of a mass murderer's body rather than recognising that the responsibility lies with the whole, not the parts.

So we approach this chapter free of paranoia and we observe how society's demons act together in consort. That way we might invoke the demon paranoia back to the party and make yet another friend.

The examples in the last chapter suggested that there was quite a lot wrong with our society, or maybe rather that human society is so utterly wonderful that there are an awful lot of nasty demons—like illegal immigrants—pouring in and spoiling it for the rest of us.

Ask most people in Britain what is wrong with their lives and there are two sorts of answers. The first we would recognise and put aside as the voice of personal demons—an immediate obsessive focus on blaming certain factors, whether the government, or crime, sixties immorality or whatever and the reasons why they are ruining Britain and our lives. These personal demon responses, however serious, we set aside because it is the second sort of response that interests me now.

People who do not jump to stock responses but who examine their lives to see what could be wrong tend to report a sense of exhaustion, of weariness and lack of hope. The promise of greater choice has little appeal because such people already have plenty of wonderful possibilities to chose from, but never seem to have the time to exercise their choices. Some are also limited by money problems, but a general sense of tiredness reduces any dynamism for money-making schemes.

The essence of this condition has been diagnosed as information overload. We are, the story goes, bombarded by the media, business and advertising. From the moment we wake up till the time we turn off the light we will be assailed by radio, TV, junk mail, newspapers, free newspapers, posters, unsolicited phone calls and every device clamouring for our attention. There is no peace, we are swamped with data and this is in itself exhausting. We have no time because we have to cope with all this material—even the effort of sorting junk e-mails takes time—and then the government and other regulators send us forms to complete... and so on.

My image of this information overload warrior is the city trader sitting at his desk all day with six data-shark screens pumping continuous financial statistics, while his desk is littered with other data sources. He wears a headset to leave his hands free to pick up other phones or type into keyboards. His breakfast was a cup of coffee and a croissant as he "speed-read" his Financial Times. His lunch consists of a sandwich eaten at the desk but not tasted as he concentrates of his screens. He starts early and

leaves late to get more work done, but he might well spend his evening at a nightclub.

Compare him with my childhood spent wandering in quiet Cotswold fields wearing very little clothing. His six screens, even though they will have broadband connection, deliver just a few piddling kilobytes of data—you could put their whole day's statistics onto a single floppy disk. Compare that to the fractal complexity of Cotswold scenery, a constantly changing 360-degree panorama of visual, auditory, olfactory and tactile data too complex to be generated by any computer on earth—whereas his office and furnishings consist of textureless geometrical shapes. My skin was being brushed by breezes and tickled by grass as I walked barefoot through the meadows, and all this sensation was not mere background noise. For a single tingle on my skin could mark the arrival of a horsefly or ant, and my senses were alert to every such touch even when my consciousness was elsewhere. Whereas his clothing and his chair is all designed for comfort—to minimise such sensory distraction.

The real truth is that the data warrior is not being bombarded with information but starved. All that junk mail, all those TV adverts and all those phone calls you receive in a day contain less total data than a single Cotswold beech tree. In terms of sheer data bits, we are all starved of information, not glutted, nowadays.

If that is the case, why then does today's data warrior feel exhausted at the end of the day while the boy in shorts in a Cotswold meadow feels nourished by the terabytes of data blasting him every second? The answer lies in that one word "nourished", for

information is our food. The more we get the more we are nourished, while the data warrior at his desk receives so little information that he probably goes to disco raves to loosen up, or spends his weekend rock climbing or white water rafting in order to get some real stimulus back into his starving senses.

To be starved of data is tiring, because it forces the brain to work harder to fill the gaps. If you experiment with sensory withdrawal in a floatation tank what happens in the utter silence and dark is that the mind creates its own visions and sensations to fill the void.

More realistically, consider this example. I arrive home feeling angry and wonder why. Then I recall seeing on my way home a newspaper hoarding with the words TORY COUNCIL CRACKDOWN ON YOUTH CRIME, and my mind is full of angry images of blustering old farts with blazers and monocles blathering on about scratches on their Rolls-Royces or other trivial indicators of some imaginary crime wave.

Now, had I received just a little more information, such as small photos of the councillors in question, then I might have noticed that none of them wore monocles, only one had a blazer, half of them were quite young and some were even women. Given even more data, like a transcript of their meeting, I might have noted that the debate was actually quite fair minded, sound and well-meaning. If I actually knew the people involved.... And so on.

Thus the effect of being presented with a mere sound-bite has been that my mind has nothing with which to fill in the data other than its own demon fuelled prejudices—for the less information you

receive the more decompressing the brain has to do. Although the financial figures on the datashark screens contain very little data, the trader's mind does enormous work to complete the picture. A small change in the price of oil here, a rise in interest rates there, and the trader's brain constructs a world scenario that suggests it would be wise to buy Russian shares. This effort is exhausting in the long run.

I suggest that such work is exhausting for all of us. Instead of receiving the rich nourishment of human sensory interaction with the environment, we are fed sound bites and digital substitutes and forced to do all the work of interpretation and extrapolation. We watch Neighbours instead of calling on our neighbours; we see wildlife programmes instead of going on field trips; we are fed newspaper headlines and video clips rather than walk onto the streets and explore life for ourselves. Travel journals promise to reveal the hidden byways of Alsace, to save us from finding them for ourselves. Shopping guides tell us where the bargains are to be found and self-help books reveal the seven secrets of whatever we actually were incarnated on this planet to find out for ourselves. If King Arthur and his knights ever do return as promised, they will find handy Grail dispensing machines in every castle, installed to minimise quest fatigue.

Not only is this sensory starvation tiring, it makes us vulnerable to manipulation. For notice in the newspaper example above how the information became padded out with prejudices. It is not that more information will necessarily overrule prejudices and result in better judgement, but that given

nothing other than a sound-bite we only have prejudices to work with. These prejudices are demons with a hold on us—that is why they are sometimes able to resist even the overwhelming logic of further information. I recall an uncle who went on and on about negroes and how inferior they were, but when you told him about a negro who had made some spectacular achievement, instead of recognising this as a counter example he would burst out with a remark on the lines of "who the hell does he think he is putting on airs like that!". His demons were unassailable in their fortress.

So a society made up of people who are out of contact with each other and out of contact with their senses, is a society highly vulnerable to infestation and control by demons.

With this in mind we can observe how our great demons conspire to create such a society. We have seen how the safety demon and the media combine their efforts to keep families—children especially—confined to their homes rather than meeting in public places. They also ensure that children will not be allowed to join in physical activities that might cause any injury or contact with germs or paedophiles. The legal system demon helps this by ensuring that teachers and institutions will be unable to offer such activities for fear of damage compensation claims, while the insurance demons will insist that the risk of spinal injury involved in the playing of tiddleywinks is such that they can no longer offer any insurance cover at any financially viable premium²⁰ ... and so on.

The next line of assault is provided by the science and academia demons who replace awe, mystery

and the fullness of sensory involvement with explanations and precedents to further dumb us down and reduce our hold on reality. When faced with a mystery—like footsteps in a haunted house—our entire physical organism would be galvanised into awareness, we begin operating on all cylinders. To observe the moon as Queen of the Night is to open oneself up to a brain feast. Science replaces all this with an explanation that the moon is a rocky satellite, that the footsteps must be an illusion and so the brain goes back to sleep. Whenever we behold something new and exciting, the academics will say it has been done before. For the formula for academic judgement is simply to take all claims of creativity and prove that they are plagiarisms of the past, and conversely to take all claims of faithful recording and prove that they are full of error and therefore creative. People actually get paid to do this.

You will be told that all this demon nonsense is rubbish, and encouraged to drain away what little life these pages have been pumping back into our environment. You will even want to go on reading this stupid book rather than step outside and discover with your own senses what you should already know for yourself.

Devour life! That is what human consciousness has evolved to do, and that is why it is so eagerly sought for and invaded by disembodied demons. Discover our common humanity, the one element that links humans and is denied to demons.

The commonwealth of demons is working together to prise us all apart because, as was explained in the case of personal demons, they begin by infecting cracks and divisions. So a society broken into

isolated individuals as Thatcher decreed is a society ripe for infestation—every division in society is a niche to harbour a demon. We in Western consumerist society are being commoditised for consumption by their hordes.

Now let us sing the Hallelujah Chorus—substituting the word paranoia for hallelujah.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

WHAT WE LEARN FROM SOCIETY'S DEMONS

It is Autumn 2004, and all evidence in the media points toward David Blunkett, Britain's Home Secretary, being a sick-minded little shit who only got into government because the Prime Minister was so utterly desperate to freshen up his politically correct image that he felt obliged to drag the odd disabled person into his entourage to the extent that he overlooked the fact that not all handicapped people are saints, indeed they can also be bitter twisted individuals with a deep-seated grudge against the rest of us and society as a whole.

I, however, am suggesting an alternative theory: that the very fact of being in government can lead a weak minded minister to propose identity cards, unlimited detention of non-whites without prosecution and other equally blatant mechanisms of repression, not because the person is inherently sick or evil, but simply because that is what government wants and that is what it will get unless we humans recognise that government is itself a demon that has worked its way into the ecology of our culture.

Seeing government, the law, medicine, academia and other institutions as parasites on society is not to condemn them but rather to initiate a more realistic relationship with them. For parasites do not truly serve their needs by killing the host. Tapeworms have been used by film stars and other who wanted to lose weight without reducing their enjoyment of food. Some parasites confer benefits on their hosts in order to provide an even better environment for

themselves: if medicine killed us all off the result would be just as unsatisfactory for the medical profession as if it were to eliminate all illness²¹.

Remember that recognition of demonic status means granting respect in some measure, and empathising with the demon. Consider the war on drugs proposed by President Bush and ask this question: if the Republican Party proposed instead to legalise hard drugs, how many votes would it lose? That figure provides a measure of the extent to which their government is itself dependent on drugs. Recognising that the Republican Party is addicted to drugs means that we can look on its activities, and the millions of pounds it spends on drugs, with a more educated and understanding eye. I am not saying it is easy coping with a drug addict, but it does help to have some understanding of the driving condition behind its crazy actions.

Recognising the power of demons in society encourages us to look again at the ebb and flow of power and influence. Who benefits from crime and terrorism? Individual criminals may make some gains, but they are as nothing compared with the benefits to government, the media, law and other institutions. So how much crime do we actually need? The figure is clearly not zero, because that would make our newspapers and dinner party conversations much too boring. People are fond of their crime figures: tell a city dweller that you feel safe on their streets and they will be most offended and will quote figures for soaring crime, because most people like others to feel they live in an environment as dangerous as our evolutionary history would require. We need a bit of crime to liven things

up and generate income for the perpetrators, but beyond that it is only serving our demons, not us. Is this really a useful trade?

Acamedia teaches us that demons do not exist, that there is "no such thing as science, only scientists", and that we must, therefore look for human scapegoats for all that is sick in society. It must therefore be David Blunkett's fault, so he must be sacked and be replaced by some other mindless twit who will simply repeat the same mistakes. Remember what was said in chapter five about demons enjoying power and wanting to be left alone. It is such fun being able to send nations to war and arrange mass slaughter on a whim that a demon is not going to give that up easily. It is necessary to offer them something better in return.

Remember also chapter nine where it was explained how demons occupy splits or wounds. By insisting that we focus on individuals rather than the demons driving them, further divisions are created in society for demons to inhabit. We are encouraged to identify and punish criminals, while crime itself is thereby given ever greater space to romp in. We are encouraged to hate David Blunkett whilst paving the way for some even worse cretin.

As humans we should be uniting, not dividing. I have more in common with the craziest crack addict or Al-Quaeda nutter than I have with the demon of government, or the law, or any other institution. It takes expertise to distinguish the DNA of any two humans. In fact I probably have more in common with a cabbage than with any system of government, whether I voted for it or not.

Remember that fact when you go to the polling station. You will be encouraged to believe that you are voting for one party and against another—creating another split for demons to infect. The prime fact is that you have already voted for democracy, simply by going there and marking the paper, no matter who the candidate is. It is more important first to remember that every vote is a vote for democracy than it is to get split by the divisions within it.

Just as demons choose to occupy splits in society, so also do they reveal their dualistic nature by manifesting horns. The same paradoxical quality we found in personal demons will be found in society's demons, and it can provide a clue to the presence of a demon. Look out for the paradoxes inherent in any fashionable theory, technology or practice and you will be better defended against the blindness that hides their demonic driver, as in the following examples.

- Thatcherism killed the work ethic. While putting so much emphasis on the work ethic, Thatcher's economic policies put so many people out of work that the next generation of school leavers gained a new career choice: whether or not to work for a living.

- Four wheel drive vehicles are migrating, along with foxes, into city centres. The environmental drive to calm urban traffic by using speed bumps means that there is in Britain now greater need in town than in the country for the rough terrain handling and endurance advantages of off-road vehicles. Women drivers in particular now opt for the comfort of a Range Rover when negotiating our bumpy streets.

- The Law encourages crime and government encourages terrorism—as has already been illustrated.

- Computers cause chaos. A technology designed to impose order on information and so on human processes will gain territory by making itself indispensable rather than by making itself perfect. Our airports, our traffic etc., we are told, could not operate without computers. Sure enough, during computer outage, they cease to operate. It is interesting to observe the transition point in the sales of IT: initially a new technology is sold on the premise that it will confer business advantage, then the point comes when it becomes a disadvantage not to have it.

- Diets make us ill. The dieting industry gains influence by numbing our awareness of our own body's food wisdom—as illustrated in chapter four. Similarly, negative suggestions on cigarette packets kill people and increase the influence of the medical profession which encouraged those health warnings.

- Branding makes shopping a bore. Thirty years ago a clothes rack labelled "Men's shorts" would contain a huge range of styles, lengths, colours and materials—denim, polycotton, needlecord, leather, nylon etc.—as each manufacturer competed to attract attention with a unique, eye-catching offering. Now shop displays are classified by brand names, and each feels obliged to match every other brand's offering, or risk losing a customer. So every rack has basically the same limited range of clothes under a different label—just as Porsche feels obliged to add an off-road vehicle to its range and VW now

includes luxury saloons too. Sex is now more fun than shopping.

As humans we are united—for why else would demons conspire so hard to divide us? We have bodies, they do not. Knowing this is another line of defence against demonic possession. When you find yourself beginning to burn with indignation, enthusiasm or any other passion, remember your senses, come out of your head and look at the world around you, hear the sounds, smell the smells and feel the textures of all that touches you. The passion will fade—not away, but into perspective.

I gave the example in *What I Did In My Holidays*²² of people who exert a powerful influence over you. You arrive eager at your work place, but slightly late, and your boss makes some cutting remark to that effect. The result is that you spend the rest of the morning struggling to work against a backdrop of bitter thoughts about what he said and how you wished you had responded—all the initial enthusiasm for the day's work has been eroded, all the energy diverted into ineffective anger. What was suggested was that the moment you see the boss look at his watch and make the remark, instead of going into tunnel vision focusing totally on the hurt, you should breath deeply and expand your awareness consciously to embrace all that is around you. Develop not just peripheral vision at that moment but also peripheral hearing, tasting sensing and smelling so that his words become just a small part of the wholeness of the moment's experience. Practice this, and you are less at the mercy of others and the demons they invoke. It is as if the message passing from his bully demon to your victim demon

becomes diluted in the fullness of sensory awareness; it matters less and so you are better able to handle the situation yourself.

So also with society's demons. Remember that no political or religious theory matters half as much as the taste of good coffee—and that is a measure of my respect for such theories, not my contempt. Enjoy good coffee with your enemies, and the political beliefs that separate you become every bit as precious—and not one jot more—as the dash of chocolate powder garnishing your cappuccino.

Recruitment adverts call out for people who have 'passion', while they should rather be recruiting people of action. Instead of driven people, we need drivers. So the first lesson from a study of society's demons is simply to recognise their existence and begin detaching from them. Every commitment you make—to a product, a party, a service or an institution—is a deal with a demon. So ask yourself what the real trade is behind every interaction. When you buy a best selling item or switch on a popular TV programme you may feel that you have summoned a slave for your amusement or gain. Think again. Buying a book requires money, a belief in the value of the book's author or contents, a commitment to commerce and a pact with a bookshop and a publisher. A whole host of demons gather round, just be aware of the fact.

There are pleasures to be had in the company of demons. In *What I Did in My Holidays* I spoke of another form of demonolatry typified by the fashion pundit who demonises last years styles in order to resurrect them later when they have grown fierce and interesting²³. So, for example, crushed velvet

flared trousers are not allowed to die gracefully but are ridiculed to high heaven as if to say that people were totally mad ever to have worn them. As a result they become such a symbol of bad taste that they can be revived twenty years later for their very outrageousness.

This form of demonisation relates to the example of political correctness in chapter thirteen, where some element of our culture is driven out from polite society and it then becomes feral and interesting—the effete ‘gentleman’ returns as the tyrant of political correctness, tired old Christianity returns as revolutionary communism. It is a delicate business deciding to what extent you wish to domesticate such demons or return them to the wild. Tabloid media are experts at demonising, they are adept at creating news cheaply out of thin air. I recall a paper running features on the repression of poor helpless mental patients who were ‘imprisoned’ in institutions; a month later there was talk of returning mental patients to the community and the headlines were suddenly all about the threat to decent people from loonies on the loose.

Another observation is that demons will show you respect when you resist them, as in the case of sexual repression—which not only makes sex all the more enticing but drives it to exquisite heights of brutal savagery. Witness those American teenagers who—in pursuit of ever more frenzied paroxysms of lust—take vows of pre-marital chastity. The eighty-eight percent failure rate of their vows is ample testimony to the success of their endeavour—what teenager would not give his or her soul for an eighty-eight percent chance of a legover?

By such tokens I am now much fonder of David Blunkett following the nasty things I nearly wrote about him at the beginning of this chapter. I would even like to offer the obnoxious little turd a helping hand across a busy road—maybe an unrestricted German autobahn when maniacs are speeding home from work. God, I could hug him. Thank you David for helping me write my book.

This is the difference between action and passion: I pause and savour the pleasure, knowing that it belongs to me and my body, not to any demon. A demon reaches out to grasp it, but I hold on to my senses and ask the demon first to be seated and only then we can share the pleasure delicately between us... maybe saving the best bits for myself.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

CONCLUSION

We have looked inside ourselves, we have looked between ourselves and we have looked at society as a whole—and everywhere we have seen hordes of demons. Because seeing demons was what we set out to do. Other people see only mechanical processes—because that is what they have been taught to do.

We actually made a choice. They only did what teacher told them.

It matters less whether we made a good or bad choice—whether my demon thesis is platinum or crap—than the simple fact that we made a choice and explored things for ourselves rather than dance to the blathering farts of acamedia.

The problem of our times is society versus the individual, the individual in society and the society within the individual²⁴.

The exploration of our personal demons has revealed to us the society within the individual, the potential for democracy within us. It opens the windows for an exploration of ourselves, the individual within society, and so the potential for democracy without.

The exploration of society's demons has revealed to what extent our lives are being lived for us. We do not have to welcome these demons into our lives.

Cancel all subscriptions to newspapers and magazines—if you cannot do without them you can always pick them up free as they litter our streets—you thereby do a double service. Unplug the TV

set—if there was anything worth seeing on it you will hear all about it from friends anyway.

Remember to enjoy hunting, and that means relishing the search for the product that has never been advertised, or placed handily at the front of the shop. Life begins on the uppermost shelf—avoid guidebooks and top tens like the plague. Give money freely, but never ever allow another to make money at your expense. There is no need ever to read another bestseller, others will read them for you and save you a lot of time.

As you explore society's demons in this way you discover just how many labels you have accepted and identified with that are not truly you. In our search to discover ourselves we listen to experts who say we are Aries, middle class, white, Oxbridge, introvert, and a myriad other labels, none of which fully captures our essence. Peel off those labels one by one and you find more, not less, beneath it all²⁵.

Then explore your inner demons and you will find so much that drives you but is not truly yourself. Demons that once owned you become parts of you and then detach further and become your friends as you dig below the demon-infested higher brain functions to discover our species' common core, the lower brain functions, the bodies and the DNA that unite us all.

It is as if you had lived your life in one cluttered room and you decide to clear it out bit by bit. What was once rubbish may turn out to be a concealed treasure, while things you once believed necessary turn out to be junk. But as you clear away, fearing maybe for the loss of all that was yours, you gradually uncover a window on the back wall. You open

that window and are gazing out onto a view you never knew existed—the landscape of our common humanity.

This is the territory that those demons envy and yearn to inhabit, the part that links us to humanity and not the higher functions that divide us. Let the demons that drive our puppet politicians lead us to war upon war—blinding infernos of fire, noise, stress and pain that close down our higher minds and reduce us all to huddling mammals. That end point is the one thing that those demons with all their seductive promises of spiritual perfection, revenge, glory, meaning and power can never themselves grasp, because they lack our human bodies and our senses.

This is the eye contact across the cups of coffee I described in chapter thirteen (the religion example) and it links me to a poor coffee farmer as we agree that coffee tastes good—no matter whether I approached him as supporter, exploiter, bureaucrat or stranger. A single moment of shared two-way human contact is worth any number of hours of watching other people on TV screens.

We all of us share a vast, beautiful, evolving territory of our common humanity. Demons want that—it is the soul they ask us to sell to them. We can learn to share our soul with them without ever having to sell it, for it is priceless

If you enjoyed this book, keep it secret and deny all knowledge of it. Then it is yours alone. This does no mean you cannot share it, but simply that you share it by living what you have learned from it rather than handing it around.

I explained how much easier it is to detect other people's demons, so you can use this book as an example and a beginning of the work. For I wrote it with the help of mine own demons. Knowing that you can skim back through the book and mark the passages you think were written by them rather than by myself, whoever that is.

Remember above all that demonolatry as described in this book is just one more damn demon in a world already teeming with them.

As such, it deserves respect every bit as much as you do.

APPENDIX ONE

LITTLE ANGELS

I was quite determined not to make over-simple distinctions between demons and angels, but the following examples—divination and meditation—have been lifted from the chapter on types of personal demon because they address a more specialist readership, not because they are so angelic.

DIVINATION

As I am considered to be something of an expert in such matters, people sometimes put questions like the following to me.

- Is it better to use yarrow stalks to consult the I Ching rather than the simpler coin technique?
- Is it bad to ask the same question twice?
- Is it true that, if you ask a question of the tarot, it is then wrong to ask the same question of the I Ching or other system?

As far as I can see, all such questions are best answered not by a dogmatic yes or no, but rather by suggesting that the queror identifies with the system of divination. For when we consult any system—from astrology to tea leaves—we are asking it to provide advice in matters beyond our own reckoning. We are, therefore, consulting an expert.

So I suggest that you consider the tarot, I Ching or whatever not as some abstract system but as a wise advisor—like a doctor, lawyer or whatever. In those

terms a question like "is it bad to ask the same question twice" becomes a little silly. How would your doctor feel if you came back for a second appointment to ask him the same questions? The answer is that it would depend largely on your approach: if you returned in contrition, apologising for having forgotten the answer and begging him to repeat it, then he might be amenable. But if you give the impression that you are trying to trick him into being inconsistent, or are wasting the initial consultation by hoping for a better answer this time, then he has reason to be irritated.

As to whether one should be formal in one's divination rituals—including using traditional yarrow stalks, burning incense, invoking spirits etc.—the answer is that any activity that not only demonstrates respect for the expert but also maybe helps to focus your mind on the question could be helpful. On the other hand, a wise expert is wise enough to know that advice is sometimes most urgently needed in times of haste and limited resources—if you stagger into the doctor's consulting room with blood streaming from your head, he is hardly going to tick you off for not making a proper appointment. Again the mental approach is really what matters.

There is another very important consequence of this approach and it concerns how we respond to advice from divination. If I am saying that we treat the divination as a consultation with an expert, then does it mean that we have to follow the given advice with slavish adherence to the letter? For surely, an expert must by definition know far more than we do and it would be wrong to question such advice?

Listen carefully to my reply as it is crucial. The essence of my method is to treat phenomena as if they were human like ourselves, and my first great warning was against slipping back into mechanistic rules-based thinking in the process. To follow the word of an expert unthinkingly because you believe they must know much more than you is to slip back into rules-based thinking—the rule being “submit to superior knowledge”. In my terms that is not at all respectful to the expert, because it denies the fact that it is human like ourselves. When the doctor says “take this prescription straight to the chemist and start taking the pills immediately” it is not respectful to walk out of his office and straight across a busy motorway because “it’s his fault as he said I was to go ‘straight’”. Respect for the man entails recognition that he is human, not a machine, and that he expects a human interpretation of his instructions from you the patient. In our litigious society we have departed so far from my respectful approach that the doctor who said the above words probably has a plaque on his wall denying any responsibility for the harmful consequences of his advice.

The same applies to the results of divination. If a stunning financial opportunity arises at a time when Mercury is badly aspected by Neptune, or the tarot cards have issued a warning against speculation, it is not respectful simply to ignore the opportunity because “the cards told me not to do it”. If a financial advisers tells you to beware of risks, then the respectful response is to beware of risks, rather than cease all activity and pass the responsibility onto the advisor. Similarly, if they advise you to invest

in housing they do not expect you to buy the first house that you find without doing a proper survey.

There are many such questions from those who start dabbling in divination: "I've fallen in love with this guy, but I'm Cancer and he's Aries—does that mean we're incompatible?"; "when I asked about the job I pulled the five of swords—does that mean I shouldn't take it?". In many cases the answer becomes much clearer if we assume that a being is indeed trying to tell us something but we may not be asking the right question or may not have done enough thinking ourselves before the consultation.

When I want to ask a serious question using the tarot pack, then I begin by thinking over the background of the question and usually writing notes in my diary to clarify the question before putting it, rather as I might fill in some background to inform an expert before asking for an opinion. Imagine that you are a financial expert and I ask you "should I invest in gold?": would you not delay your response, asking first what I wanted—a quick return or long term gain—how much I wanted to invest and so on? So a question to the tarot like "should I invite Daphne on a date?" might be proceeded by notes like these:

Very attracted to Daphne but don't like her friends and family. She said she liked my company, but sounded a bit desperate—is she flakey? Am I being flakey? WHAT WOULD BE THE OUTCOME IF I INVITE DAPHNE OUT FOR SUPPER TOMORROW?

For further advice on how to address divination, I recommend Joel Biroco's more detailed advice on the use of the I Ching to be found on his website²⁶.

MEDITATION

Here's another example where my so-called 'demon' would be considered much more as an angel, even a god to some. But the basic point is the same: to take an abstract entity and personify it, identify with it and thereby form a new sort of relationship with it.

Do you meditate? If you do, how successful are you?

Most people who meditate have a sense that they are seeking to tune into something greater—whether they call it 'spirit', 'god', their 'higher self' or whatever. They sense that there is this great, important and powerful thing that they can contact or commune with if they can just sit still and quieten their mind.

Many of those people find that, when they sit to meditate, they are constantly pestered by thoughts. First there are immediate concerns: "how long have I got before breakfast?"; "did I remember to turn off the cooker?"; "am I in a good position not to get backache?". Then other everyday thoughts: "How am I going to pay for that car repair?"; "what did she mean when she said she hoped she would see me again?"; "am I really happy in my job?". Then there are brilliant insights that seem too good just to put aside and maybe forget... and so on.

With persistence you can end your session with at least a few moments of peace, but often time is up

and you realise that you've spent the whole session brooding on some problem rather than really meditating.

My suggestion is that you begin by questioning that relationship between you and 'spirit'. You appear to believe it is something big and powerful, but you are not treating it that way.

I have had the experience as a junior employee of being summoned to a more senior person's office for a meeting and then having to sit there while he makes several urgent phone calls and, when we do communicate, it is constantly interrupted by more important matters. Isn't that just how we are treating spirit in our meditations? Far from being the big boss, spirit is being treated like an office junior—we have invited spirit to a meeting by sitting to meditate, and then we proceed to chatter with pressing life problems instead of being quiet and listening to spirit.

Think back to the office example. Why is the office junior invited to a meeting in the first place? A good manager has to strike a balance: of course the office junior cannot take precedence over a phone call from a higher authority or an important client, but on the other hand it is a waste of resources having him waiting in the office. Better to have a shorter meeting and really give him your attention.

Now transfer that thinking to the meditation. It is bogus to pretend that spirit is such a big, important and powerful thing in your life when all our behaviour suggests the opposite—like those irritating men who call their wife 'the Boss' while treating her like a skivvy. If you cannot change your behaviour (and I am assuming that you have indeed tried to medi-

tate better) then you should face the fact that spirit is actually rather low in the pecking order, a junior thing in your life, and treat it accordingly.

So how do we relate to a junior? The answer is that we treat it with respect as a being, recognise that it does not have any priority and therefore it becomes all the more important to allow some time to listen to it. Put yourself in the junior's shoes and consider what a difference it makes when the boss is speaking to you and his phone rings, if he completes his sentence before picking it up. Or if you are speaking when another person comes into the office, does the boss keep his eyes on you until you are finished? Read the financial press and you will see many stories of business failures that could have been averted if the bosses had listened to the workers a little instead of simply issuing edicts.

I have applied this thinking to my meditation: not lying to spirit by insisting that it is vastly more important than the material world, then a minute later I'm thinking about my tax return. No longer pretending that everyday worries were trivial but recognising them as the real matter of existence and yet, within that reality, I am wanting to make contact with this little spark of spirit in me. Can I simply listen? And when spirit does not speak to me, can I accept that silence may be the most valuable communication it can offer for me?

No great claims are made for this approach. I have used it to freshen up my stale meditations and it has proved quite useful. It is no fast lane to nirvana, nor the secret of the philosophers' stone, but simply an illustration of the way that you can find new approaches to abstract notions such as 'spirit' when

you are prepared to personify them, put yourself in their shoes and look at the way you relate to them from their point of view.

How do you think Sex feels when people insist that it is a beautiful thing yet describe its every manifestation as 'filth'?

How do you think Freedom and Choice feel when they are forced onto people who never asked for them?

How do you think Beauty feels when it is equated with Vanity? And how does Vanity feel about that?

Make new friends with lonely abstractions!

APPENDIX TWO

WHAT EXACTLY IS A DEMON?

The quick answer is that it isn't "exactly" anything, because exactness has little place in personal interactions.

Having said that we can go back to first principles and raise the question in the light of what has been learnt so far about demons.

WHAT IS A DEMON?

Having suggested that the sea of mechanical interactions and the sea of consciousness are equivalent, let us stick with the latter view in which we, as observers, direct our consciousness toward certain phenomena and choose whether to share our awareness with them.

What are these phenomena? I take the office copier and the office boss as examples. Both are experienced by us as patterns of interaction in our brains and nerves, patterns informed by data entering via our senses. These senses are themselves only experienced as patterns of interaction in our brains and nerves. So, in our subjective reality as experienced, both the copier and the boss are patterns of interaction within our brain.

We assume that these patterns somehow reflect another objective reality—i.e. that there really is a material copier and a material boss out there and they are more than just illusions existing only in our brain. But this assumption complicates matters, so will be addressed later. For now we concentrate on

the subjective reality we inhabit and recognise that it contains a boss and a copier and that—until you read this book—most people would have granted that the boss is conscious like themselves whereas the copier is not.

In these terms what I have been suggesting is that, rather than partitioning the neural patterns in our brains and insisting that certain patterns within the brain may manifest or contain a mind like ours while other patterns within the brain may not, we simply assume that mind can arise anywhere within the whole. That, for example, mind could be more a function of complexity than of components.

Now imagine that one day we go to use the office copier and it appears to be sweating tears. As we bend over it, the copier speaks and cries that it has a broken heart. Alarmed, we go to report this anomaly to the boss, but when we try to speak to him he is acting like a machine, endlessly turning the pages of a report. Then we wake up and realise that it was just a dream, and that while asleep we had no problem in allowing consciousness to be manifest in the copier. This, however, we decide to be a special case, and it does not impact our normal belief that the copier cannot be conscious in real life.

But imagine next that we really do go into the office and as soon as we try to turn on the copier it malfunctions, and it turns out that there is a broken component right in the heart of the machine. We remember our dream and feel a little funny, because the solid barrier between the dream world and everyday reality suddenly seems to be leaky. In practice we may dismiss this as coincidence or else create some theory that our unconscious had picked up

minor behavioural faults in the machine the day before and interpreted them in a dream that it was on the point of breaking down.

Here is a further consideration. Across the divide between dreaming and waking lie lucid dreams—dreams when one's consciousness feels fully awake and aware, but when you can still make yourself fly or talk to copiers. One can buy a sleep mask that picks up eye movements when you dream and flashes lights in your eyes in order to invoke this form of consciousness—it sounds like a simple idea, but I found lucid dreaming pretty tricky myself, even with this gadget. But I did enjoy experimenting with the informal Turing test referred to above: talking to my dream companions until I felt confident that they were indeed aware, conscious beings like myself. In other words, I experienced for myself how my brain can contain not just my own conscious awareness but a host of other conscious aware beings that come and go from night to night and never seem to exhaust my brain's information processing capacity. You could say the brain did not contain such consciousnesses but simply modelled them, but to do so would be to challenge the very assumption upon which the Turing test is founded.

Working in this way, with the content of consciousness both in and out of dreams, there seems little reason not to believe that consciousness is everywhere present like ripples across water and that human awareness is merely a particular peak in the wave pattern of which one's own is the biggest peak of all. And yet most of us turn back from that full-scale animism or pan-psychism because it is alien to our culture.

Plato suggested that the everyday world we inhabit is just a shadow play of a true reality that lies beyond our senses. That all we see, hear, smell, touch and taste is really an illusion, a pale shadow of what really is. This idea is fundamental to western thinking, for we believe in an objective world of matter that we can never experience directly, but only through the brain's processing of neural data. This activity within the brain is the everyday life we all live, but we are taught to believe that it is but a shadow of a solid world out there. We believe that there really is a massive world of elementary particles and atoms that we can never experience except through the shadow images of human perception, and in that supreme reality there is one assemblage of material that corresponds to our subjective image of the office copier and another that corresponds to our image of the boss. And when two people chat about the copier, although each is chatting about their own subjective image of it, their images are basically true reflections of the same objective reality.

It is also believed that in this material world the structure that casts the shadow of myself and the structure that casts the shadow of the boss both contain a real human brain whereas the copier's structure does not. Therefore, when I dream that the photocopier can speak to me in that way, it is simply an illusion within an illusion, the shadows of my mind casting their own shadows while the truth lies out there where we can never touch it.

This Platonic idea is a powerful one in a culture built upon science and religion, because it invests all value in a world that is inaccessible to us, so we common people are forced to enquire of experts

who mediate between everyday life and the reality beyond. Priests or scientists tell us about true reality—heaven or objective reality, as you will—for they alone know its secrets, having studied the shadows with enlightened understanding. For they too are unable to experience the objective world directly.

It is these priests and scientists who have told us that it is evil, diabolical or—worst of all—silly to imagine that spirits like ours dwell in inanimate objects and patterns of occurrence.

They also assume the right to correct us when we read the shadows wrongly. If you suffer illness and find relief in a homeopathic remedy, then there will be a scientist ready to tell you that the cure was an illusion created by a placebo effect or coincidence—for he knows that the material substance that cast the shadow of a homeopathic remedy into your life has no healing power whatsoever.

For such reasons, priests and scientists may find my book irritating and condemn it. Therefore I ask you not to judge it according to my reputation, indeed not to judge the book at all, but simply to play with what it says and see if you find the results more interesting than a world dominated by priests and scientists.

WHAT ARE YOU?

Whom have I been addressing when I invited you to share your consciousness with other entities? To whom am I speaking in this book?

I began with an image of you having trouble with an office machine and went on to imagine you

having recurring problems in your life and looking for new ways to address them. If you have been practicing what I describe, you will have located demons within the phenomenon you called yourself and that once undivided monad will increasingly feel like a collective. Within you are angels and demons as well as that most elusive point of consciousness itself.

Taking either the right wing or left wing path I described, your inner world may be more like a fascist state or more like a democracy. In the latter case it can be disconcerting to discover that within your democracy there are fascists, anarchists, cheats, psychopaths and charlatans, but this does not matter for it is all the stuff of human consciousness and the real test is how far any of these less desirable demons exercises its power. For some people, the only difference between themselves and a mass murderer is that they have not murdered anybody—a minor difference within, and yet all-important to the outside world and to their own peace of mind.

As you share your awareness with these demons, you notice and appreciate when other humans do the same to you and treat you as if you were human. This raises the question: when did you receive the original gift of your own self awareness that you have carried for as long as you have been aware—and from whom did you receive it? Where did the feeling of “I am” come from and what right have you to share it out to others? Was it self-gifted?

I like questions. So let's leave that question raised.

WHAT IS THE UNIVERSE?

Let us now leave priests and scientists out of the debate and examine the world as we see it rather than subject to correction from those with visions of the transcendent.

I find myself living in a sea of experience, from the tiniest ripples like the pattering of my fingers on the keys of my PowerBook to great ocean swells like the onset of Winter. On that great seething ocean surface particular waves, whorls and eddies of experience have particular significance. Some seem to mirror myself and I call them fellow humans. These patterns contain their own universes within just like mine own. I believe that, to another fellow human I am not seen as the centre of the universe but rather as another fellow human towards the periphery of their universe. So, within my universe lie other universes that model my own universe within themselves.

We have excluded priests and scientists from our exploration, but let us not exclude their loveliest myths. Indeed, let us embrace a wonderful creation myth put forward by scientists which is that matter, through random chemical and physical reactions, was able to create life out of itself and also the conditions which enabled life to evolve to the complexity and consciousness which we experience in ourselves as beings each containing their own universes.

Let us then embrace this myth while liberating it from specifics, by assuming a universe of information rather than matter: generalise the motions of molecules in a chemical soup to the information exchange conveyed by those motions. Thus

our myth allows virtual universes to evolve and compete for survival within an information soup. And then we ask whether we need the ideal objective world beyond? If there can be so many virtual universes, what chance that we are living in world of matter and, if we were, what difference would it make when we can only know and experience the virtual reality in which we dwell?

WHAT IS THIS BOOK?

It is an invitation to find out about the world for yourself, by asking questions of the universe, then listening to the answers and reading between the lines just as if you had thought up those answers yourself.

FURTHER READING

First I suggest that you should not be doing any further reading – this book is already too long. Ok then, try the following.

Chaos Monkey by Jaq D Hawkins, Capall Bann, 2002, ISBN: 186163 188X. Takes a particular phenomenon—the trickster element in life and magic—and explores its personification in depth.

Chaos Servitors – A User Guide by Phil Hine, Pagan News, 1991. This booklet addresses magical techniques for creating demons to order. It is out of print, but you will find much more on Phil's excellent website www.philhine.org.uk.

Chaotopia by Dave Lee, Attractor, 1997, ISBN: 0-95306-350-X. Chapter 8 on Pacts With Spirits goes beyond my account by classifying what I have loosely called demons into types of spirit, and describing ways to interact with them.

Liber Null by Pete Carroll, Weiser, 1997, ISBN: 0-877286396. The section on Evocation is a classic introduction to magical work with demons.

Now That's What I Call Chaos Magick by Greg Humphries and Julian Vayne. Mandrake of Oxford, 2004, ISBN: 1869928-741. Has good sections on demons in second part. Goes beyond my account by describing more formal magical ritual interactions.

MY OWN STUFF.

Now I'd love you to get some more of my books, they really are frightfully good. No need to read them, just whip out your credit card and feel the cosmic energies surging through and empowering you...

What I Did In My Holidays Ramsey Dukes, The Mouse That Spins, 1998, ISBN: 1-869928-52-0. Several essays in this collection explore aspects of demonology as described in this book.

The Good The Bad The Funny by Adamai Philotunus (yes, it's me), The Mouse That Spins, 2003, ISBN: 0-904311-10-4. This is especially recommended if you are having trouble with demonic polarization, because it explores techniques for resolving such dualities by moving forward into Trinitarian solutions.

Words Made Flesh, Ramsey Dukes, The Mouse That Spins, 2003, ISBN: 0-904311-11-2. This explores in depth the information model of reality as a virtual universe – useful for those who need some conceptual framework for hanging the whole demon/animism idea on. As such it extends the discussion started in Appendix 2.

1. In a talk entitled *Four Glasses of Water – postsecular angst and the denial of magic* presented at Occulture Festival, 19th July 2003, Brighton, England. Also in an article under the same title for the *Journal for the Academic Study of Magic*, Issue 2, 2004. See www.sasm.co.uk for details.
2. See chapter 1 *SSOTBME – an essay on magic*, Ramsey Dukes, The Mouse That Spins, 1974. Currently available as *SSOTBME Revised* ISBN 0-904311-08-2.
3. A news item early 2004 described a crow in a laboratory experiment that would repeatedly form pieces of wire into a hook in order to extract food from a tube.
4. Quoted in *What I Did In My Holidays* Ramsey Dukes, The Mouse That Spins, 1998, ISBN: 1-869928-52-0. See Chapter 22 “Devil Worship for Power and Profit”. The extract was taken from Idries Shah’s “Secret Lore of Magic”.
5. For example *The Diviners Handbook* by Tom Graves, Destiny Books 1990 ISBN: 0-892813-03-2.
6. *Moon Magic* by Dion Fortune, Samuel Weiser, 1985, ISBN: 0-87728-423-7
7. For an in-depth analysis of the derivative vice market see *Somewhat Derivative* on <http://www.occultebooks.com/hugo/diaries.htm>.
8. *The Good The Bad The Funny* by Adamai Philotunus, The Mouse That Spins, 2003, ISBN: 0-904311-10-4. See “The Trinity as Psychological Process” and the Postscript in *Pars Quattuor*.
9. An annual charity event organized by Tuppy Owens in London during the 1990s.
10. See Appendix 1
11. Think the book was *Paganism and the Occult* by The Reverend Kevin Logan, Kingsway Books, 1988
12. *What I Did In My Holidays* Ramsey Dukes, The Mouse That Spins, 1998, ISBN: 1-869928-52-0. See Chapter 4 *The Law Is For All* for a fuller account of Thelemic morality and the iterative approach.
13. Was it?
14. A talk on Magic and the Media presented at the Brighton Occulture festival in 2001.
15. See chapter 3A, *SSOTBME Revised*, Ramsey Dukes, The Mouse That Spins, ISBN 0-904311-08-2.
16. Among other arguments currently being put forward for a return to the Dark Ages I note: the decline in applications for scientific studies at university; the revival of religion as a

political force; unrestrained global warming and the increasing emotionalism of a connected global culture.

17. See Chapter 5 *The Real Middle Earth*, Brian Bates, Pan Books, ISBN: 0-330-49170-9.
18. See *Lila – an enquiry into morals*, Robert M Pirsig, Black Swan, ISBN: 0-552-99504-5.
19. Caduceus magazine, issue 63, 2004, quotes in its Cornucopia column a report to president Bush entitled *To Err Is Human*, claiming that 98,000 US citizens die in a year from conventional medical treatments. It is tempting to protest that “this is unacceptable!”, but the statement is rubbish, for it has already been accepted. What is not acceptable is knowing the numbers killed—thus the argument is a battlefield between the two demons of journalism and the medical establishment. Tread warily.
20. Every month brings a fresh crop of examples to illustrate this tendency. At the time of editing this chapter we had a school fete money-raising fete where parents were no longer permitted to contribute home-made cakes because they would not meet health and safety regulations, and another school where the pupils were required to wear safety goggles while playing conkers. (Readers who do not know what ‘conkers’ are recommended to apply for British citizenship).
21. See note 19 above for a discussion of acceptable kill rates.
22. Chapter 28 entitled *Pre-Millennial Tension? Stuffit – Bandwidth, Data Compression and Runaway Emotion*.
23. Chapter 10 entitled *In Praise of Devil Worship*.
24. In *Thundersqueak* (Anger ford and Lea, The Mouse That Spins, 1979, currently reprinted as ISBN: 0-904311-12-0) chapter 25, the problem is seen as belonging to the Aquarian Age insofar as Aquarius (society) opposes Leo (the individual) in the Zodiac. A comparison was drawn with the Age of Pisces where Pisces was opposed Virgo, requiring the integration of the Virgin Goddess with Christianity.
25. See *Thundersqueak* chapter 7.
26. See *Some things to avoid in your Yijing practice* on www.biroco.com/yijing/avoid.htm