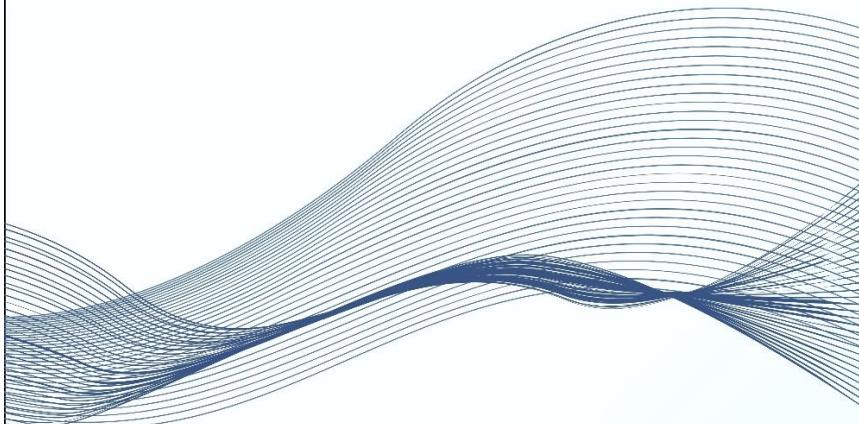


PSYCHOLOGICAL DEMONS ON PSYCHEDELICS

**The Ultimate Guide to
Understanding and
Removing Them**



**An Anthology
By Jules Henry Rivers**



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Dedication

To those who had journeyed within,
seeking healing, yet feel the quiet pull
toward something deeper—a final
resolution that leads to lasting joy and
peace.



The author of this book does not intend nor actually offer medical advice or prescribe the use of any technique as a form of treatment for physical, emotional, or medical conditions without the help of a certified physician. The positive intent of the author is to share with the reader some general guidelines gained from direct experience that has not been scientifically tested in any way. Such information may or may not help the reader in the quest for emotional and spiritual wellbeing. The author and the publisher assume no responsibility for the consequences of any action initiated by using information contained in this publication.

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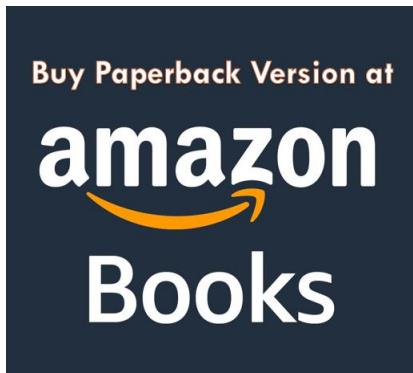


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Preface

Welcome to a journey that dares to explore the uncharted mysteries of the soul. Your curiosity has led you here, and that alone sets you apart. The topic of demons often stirs fear and discomfort; most people avoid it altogether, shaped by the chilling portrayals of Hollywood horror or the weight of cultural myths. But not you. Your willingness to confront the forbidden and seek the unknown marks you as someone ready to challenge the ordinary.

Society's relationship with demons and horror is as polarizing as it is fascinating. Some revel in the thrill, drawn to the macabre allure of fear, while others recoil, dismissing it as mere fiction or fantasy. Hollywood, heavy metal bands of the 1990s, and pop culture have played their parts in shaping these views. Symbols of death and darkness—skulls, bones, and grim imagery—have infiltrated fashion, music, and art, even turning up in lighthearted places like Christmas movies. But beneath this fascination lies a deeper truth waiting to be uncovered.

That truth first came into focus for me through an unusual encounter. A friend introduced me to Pavel, a Russian practitioner who had pioneered a groundbreaking approach to mushroom-assisted healing. His retreats targeted astral parasites—entities buried so deeply in the subconscious that they elude conventional therapies like plant medicine or hypnotherapy. Pavel's method combined heroic doses of psychedelic mushrooms with advanced techniques to extract these hidden entities.

I was intrigued, particularly because of something I had witnessed many times in my years as an ayahuasca facilitator. Occasionally, participants would enter a wild, uncontrollable state—screaming, thrashing, and requiring physical restraint until the episode passed. In my book “Ayahuasca Wisdom”, I coined the term “Visionary

“Intense Release Syndrome” (VIRS) to describe this unpredictable phenomenon, which I’ve observed across various visionary medicines, including ayahuasca, psilocybin mushrooms and *bufo alvarius*.

For the first time, Pavel’s work offered a plausible explanation for VIRS. Could it be that during these visionary experiences, subconscious entities surface, attempting to joy ride into physical reality? The question drove me to dive deeper, conducting thorough research and experiencing multiple time Pavel’s method firsthand. The answer was unmistakable: Yes.

Through these sessions, I extracted several entities I hadn’t even realized were embedded in my subconscious. These weren’t malevolent forces driving criminal acts but subtle parasites feeding on my life energy, manifesting through behaviors I mistakenly believed were part of my identity. These behaviors, I discovered, were rooted in childhood traumas and reinforced by patterns long mistaken as “me.” The liberation I experienced profoundly shifted my understanding of the self.

Until then, my inner work was deeply rooted in Jungian psychology and shadow work—powerful tools I used in guiding ayahuasca integration sessions. But this newfound awareness of subconscious entities expanded my framework, elevating my practice to what I now jokingly call Spiritual Coaching 2.0.

This discovery soon grew into a collective mission. When I shared my findings with a fellow ayahuasca facilitator, he embraced the paradigm enthusiastically, undergoing his own transformative experiences. In a twist of synchronicity, he introduced a Buddhist monk from the Tibetan Vajrayana tradition into our circle. Trained in ancient and secretive demonic extraction techniques, the monk saw this collaboration as the long-awaited opportunity to apply his sacred knowledge.

In 2024, the three of us joined forces to create SHAPE Retreats. SHAPE is an acronym for Spiritual Healing (by) Astral Parasite Extraction. Our mission is to bring this revolutionary healing modality to those seeking freedom from the unseen forces that shape their lives.

This book is one of the initial steps of that mission. It affirmatively addresses the vast information void surrounding subconscious entities and their impact on human psychology and spirituality. Within these pages, you'll find a curated collection of insights, research, and experiences designed to illuminate this mysterious but profoundly impactful realm.

Let this book be your guide as you navigate the shadowy corners of the soul, uncovering truths that might just transform your reality. Are you ready to meet your demons—and reclaim the power they've held over you? Let's begin.

Introduction

The topic of astral parasites and demonic entities has intrigued humanity for centuries, captivating imaginations and fueling folklore. Yet, their intangible, non-material nature presents a challenge to modern rationality, particularly in an era shaped by science and empiricism. Today, openly discussing demons often invites skepticism, ridicule, or outright dismissal, as such concepts are seen as relics of superstition. This societal aversion has created fertile ground for myth and entertainment, where grotesque medieval depictions adorn museum walls, and horror films thrive on fear as a lucrative formula. At the same time, psychology grapples with an inherent paradox: acknowledging demons as real phenomena risks undermining the very framework of its scientific discipline. For individuals, the stress of daily life often makes it easier to deny or ignore these entities altogether.

This collective cultural denial, however, inadvertently offers astral entities an ideal refuge, enabling them to persist unnoticed, feeding on human vitality while comfortably evading scrutiny. This anthology seeks to confront that silence, shedding light on the reality of psychological demons through a multidisciplinary lens. Drawing from sacred texts, foundational psychology, clinical psychedelic research, and insights from renowned healers and scholars, this compilation reveals a rich tapestry of perspectives that collectively affirm the existence of these elusive phenomena.

We begin by unpacking the concept of demons, situating it within cultural and linguistic contexts. Phrases like “facing one’s demons” are universally understood but seldom taken literally, reflecting a metaphorical approach that often obscures deeper truths. One article highlights the connection between psychological demons and trauma, presenting these forces as more tangible and relatable to everyday experience. This is followed by accounts from

psychedelic therapy, where profound encounters with such entities often emerge, bridging personal anecdote and clinical observation.

The exploration deepens with insights from two luminaries of psychology: Sigmund Freud's concept of the *Id* aligns closely with the metaphor of demons as primal drives, while Carl Jung's extensive reflections on shadow and archetypes offer even more explicit connections. Jung's writings, in particular, provide a wealth of references to demonic forces as integral to the human psyche's dynamic interplay.

My own contribution to this anthology includes excerpts from *Ayahuasca Wisdom*, where I delve into subpersonalities, entities, and their removal. These chapters aim to demystify the concept of demons, offering practical guidance for therapists and patients to foster shared understanding in therapeutic contexts.

The second part of the book expands on broader spiritual themes, exploring the role of awakening in culture and society. The anthology concludes with a theological analysis of demons as depicted in modern religious texts but preceded by an overview of the theoretical framework employed by SHAPE Retreats, a pioneering approach to addressing these phenomena. This collection aims to challenge assumptions, inspire dialogue, and expand our understanding of one of humanity's most enigmatic topics.

SHAPE Retreats has graciously sponsored this e-book for your enjoyment.

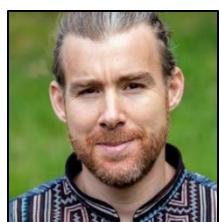
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Andrew Rosenstock



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Sue Mehtens



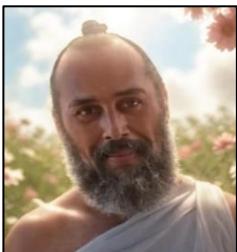
She is the founder of The Jungian Center for the Spiritual Sciences, which is a new kind of educational organization based around the implications of the philosophy and psychology of the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung. Her essay give us a delightful tour over a collection of relevant quotes and opinions carefully picked from Jung's extensive body of work.

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Award winner 2009 / 2010

Sandino Grullon



Sandino is Buddhist Monk ordained in four different Tibetan and Chinese lineages, Professional Acupuncturist, Instructor of Reiki, Naud Thai Massage, Qigong, Shaolin Gong Fu. Practitioner of Neuro Linguistic Programming, and Thai Chi. He leads the Tibetan techniques of extraction of astral parasites during the events held at SHAPE Retreats.

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Jules Henry Rivers



A life journey of self-exploration, autodidactic studies, and business ventures after retiring from a successful banking career, shaped Jules Henry into a devoted ayahuasca practitioner, spiritual advisor and book author. Having developed into a passionate advocate of the psychedelic renaissance, Jules is now embarked on the journey of paying forward the blessings received from the higher realities thanks to the entheogenic resources provided by nature. Jules is available for private consultations, media interviews, and conference presentations.

Part One

Psychological Demons:

Some Theoretical Frameworks



Chapter 1

Psychological Demons Defined

The first and most vital lesson in understanding demons is recognizing how profoundly our perception of them has been shaped—and distorted—since childhood. By the age of seven, we have already internalized the foundational framework of how we believe reality operates. From that point on, our understanding grows more through expansion than fundamental change. When it comes to demons, however, this early foundation is often built on a shaky amalgamation of influences: sensationalized television shows, horror movies, regional folklore, misinterpreted religious teachings, the playful yet skewed imagery of Halloween, and countless other misconceptions. These sources weave a narrative so entrenched in fear and fiction that it obscures the deeper truths about what demons may actually represent.



To provide you with some elementary ideas about demons, we have researched modern literature and have collected twenty quotes from famous authors and philosophers that give us a taste of the real nature of demons. Each quote contains a speck of truth and all of them together should help you upgrade your “factory settings” about demons.

1. Demons are not to be feared, but to be understood.
2. In order to conquer your demons, you must first acknowledge them.
3. Don't let your demons define you but let them refine you.
4. Demons are simply misunderstood fragments of our own souls.
5. We all have demons, but it's how we choose to handle them that makes us who we are.
6. Our demons grow stronger when we try to ignore them.
7. Demons are the result of unresolved pain and trauma.
8. Our demons are there to guide us towards our own personal growth and transformation.
9. Denying our demons only grants them more power over us.
10. The path to enlightenment is paved with the understanding and integration of our demons.
11. Demons are merely obstacles to self-realization.
12. Demons are not evil entities, but fragments of our own consciousness seeking resolution.

13. Demons are not an external force, but projections of our own unresolved emotions.
14. Demons are our greatest teachers, showing us where we need to heal and grow.
15. Our inner demons are like shadows; they cannot harm us unless we allow them to consume us.
16. Demons are the messengers of our past, reminding us of the work that still needs to be done.
17. Demons are the guardians of our growth, pushing us towards our highest potential.
18. In facing our demons, we find the courage to embrace our true selves.
19. Our demons hold the keys to our liberation – if we are brave enough to face them.
20. Demons are not enemies, but opportunities for growth and self-discovery

Having set the tone about the nature of psychological demons it is relevant to bring the wisdom of Bill Richards, PhD, a psychologist in the Psychiatry Department of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, where for decades he has participated in the design and implementation of research projects with psychedelic medicines. In an article titled “William Richards on Psychedelic-Assisted Psychotherapy and Mystical Experiences” he said:

Generally, they’re people who never would have been interested in psychedelics if the opportunity to receive one hadn’t been offered as part of medical treatment, education or research. Some were eighty-year-olds from the inner city dying of cancer; not the hippie type—not the stereotype of the psychedelic user at all. And I have to say just about all these people have benefited.

I’ve come to believe that if there’s anything they’re not ready to deal with, yet it won’t even come up, not even in a psychedelic session. And if it comes to consciousness, to me that says they’re ready to deal with it—that this is an invitation and if it comes to you, greet it. It may be the uninvited guest but it’s the guest. And you meet it. I always say what devils hate most is being embraced. They’re like kids in Halloween masks—but then the game is up, and you realize the false front of the terror.

When you go towards the fear there's growth and insight and resolution. But you need to be grounded in a good relationship with a therapist or someone you really trust, or in the depths of your mind perhaps if you're spiritually developed enough. There's this courage, there's this intention to greet, to welcome, to embrace whatever comes into consciousness. And with that there's a willingness to suffer. It doesn't have to be a "good trip," you know, especially if "good" just means getting high and laughing and feeling that everything's cool. Personal growth is sometimes hard work, and spiritual development takes you through the dark night of the soul sometimes. But with that intention to welcome whatever comes into your field of consciousness and accept it, and wrestle with it, and go through it, people invariably emerge with a feeling of inner strength and confidence, and significantly decreased anxiety at the end of the day." [1]

In this quote, Bill just embraced the value of working with your psychological demons and described its two most critical issues. First, if a demon comes to your consciousness during a psychedelic experience it is because you are ready and prepared to confront it. This is something I underscore to participants just before beginning my ayahuasca sessions. Your own fear, not the demon, is the only challenge before you at that moment. There is nothing to fear, you must trust that these demons are in some way part of your inner world regardless of whether you are aware or not. Ignoring them is precisely what gives them more territory to continue affecting our wellbeing, lives and the motive we should work at their extraction. of your awareness

Secondly, Bill remind us that self-improvement doesn't come without conscious effort. Even with the powerful benefits of psychedelics, it is not about a magic pill that like an aspirin, makes your headache go away. It requires work. Confronting your own fears is a mandatory step for spiritual healing and the good news is that it is not as hard as you believed. Fear dissipates faster than you think when you invest the conscious determination to face it.



Chapter 2

Demons Within: Trauma, Unhealthy Experiences, and Harmful Learned Processes

By Andrew Rosenstock

In this chapter, Andrew presents a true masterpiece. With remarkable finesse, he dismantles fear and apprehension surrounding demons by framing them as a metaphor. Yet, through this literary lens, he elegantly distills the core principles of demonic extraction and delivers them with striking clarity. His approach is both enlightening and thought-provoking, and we find ourselves in agreement with nearly every point he makes—save for one crucial distinction.

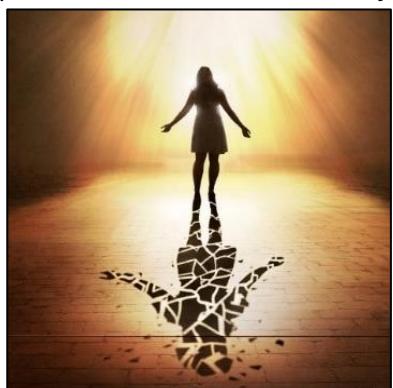
While Andrew emphasizes the metaphorical nature of demons, we believe their role in spiritual healing is far more literal. Modern psychology has provided us with a framework to understand demons as negative inner energies deeply rooted in our subconscious, closely linked to unresolved trauma. From this perspective, demons can be seen as internalized manifestations of our pain, shaping behaviors and thought patterns in ways we often fail to recognize.

For the purposes of this book, however, we distance ourselves from the more mythological interpretations of demons—those transpersonal entities said to attack from the outside or cling to one's soul through contact with a cursed object. While such notions may carry symbolic or cultural significance, they serve more as myth than reality in our view. Instead, our focus remains on the tangible and transformative process of identifying and healing the inner energies that obstruct our growth and well-being.

After a session with a client yesterday she said to me, with a mix of a smile and also tiredness, “this was like an exorcism.” I had never thought of the work in that way, and also this metaphor made complete sense to me in some way. In order to find health, she needed to clear what was keeping her from being freer, her “inner demons.”

I was inspired from this comment to build out a larger framework of how demons may just be unhealthy patterns nestled into our body and mind.

The concept of demons has been a part of human storytelling and mythology for millennia. These malevolent entities, often depicted as tormentors and agents of chaos, have served as cautionary figures in tales of morality and cosmic struggle. However, when we shift our focus from the literal to the



metaphorical, demons acquire a new dimension of meaning. They become representations of traumatic experiences, unhealthy living conditions, and harmful learned behaviors that may be embodied within our psyche and physiology.

Importantly, these metaphorical demons aren't corporeal beings. They don't possess horns or claws, nor do they lurk in dark corners. Instead, they are the personifications of our internal struggles, symbolic representations of the learned patterns of being that can influence our behaviors, thought processes, and overall wellbeing.

Demons as Traumatic Experiences

The metaphor of demons effectively encapsulates the nature of trauma. Trauma, like a demon, can feel like an invasive presence that takes root in our minds and bodies. It can distort our perception of reality, causing us to relive horrific experiences through intrusive thoughts, flashbacks, or nightmares. These are our personal demons, born out of traumatic incidents, lurking in the recesses of our consciousness.

When we talk about 'battling our demons,' we're often talking about confronting and processing these traumatic experiences. This struggle isn't just a psychological one, as trauma can also manifest in physical symptoms like insomnia, chronic pain, or anxiety-induced illnesses. In this way, our bodies become the battleground, the physical space where our metaphorical demons make their presence known.

Demons as Unhealthy Lived Experiences

Our metaphorical demons can also emerge from unhealthy lived experiences. An abusive relationship, a toxic work environment, systemic oppression—these experiences can profoundly shape our perception of self and others, often in detrimental ways. They can

influence our learned patterns of behavior, causing us to internalize negative beliefs about our worth or capabilities.

These ‘demons’ can be insidious, subtly influencing our thoughts and actions without our conscious realization. Over time, they can lead to self-sabotage, self-neglect, or an inability to form healthy relationships. Here, the demon metaphor serves as a potent symbol for these unhealthy learned processes that can rob us of our potential for growth and happiness.

Exorcising Our Demons: The Path to Healing

Just as narratives involving literal demons often involve exorcism or some form of banishment, addressing our metaphorical demons involves a similar process of acknowledgement, confrontation, and release.

Therapy and self-reflection can function as our form of exorcism. By bringing our ‘demons’ into the light, we can examine them, understand their origins, and begin to challenge the negative thought and behavior patterns associated with them. This isn’t an easy process—it requires courage, patience, and persistence—but it’s a necessary step towards healing.



Mindfulness practices, such as meditation or yoga, can also aid in this exorcism. These practices help us tune into our bodies, recognize the physical manifestations of our ‘demons,’ and cultivate healthier ways of managing stress and trauma.

Demons as Learned Beingness

Perhaps the most insidious aspect of our metaphorical demons is their ability to influence our ‘learned beingness’—the habitual ways in which we perceive and interact with the world based on our past experiences. Our demons, born from trauma or unhealthy lived experiences, can shape these learned patterns in harmful ways.

For example, someone who has experienced an abusive relationship may have ‘learned’ to associate love with pain, leading them to withdraw from potential relationships or to tolerate mistreatment. This demon of past abuse isn’t merely a memory, but a learned way of being that influences their current behaviors and attitudes towards love and intimacy.

Healing as Unlearning and Relearning

To exorcise these types of demons, we must engage in a process of unlearning and relearning. We must challenge the harmful beliefs and behaviors we’ve internalized, replacing them with healthier patterns that align with our growth and wellbeing. This process, like exorcism, can be painful and disorienting, but it’s a necessary part of reclaiming our narrative from our demons.

Unlearning involves recognizing and challenging the negative thought patterns we’ve internalized due to our demons. This might involve cognitive-behavioral techniques to reframe negative beliefs or mindfulness practices to cultivate self-compassion and acceptance.

Relearning, on the other hand, involves cultivating healthier thought and behavior patterns. This might involve building self-esteem, improving emotional regulation skills, or learning to set healthy boundaries in relationships.

The Role of Community in Exorcising Demons

Just as the exorcism of literal demons often involves a community—be it a group of priests, a supportive group of friends, or a spiritual guide—the exorcism of our metaphorical demons also requires

communal support. Therapists, support groups, and understanding loved ones can all play crucial roles in our healing journey.

This communal support serves as a reminder that while our demons are personal, the struggle against them is a shared human experience. We are not alone in our battles. We are part of a wider network of individuals, each with their own demons, each striving towards healing and growth.

Embracing the Metaphor, Empowering the Self

The metaphor of demons as representations of trauma, unhealthy lived experiences, and harmful learned processes is a powerful tool for understanding our internal struggles. It highlights the pervasive impact of these experiences, not only on our mental health but also on our physical well-being and our learned patterns of being.

Yet, the demon metaphor also offers a path towards healing. It shows us that our demons, however formidable, can be confronted and exorcised. It reminds us that we are not defined by our past traumas or unhealthy experiences, but by our courage to face our demons, our determination to unlearn harmful patterns, and our capacity to grow beyond them.

In the end, our demons are not just tormentors but teachers. They reveal to us the areas where we need healing, the patterns that need unlearning, and the strength that lies within us. By acknowledging our demons, we take the first step in transforming them from symbolized fears into catalysts for growth and self-understanding.

Our demons may be metaphorical, but the struggle against them is decidedly real. Yet, in this struggle, we find not just pain, but potential—the potential for self-awareness, healing, and profound personal transformation. For in the heart of our battle against our demons, we discover our capacity for resilience, for change, and for reclaiming our narrative from the shadows of our past.



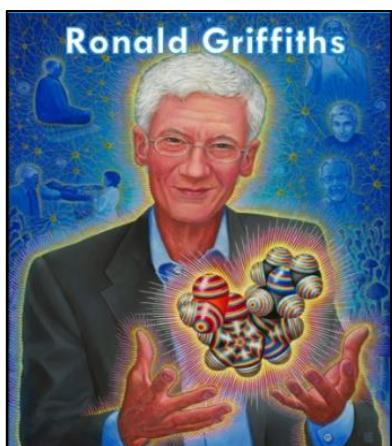
Chapter 3

Encounters with Negative Entities in Psychedelic Experiences

By Jules Henry Rivers

One irrefutable fact that has emerged over decades of our modern psychedelic era is that individuals often encounter the presence of self-conscious entities that interact with them within the psychedelic experience. These have been confirmed and documented while conducting clinical studies under controlled conditions. We are currently experiencing a clash between this reality and the mindset inherent in scientific research. The challenge is to develop theoretical frameworks and testable hypothesis to provide the scientific method with an entry ticket into this mysterious realm. We are still probably decades away from meeting those challenges. Meanwhile, it is the field of psychology that has

attempted to fill the gap between science and the mysterious nature of non-material realities.



We have one astounding truth; both science and mystics acknowledge the subjective reality of something we may call demons during the psychedelic experience. Testimonials from subjects participating in psilocybin-controlled studies repeatedly confirm their existence. It is irrefutable; demons show up in psychedelic experiences when respectable dosing is applied. Thus, we can reasonably speculate that if they are present in high

doses, they are also present at all times, it is just that they remain unseen behind the mask of the ego structure, negatively influencing human behavior even when we instill our strongest efforts to the contrary.

No one better than Dr. Griffiths himself to summarize the clinical interpretation of the astral parasites. Roland Griffiths, Ph.D., (1946-2023) was a Professor in the Departments of Psychiatry and Neurosciences at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and founding Director of the Johns Hopkins Center on Psychedelic and Consciousness Research. He conducted a series studies characterizing various psychedelic experiences including those associated with mystical-type effects, as well as entity and God-encounter experiences.

When interviewed by world-renown clinical psychologist Jordan Peterson he said the following:

“ ... if you find yourself facing a demon in your psychedelic experience, you'll may either choose to run from it and spend the entire session running from it who is going to annihilate you until you're exhausted and the psilocybin's effects are gone, or alternatively, you can make it a life-changing experience because

after you confronted the worst demon of your dreams, and looked in its eyes, and realized it's actually nothing more than an object of consciousness, nothing other than an aspect of yourself, then you ask yourself, where is the obstacle in life that you can't overcome? Your job is to be really interested in it, to recognize that this is a display of consciousness, that you are empowered to approach whatever it is that emerges. If you are able to do that, it is a hugely empowering experience, you have faced the greatest terror victoriously, and that could be a life-changing experience in itself.
“[1]

Similarly, Bill Richards, the psychologist quoted in Chapter 1, said:

‘In and through, in and through’ is the mantra. If an inner dragon, boogeyman, or monster should reveal itself then we go right straight towards it as rapidly as possible and say, ‘Well, hello. Aren’t you big and scary! What can I learn from you?’ And so instead of running away and getting into panic and paranoia and confusion and even perhaps needing to go to a psychiatric emergency room, you look it straight in the eye and say, ‘Boy, you’re an ugly part of me but what are you made of?’ And when you go towards it, inevitably there’s insight...I always say what devils hate most is being embraced.”[2]

Another player in the psychedelic landscape that has noted that demons or entities are often encountered in psychedelic experiences is the prolific Jules Evans. Jules is director of the Challenging Psychedelic Experiences Project, editor of Ecstatic Integration, and an honorary research fellow of the Centre for the History of the Emotions at Queen Mary University of London. He’s the author of four books including Philosophy for Life and Other Dangerous Situations, and The Art of Losing Control.

In September 2023 he published a milestone article titled “Encounters with Negative Entities” [3] where he made several revealing observations that deserve a prominent place in this essay. He begins:

“It is quite common to encounter ‘entities’ – what other cultures would call spirits, angels or demons – while on psychedelics. A 2015 survey [1] of 800 psychonauts by Fountonglou and Freimoser found that 46% of ayahuasca-takers reported ‘encounters with suprahuman or spiritual entities’, as well as 36% of DMT-takers, 17% of LSD takers, and 12% of psilocybin-takers. Similar percentages reported ‘experiences of other universes and encounters with their inhabitants.’”

This sort of entity encounter is typically a positive experience, but not always. In a Johns Hopkins survey [2] by Davis et al in 2020, 2561 people said they encountered entities while under the influence of DMT. They usually described these entities as a guide or helper, but 11% described the entity as a ‘demon’, ‘devil’ or ‘monster. For 78% of people, the entities were experienced as ‘benevolent’ or ‘sacred’, but 16% felt they were ‘negatively judgmental’ and 11% felt they were ‘malicious’.

Whether positive or negative, entity encounters can upend a person’s worldview. Most respondents (72%) in the Johns Hopkins survey thought the entity continued to exist after their encounter, and 80% said that the experience altered their fundamental conception of reality. The number of respondents who identified as atheist fell from 28% before the encounter to 10% after.

Encounters with both positive and negative entities are particularly common on ayahuasca. In Bouso et al 2022 paper on adverse ayahuasca events, [3] which used data from the 11,000-respondent Global Ayahuasca Survey, 14.9% reported feeling ‘energetically attacked or a harmful connection to the spirit world’ (of course, an energetic attack could be experienced as coming from another human). Such experiences may be particularly common in ayahuasca experiences because of the setting of shamanic culture. One reader tells me: ‘I think shamans plant this idea with you when you arrive [in the Amazon]. Then they can help you and expel your demons and you feel satisfied.’

Negative entity experiences weren’t quite as common in our post-psychedelic extended difficulties survey, [4] but they did crop up. We included demon and hell encounters in one theme, ‘Sense of hell / evil presence / fear of afterlife’ (which occurred in 4% of

responses), and experiences of feeling possessed by humans or non-humans in another theme, ‘Possession beliefs’ (which occurred in 2.3% of responses).”[3]

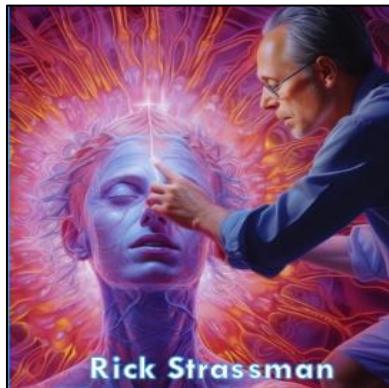
Jules Evans bring us a couple of remarkable examples in his article. Daniel Pinchbeck, author of “Breaking Open the Head: A Psychedelic Journey into the Heart of Contemporary Shamanism”, wrote to Jules by email:

“I had the experience of a kind of entity coming through me many years ago, after taking DPT with a friend – I wrote about it in Breaking Open the Head. I did some exorcism / banishing rituals to free myself from it, as described in the book. I wouldn’t say it was entirely ‘negative’. I ended up getting fascinated by Rudolf Steiner’s ideas about ‘Luciferic’ beings that make alliances with humans and augment our capabilities, although it is a complicated bargain... This is similar to the Djinns of Islamic lore, or the Daimon that Patrick Harpur writes about in The Daimonic Reality and other works. In the Classical world, men would have altars to their Daimons, which represented the spirit of ‘inspiration’. I also had the experience of a voice speaking through me for a week that identified itself as the Mesoamerican creator deity, Quetzalcoatl. I wrote about this in my book 2012: The Return of Quetzalcoatl, now republished as Quetzalcoatl Returns. It was not something I imagined to be possible - a shocking experience. It happened when I was in the Amazon in Brazil, working with the Santo Daime. The experience was difficult but also integrating the experience was very difficult.”[3]

The other example is Rick Strassman, who was the first person in the United States to undertake human research with psychedelic substances with his research on DMT: Jules Evans recounts:

I saw him speak at Breaking Convention in 2015, where he said: “How can we tell if these beings are for us or against us? When opening yourself to spiritual worlds, it’s not all love and light. It’s important to know how to protect yourself, how to pray.”

I asked him to say more on the topic this week, he told me by email: “Bad trips happen and it’s usually because of frightening content. Whether or not that content originates in one’s own mind or ‘somewhere else’ doesn’t really matter. It appears in the mind and that’s where one deals with it. The last such episode I had like that, I meditated and accepted the content and it got worse and worse. Then I started praying to God using some simple Hebrew prayers, and the situation resolved. If one believes in angels, then demons also have a place. The location doesn’t matter. These beings represent things about which we were previously unaware, or only dimly aware, and then we need to deal with them, or the information they convey.” [3]



Rick Strassman

Then we have the epic testimonial of the discoverer of LSD, Albert Hoffman himself when he describes his LSD experience on his famous bicycle day:

“A demon had invaded me, had taken possession of my body, mind, and soul. I jumped up and down and screamed, trying to free myself from him, but then sank down again and lay helpless on the sofa. The substance, with which I had wanted to experiment, had vanquished me. It was the demon that scornfully triumphed over my will.” [4]



The phenomenon of entities has been recognized since the very beginning of the modern psychedelic era. This truth induced the first psychonauts to consider the ideas of life beyond death, and death itself. In such exploration, which included the examination of philosophies and traditions of the far east, one particular text gained

relevance. The Tibetan Book of the Dead has been an influential text for psychedelic science ever since Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert made it the basis of their 1964 Psychedelic Experience Manual.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead is a Tibetan Buddhist text that was written as a guide for navigating the process of death, the bardo and rebirth into another form. The text of The Psychedelic Experience discusses the Tibetan Book of the Dead and use the process of death and rebirth presented in it as a metaphor for the experience of ego death or depersonalization that is commonly experienced under the influence of psychedelic drugs. The psychedelic internal "journey" is thus likened to a metaphorical death-rebirth experience, with the text intended as a guide.

In Tibetan Buddhist theology, any monsters, demons or wrathful deities you encounter now or in the afterlife should be recognized as aspects of consciousness, real and perhaps deserving of compassion as suffering sentient beings. They should also be recognized as empty-of-self at the ultimate level, and transformable through introspection and intention.

Not all cultural or philosophical traditions align with the psychological interpretation of demons as symbolic aspects of the

mind. In Western occultism, demons are often regarded as entities with independent self-essence, demanding mastery and defense to avoid being overpowered by their influence. Similarly, Amazonian shamanism acknowledges the autonomous reality of negative entities, emphasizing the necessity of psychic self-defense. Within the paradigm of Amazonian curanderismo, such encounters are typically resolved by an experienced curandero or shaman capable of expelling the entities and restoring energetic balance.

In my view, influenced by the ethos of the current psychedelic renaissance, these situations should also incorporate alternative therapeutic approaches. Modern techniques, aimed at helping individuals find equilibrium, can complement traditional practices. However, resolving severe cases may still require the use of non-ordinary states of consciousness. Within these states, the manifestation of entities is neither judged nor suppressed but is instead allowed to unfold within a structured ceremonial context to facilitate healing.

Jules Evans shares in his article a brilliant insight into how realities are filtered through our cultural lenses:

“But one can take a pragmatic and trans-cultural view. Modern psychiatry expelled demons but created disorders. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual is the modern version of a demonological compendium. In it the gods have become diseases - Phobos, Greek God of fear, has become phobia, Pan has become panic disorder, divine mania has become bipolar disorder.

The modern demonology of the DSM is not so far from the ancient one. When one ‘has’ a disorder (like social anxiety, say, which I had for several years), it can feel like the disorder has you, like you are possessed by a parasite or demon that seeks to dominate your attention, energy and life choices.” [3]



The frameworks of "mental disorders" and "demonic possession" can be seen as distinct yet parallel interpretations of the same phenomena, reflecting different cultural and historical worldviews. In modern psychiatry, mental disorders are understood as disruptions in cognition, emotion, and behavior caused by complex

interactions between biology, psychology, and environment. Conversely, traditional perspectives on demonic possession view such disturbances as external, malevolent forces influencing an individual's mind and body. Both paradigms aim to explain and address profound changes in behavior, emotional distress, or altered states of consciousness. Where psychiatry employs clinical interventions such as therapy and medication, spiritual traditions may turn to rituals, exorcisms, or prayer. These differing lenses not only shape the language and methodology of healing but also highlight humanity's universal struggle to understand and alleviate suffering, whether interpreted as internal imbalance or external spiritual intrusion.



Chapter 4

Freud's Theory of the Id

By Charlotte Nickerson

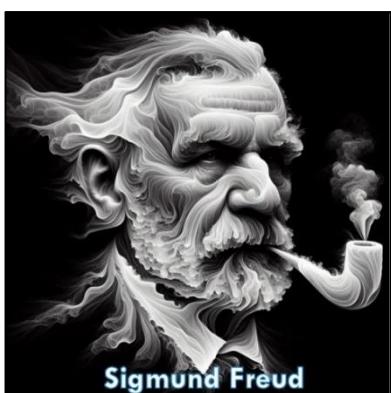
The concept of demons as metaphors for internal struggles is far from new; Sigmund Freud's framework of the Id offers a psychological lens to understand these primal and unruly forces within the psyche. Freud's early 20th-century model provided a scientific and therapeutic context for addressing the chaotic and often destructive drives that humanity has long personified as demons, grounding these age-old notions in modern psychological theory. The concept of psychological "demons" as metaphorical representations of inner struggles—such as repressed fears, primal urges, or destructive impulses—bears a notable parallel to Freud's concept of the Id. In Freudian psychoanalysis, the Id is the reservoir of unconscious drives and desires, governed by the pleasure principle and devoid of moral or rational constraints.

Similarly, psychological demons often symbolize those uncontrolled and sometimes destructive elements of the psyche that disrupt our conscious lives.

Both concepts emphasize the idea of an inner force that operates outside of conscious control, often surfacing as compulsions, irrational behaviors, or emotional turmoil. Addressing these forces, whether by confronting one's demons or integrating the Id through psychoanalytic processes, involves recognizing their role within the broader psyche and working toward a healthier internal equilibrium. These parallels highlight the universality of addressing the darker, more primal aspects of the human experience in psychological and cultural frameworks.

"One might compare the relation of the ego to the id with that between a rider and his horse. The horse provides the locomotor energy, and the rider has the prerogative of determining the goal and of guiding the movements of his powerful mount towards it. But all too often in the relations between the ego and the id we find a picture of the less ideal situation in which the rider is obliged to guide his horse in the direction in which the horse itself wants to go."

—From "New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis," 1933



The id, first conceived of by the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud (1923), is the part of the personality that is driven by instinctual needs and desires. The id is the primary source of motivation for all human behavior, namely basic needs, such as hunger, emotional expression, and sex. The id operates on the pleasure principle, which means that it seeks to gratify

its needs and desires in any way possible.

Overview and History

In psychoanalytic theory, the id is the component of the personality that contains the instinctual, biological drives that supply the psyche with its basic energy or libido. The psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud conceived of the id as the most primitive component of the personality, located in the deepest level of the [unconscious](#). It has no inner organization and operates in obedience to the so-called pleasure principle — a desire for gratification and avoiding or dissipating pain.

Thus, the infant's life is dominated by the desire for immediate gratification of instincts, such as hunger and sex. This id dominance remains until the next level of personality, the ego, begins to develop and operate in accordance with reality.

Freud's [tripartite theory](#) has had a profound influence on psychology, particularly in the area of human development. Freud believed that the id was responsible for all of our basic needs and drives, including sex, hunger, and aggression. Freud believed that the id was constantly trying to satisfy these drives but was often frustrated by the reality principle, which dictated that we could not always have what we wanted. This frustration often leads to conflict within the personality, which could manifest itself in various ways, such as anxiety or neurosis (Freud, 1923).

While Freud's theory of the id has been criticized by many psychologists over the years, it continues to be one of the most influential theories in psychology. It has helped psychologists to understand the role of people's basic drives in human behavior and has provided a framework for understanding how people resolve conflict within themselves.

When Does the Id Emerge?

Freud considered personality to be similar to an iceberg. He believed that the ego, or conscious mind, was just the tip of the iceberg, while the rest of personality was submerged in the unconscious.

The id is, in this view, the deepest level of personality, located in the unconscious mind. It operated according to the pleasure principle, which meant that it was always seeking immediate gratification. The id is, according to Freud, a primitive part of personality and contains basic drives, such as sex and aggression. Freud believed that these drives were innate and would emerge even if people were not socialized or taught about them. For example, he believed that infants are born with sexual urges, even though they may not yet be aware of what sex is.

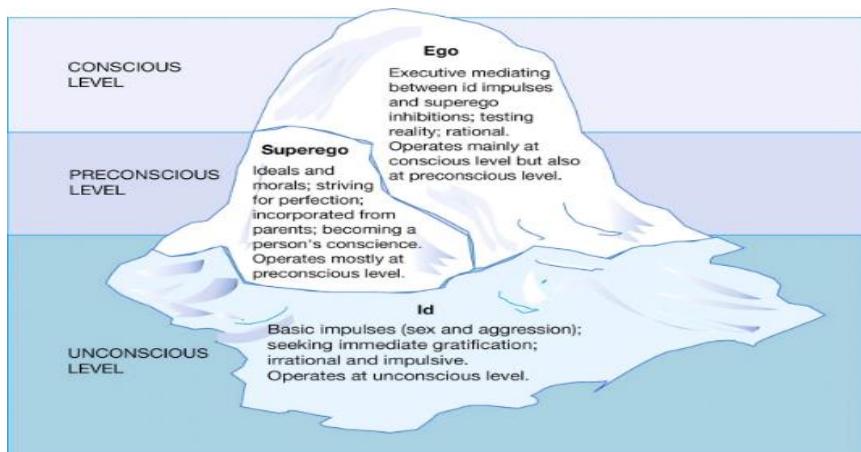
The id was also responsible for many of our primitive impulses, such as hunger and thirst. Freud believed that these drives were so powerful that they could not be controlled by the ego. For example, if someone experiences hunger, the thought of eating dominates their mind, leading them to not be able to think about anything else. The id would always seek to satisfy these drives, regardless of whether or not it was realistic or possible.

The Id and Personality

While the id is present from birth, Freud (1923) believed that it was not the only component of personality. He proposed that the ego and superego, two other parts of personality, emerge as a child grows and matures. The ego develops in response to the demands of reality. It begins to form around the age of two and helps the individual deal with the outside world in a more realistic way. For example, the ego prevents an infant from biting people when they are frustrated, as this would lead to negative consequences. The ego is also responsible for organizing our thoughts and decision-making.

The superego is the last part of the personality to develop and usually emerges around the age of five or six. It is the part of personality that internalizes the values and morals of society. The superego is often in conflict with the id, as it seeks to control our primitive impulses. For example, the superego would tell us not to steal, even if we really wanted to.

The id, ego, and superego all play an important role in human behavior. Together, they help us to understand both our conscious and unconscious motivations (Erwin, 2002).



How the Id Operates

The id motivates you to seek pleasure whilst avoiding pain and do so at whatever cost to others; it is entirely selfish. The Id operates on what Freud called the Pleasure Principle and is present at birth. The Id, in turn, is driven by two other instinctive drives:

Eros or life instinct: which gets its energy from the libido. Eros drives us to behave in life-preserving and life-enhancing ways, to avoid danger, to keep warm and well-fed, and to reproduce.

Thanatos: or death instinct, which will cause us to attack anyone that gets in the way of satisfying the libido. Thanatos, however, can be destructive when turned inwards.

The id relies on the primary process to temporarily relieve the tension caused by a need that cannot be immediately met. The primary process involves forming a mental image of the desired object and then satisfying the need with this image. This can be seen in daydreaming, which allows us to temporarily escape from reality and satisfy our needs. For example, if someone is hungry, the id will create a mental image of food, and then satisfaction will come from eating the food in our imagination.

Similarly, if someone is sexually frustrated, the id may create a mental image of a sexual encounter, and then satisfaction will come from fantasizing about this encounter. The id is not concerned with reality, only with satisfying its needs. This can often lead to problems, as the things that someone wants are not always possible or realistic. For example, an athlete may want to win a gold medal, but this may not be possible. The athlete's id would then keep repeating the desire for a gold medal, leading to frustration and disappointment.

The id can also cause problems in relationships, as it may lead us to act impulsively without thinking about the consequences. For example, someone who is angry may lash out at their partner in an attempt to relieve emotional tension without considering how this would hurt them.

Id Defense Mechanisms

The id is often responsible for [defense mechanisms](#), which are unconscious strategies that someone uses to protect themselves from anxiety. As the id demands instant gratification, there is conflict with the superego's sense of right and wrong. Therefore, the ego must step in to be the referee between the two to restore them to

reality. This causes much anxiety, and the Ego defends itself against this by using defense mechanisms that reduce the anxiety.

Defense mechanisms allow people to cope with the demands of reality and the outside world (Brenner, 1981). Common defense mechanisms include denial, repression, and projection. [Denial](#) is when someone refuses to accept that something is true, even though it may be obvious. For example, someone who is facing a terminal illness may deny their diagnosis to avoid the pain and anxiety that comes with it.

Repression is when someone pushes painful memories or thoughts out of our conscious awareness. For example, someone who was sexually abused as a child may repress these memories as a way of dealing with the pain. Projection is when someone attributes their own thoughts and feelings to others (Brenner, 1981).

Fundamental Examples

Thirst and Hunger

The id is concerned with meeting basic needs, such as satiating hunger and thirst.

Seeking instant gratification, the id can cause people to become tense, anxious, or angry when these needs are not met. Some examples of the id dominating someone's sense of thirst and hunger can include (Erwin, 2002):

- Rather than waiting for the server to refill someone's glass of water, they reach across the table and drink someone else's.
- A hungry baby crying until they are fed.
- A toddler whining incessantly until given another sweet.
- In line at the grocery store, someone is so hungry that they take a bite out of their sandwich as they wait in the line to move.

Rage

Rage is a strong emotion that is often explained by Freud's id. When someone experiences rage, it is typically in response to feeling frustrated, threatened, or helpless. For example, someone may feel rage when they are stuck in traffic or when someone cuts them off in line.

Nonetheless, rage can be an adaptive emotion that helps people to survive and protect themselves. For example, if someone is being attacked by another, the rage may give them the strength to fight back and defend themselves.

However, rage can also be destructive and lead to problems such as violence and aggression (Erwin, 2002). When the id is under control, people may act impulsively and without thinking about the consequences of their actions. This can lead to problems such as:

- An enraged driver pulled his car onto the shoulder of a road and sped forward, not caring that he was clipping people's side mirrors as he tried to get ahead of the cars in front of him.
- A child throws a toy across a room to express his anger.
- A husband makes a personal attack on his wife in an attempt to cover up the root causes of his resentment.



Chapter 5

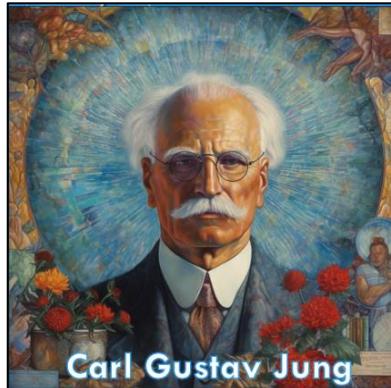
Demons and Evil as Presented by Carl Jung

By Sue Mehtens

In this chapter we present a brilliant essay written by a distinguished Jungian author and teacher, Sue Mehtens. She is the founder of The Jungian Center for the Spiritual Sciences, which is a new kind of educational organization based around the implications of the philosophy and psychology of the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung. Her essay give us a delightful tour over a collection of relevant quotes and opinions carefully picked from Jung's extensive body of work. For being highly relevant to the central subject of this book, we include it here in its entirety.

The subjects for this essay come from different quarters: from students' questions, from the daily headlines, or from my reading in

Jung's works. This essay arose from this last, during my reading of the notes of Jung's *Dream Analysis* seminar.[\[5\]](#) In discussing one of his cases, he noted how the patient refused to believe something about himself, stating it was impossible. Jung warned his students: "When we say that such a thing is quite impossible, just there is the place where the devil can come in."[\[6\]](#)



Jung was saying, in effect, that when, in our thinking, we limit possibilities, when we foreclose options, we are denying Jesus' statement that "with God all things are possible."[\[7\]](#) This led me to investigate Jung's ideas about the devil, and that led to the wider issue of evil. In this essay I will examine, first, the reality of evil and devil, followed by a review of definitions, names and symbols for the devil, some of the devil's qualities, how the devil shows up in life and in us, and, finally, the value and importance of the devil.

"... in the darkest Middle Ages.... they spoke of the devil, today we call it a neurosis."

Jung (1933)[\[1\]](#)

the devil "... describes the grotesque and sinister side of the unconscious; for we have never really come to grips with it and consequently it has remained in its original savage state. Probably no one today would still be rash enough to assert that the European is a lamblike creature and not possessed by a devil. The frightful records of our age are plain for all to see, and they surpass in hideousness everything that any previous age, with its feeble instruments, could have hoped to accomplish."

Jung (1946)[\[2\]](#)

"... Lucifer was perhaps the one who best understood the divine will struggling to create a world and who carried out that will most

faithfully. For, by rebelling against God, he became the active principle of a creation which opposed to God a counter-will of its own. Because God willed this, we are told in Genesis 3 that he gave man the power to will otherwise. Had he not done so, he would have created nothing but a machine, and then the incarnation and the redemption would never have come about. Nor would there have been any revelation of the Trinity, because everything would have remained One forever.”

Jung (1942)[3]

“... the historic events of our time have painted a picture of man’s psychic reality in indelible colors of blood and fire, and given him an object lesson which he will never be able to forget if—and this is the great question—he has today acquired enough consciousness to keep up with the furious pace of the devil within him. The only other hope is that he may learn to curb a creativity which is wasting itself in the exploitation of material power. Unfortunately, all attempts in that direction look like bloodless Utopias.”

Jung (1942)[4] The Reality of Evil and the Devil One of Jung’s major complaints about Christianity was its incomplete image of the Divine as all-good.[8] Ever true to his concept of an archetype as embodying both positive and negative poles,[9] Jung understood God as containing both goodness and evil, light and darkness.[10] He took exception to the Christian definition of evil as *privatio boni*,[11] merely the absence of good. Jung understood how this truncated image of the Divine came about, as well as its implications for humanity:

“[in]... the Christian reformation of the Jewish concept of the Deity: the morally ambiguous Yahweh became an exclusively good God, while everything evil was united in the devil.... Thanks to the development of feeling-values, the splendor of the ‘light’ god has been enhanced beyond measure, but the darkness supposedly represented by the devil has localized itself in man. This strange development was precipitated chiefly by the fact that Christianity, terrified of Manichaean dualism, strove to preserve its monotheism

by main force. But since the reality of darkness and evil could not be denied, there was no alternative but to make man responsible for it. Even the devil was largely, if not entirely abolished, ... We think that the world of darkness has thus been abolished for good and all, and nobody realizes what a poisoning this is of man's soul....[\[12\]](#)

At the time Christian doctrine was being developed, the culture of the Hellenistic world was very syncretic,[\[13\]](#) open to all sorts of ideas, including Gnosticism and Manichaenism, both of which posited gods of good/light and gods of evil/darkness.[\[14\]](#) Early church theologians reacted against these influences, declaring all such dualistic teachings to be heresies,[\[15\]](#) and then they went overboard in seeing the source of evil in the world not in God, but in man.[\[16\]](#) Hence we find these days multiple books responding to the question “If God is good, how come this ... [some tragedy, sickness, catastrophe] happened?”[\[17\]](#) Jung would reply that God is not only good, and man is not the only source of evil. Bad things happen in the world and human beings are not the sole source for them. Jung was blunt about this:

Who says that the evil in the world we live in, that is right in front of us, is not real! Evil is terribly real, for each and every individual. If you regard the principle of evil as a reality you can just as well call it the devil. I personally find it hard to believe that the idea of the *privatio boni* still holds water.”[\[18\]](#)

Jung had many discussions with Christian theologians on this point, most notably with the English Dominican priest Victor White.[\[19\]](#) Like many religious committed to orthodox dogma, White could not accept Jung’s argument. Of course there is evil in the world! In Jung’s day he saw evil in the world wars, the Holocaust, and the Cold War with its omnipresent threat of nuclear destruction. For us, the depredations by ISIS/ISIL/Daesh in the Middle East, the chaos of the drug wars in Latin America, and the destruction of our global

ecosystem by climate change are all forms of collective evil, while the various neuroses and psychoses are forms of evil on the personal level: “... in the darkest Middle Ages... they spoke of the devil, today we call it a neurosis.”[\[20\]](#) We consider some other names and symbols for the devil in the next section.

Definitions, Names and Symbols for the Devil

Jung refers to the devil in several ways: as aspects of God, as a force in life, and as a psychological phenomenon. “The left hand of God,”[\[21\]](#) “the left side of God,”[\[22\]](#) the “other side of God,”[\[23\]](#) “God’s own dark side,”[\[24\]](#) Satanaël,[\[25\]](#) God’s first son,[\[26\]](#) the Antichrist,[\[27\]](#) the figure opposed to Christ,[\[28\]](#) and “the counterpart of Christ that represents evil”[\[29\]](#) are some of the terms Jung used for the evil aspect of God. As a force in human life, the devil shows up as “the dark antagonist,”[\[30\]](#) “the principle of evil”[\[31\]](#) and the “ungodly intellect,”[\[32\]](#) while, in psychological contexts Jung felt the devil was “... the diabolical aspect of every psychic function that has broken loose from the hierarchy of the total psyche and now enjoys independence and absolute power...,”[\[33\]](#) “... the grotesque and sinister side of the unconscious...”[\[34\]](#) and, on the collective level, “... the objective psyche that held all the peoples of the Roman Empire under its sway...”[\[35\]](#) Given the manifold manifestations of chaos, destruction and warfare in our world now, we might extend Jung’s definition to our current global situation.

The principle of evil goes by many names, some of these Gnostic in origin, others deriving from ancient myths, legends or fairy tales. In ancient Egypt, the devil was called Set,[\[36\]](#) in Persia, Ahriman,[\[37\]](#) in Norse legends, Wotan[\[38\]](#) or Loki,[\[39\]](#) in ancient Greece, Mercurius.[\[40\]](#) The Gnostics spoke of the devil as the *antimon pneuma*, the imitation spirit,[\[41\]](#) or Ialdabaoth, the Saturnine archon[\[42\]](#) or *princeps huius mundi*[\[43\]](#) who ruled the material world. Goethe called the devil Mephistopheles,[\[44\]](#) and the German

author Spitteler referred to the devil as Epimetheus.[\[45\]](#) Jung took up this label, regarding

“The Epimethean principle, which always thinks backwards and reduces everything to the primal chaos... and would force back the light into the maternal darkness whence it was born.... a thinking in terms of ‘nothing but’ which reduces All to Nothing....”[\[46\]](#)

as devilish in its influence in human life. But not all the devil’s handiwork has a negative impact. While the devil is “the father of all tricksters,”[\[47\]](#) and thus the cause of trickery, deceit and deception, it also can be the *agent provocateur* that helps us live more fully into life.[\[48\]](#) I found this to be true in my own experience, as I got more in touch with the trickster archetype within me: I became much less susceptible to being gulled by con men, much more self-aware and discerning about people, and also more spontaneous in my lifestyle. Milton called Satan the *principium individuationis*,[\[49\]](#) the principle of individuation, and to the extent that our shadow side helps us become more fully ourselves, Jung agreed.

Western history and art have imagined the devil in many forms: as a horse,[\[50\]](#) as a chthonic deity with cloven hoofs, horns and tail, half man, half beast,[\[51\]](#) as a snake[\[52\]](#) or serpent, as a monkey,[\[53\]](#) the “ape of God,”[\[54\]](#) as a dragon,[\[55\]](#) as a roaring fiery lion,[\[56\]](#) as the night raven,[\[57\]](#) as the black eagle,[\[58\]](#) as the Leviathan,[\[59\]](#) as the goat,[\[60\]](#) as a shape-shifter,[\[61\]](#) and as an aerial spirit,[\[62\]](#) the “angel of light.”[\[63\]](#) The art of the Middle Ages and Renaissance was particularly vivid in depictions of the devil. They were equally imaginative in their analysis of the devil’s qualities.

The Devil’s Qualities

Jung noted that the devil has “qualities which give one pause.”[\[64\]](#) Being enigmatic,[\[65\]](#) worldly,[\[66\]](#) awkward,[\[67\]](#) wily,[\[68\]](#) savage,[\[69\]](#) immoral,[\[70\]](#) destructive,[\[71\]](#) cheating,[\[72\]](#) the devil, Jung said, “is something quite frightful!”[\[73\]](#)



Seen through the lens of psychology, the devil has the “character of an autonomous personality,”^[74] which “... is greater than man’s consciousness and greater than his will.”^[75] As the “animal side of the libido,”^[76] the devil is “... that part of the psyche which has not been assimilated to consciousness...”^[77] While it might seem “wonderful and ingenious”^[78] to us (think of all the amazing technological gadgets that our creativity has cooked up)^[79] Jung warned that it is simultaneously “dangerously deceptive on account of its numinous nature.”^[80]

Any archetype can fascinate us, because of its numinosity, and the devil is no different. Being autonomous, the shadow—our inner devil—can “insinuate itself”^[81] into daily life and cause all manner of mayhem. Our environmental problems are just one of many examples of this. Which brings us to consider how the devil shows up in the world.

How the Devil Shows Up in Life

With its “fondness for sly jokes and malicious pranks,...”^[82] the devil can lead us astray, and expose us to all kinds of torture,^[83] from emotional tortures like “impatience, doubt and despair”^[84] to more serious problems, “causing annoying accidents,”^[85] divisive misunderstandings, even fatalities. As a “spoilsport,”^[86] the devil is “... always sowing some seeds of mischief... to test human beings...”^[87] cheating, and destroying “God’s good intention...”^[88] Exploiting our weaknesses, seducing and tempting, the devil worships power^[89] and sows “unrest and strife”^[90]—all with pernicious results.

Delusions,^[91] division and fragmentation,^[92] demonic dreams,^[93] confusion, chaos,^[94] and worldliness are some obvious results of

the devil's handiwork. Other signs are more subtle, e.g. concretism:[\[95\]](#) the inability to be open to the new, to expansion, change or new possibilities, extreme rigidity that forecloses options for growth and change. God reminded John of Patmos that He "makes all things new."[\[96\]](#) Novelty, renewal, growth and change are hallmarks of the divine.

As I noted above, Jung recognized that the devil could appear when we regard something as impossible. When we fail to recognize our shadow side, for example, insisting that we could not possibly be gay, or racist, or sexist, or a terrorist, or a murderer, we open ourselves to devilish self-righteousness.[\[99\]](#) Similarly, when we passively accept a medical diagnosis, dismissing the possibility of a healing, we are providing an opening for the devil to enter our lives.

Jung saw the devil in his consulting room frequently, in his patients' states of possession,[\[100\]](#) the conscious mind having been overwhelmed by the unconscious. Insofar as they reflect an inner conflict—a division within oneself—neuroses and psychoses can be the work of the devil. Similarly, Jung recognized that the devil might appear as "... autonomous complexes, which at times completely destroy the self-control...complexes behaving quite independently of the ego, and force upon it a quasi-foreign will."[\[101\]](#) Jung's description here made me think of the old adage "The devil made me do it?"—"it" here being some action or response that, in our usual conscious frame of mind, we would never normally do.

The Devil in Us

But, if we are honest with ourselves, we must admit we do criticize others, projecting our inner devils out on to those with the "hooks" to carry them. We do get puffed up when we fail to recognize our shadow, with dire consequences. Jung explains:

"... By not being aware of having a shadow, you declare a part of your personality to be non-existent. Then it enters the kingdom of the non-existent, which swells up and takes on enormous proportions. When you don't acknowledge that you have such

qualities, you simply feeding the devils. In medical language, each quality in the psyche represents a certain energetic value, and if you declare an energetic value to be non-existent, a devil appears instead....”[\[102\]](#)

Inflation, arrogance, egotism—these are faces of the devil we all might wear. As Jung reminds us “... the side we call the Devil... dwells in the heart, in the unconscious....”[\[103\]](#) and because “... we have never really come to grips with it... it has remained in its original savage state.”[\[104\]](#) “We ... prefer to localize the evil in individual criminals or groups of criminals, while washing our hands in innocence and ignoring the general proclivity to evil. This sanctimoniousness cannot be kept up in the long run, because the evil, as experience shows, lies in man...”[\[105\]](#) that is, in us.

We don’t like to be told this. We want to think well of ourselves. Jung knew this. He admitted as much when he wrote

“... Under no circumstances, however, will my modesty allow me to identify myself with the devil. That would be altogether too presumptuous and would, moreover, bring me into unbearable conflict with my highest values. Nor, with my moral deficit, can I possibly afford it.”[\[106\]](#)

Jung could spot his “moral deficit” because he was conscious and able to engage in self-criticism. “But because most people are devoid of self-criticism, permanent self-deception is the rule...”[\[107\]](#) We deceive ourselves when we believe we are blameless, “good” people. We need to recognize the shadow, and the myriad forms this inner devil can take.

But this does not mean we want to identify with the devil because it is an archetype, and identifying with an archetype is very dangerous:

“It causes exaggeration, a puffed-up attitude (inflation), loss of free will, delusion, and enthusiasm in good and evil alike....”[\[108\]](#)
Rather we must “religiously bear in mind”

“the autonomy of this ambivalent figure... for it is the source of that fearful power which drives us toward individuation... We neither

can nor should try to force this numinous being, at the risk of our own psychic destruction, into our narrow human mold, for it is greater than man's consciousness and greater than his will.”[\[109\]](#)

Jung’s choice of words may cause surprise: religiously bear in mind? Is Jung suggesting that we *respect* the *devil*? Yes, because it is an archetype, as this quote indicates, but also because it has value and importance in our lives.

The Value and Importance of the Devil

Typical of Jung, whose thought patterns often seem to diverge from our usual conventions, Jung would urge us to appreciate the Divine in all its fullness—both the good and the “bad.” These labels are our human judgments, and the ego mind is fallible. It does not perceive or interpret life from the wider/higher perspective of the Self. What value did Jung see in the devil? How might we think of evil as something positive?

First, as the quote above indicates, Jung saw our inner daemon as that force that “drives us toward individuation.”[\[110\]](#) That inner force that allows us to discern, to differentiate, to create, to respond spontaneously to the novel opportunity, to smell a rat, to wake up to aspects of life that we’ve been missing—this is the devil within, and in such ways our inner daimon fosters our living more deeply who we are. This association of the devil with individuation was not unique to Jung:

John Milton, and the medieval alchemists before him, recognized the devil as the principium individuationis, the principle of individuation.[\[111\]](#) *Thanks to Satan’s rebellion, human beings have the power of rebellion also. Had God not allowed Satan the freedom to rebel, humans would have been little more than machines, and “... everything would have remained One forever.”*[\[112\]](#)

Likewise, Jung reminds us that Satan taught man the arts and sciences[\[113\]](#)—hence his name “Lucifer,” the light-bearer,[\[114\]](#) the source of illumination. Paradoxically, the energy associated with

blackness and darkness is the same energy that provided the enlightenment of knowledge, crafts, technologies and learning in human civilization.

Jung regarded the Lucifer myth as a “therapeutic myth.”[\[115\]](#) As a healing myth it fosters our coming to consciousness, in both positive and negative ways: via dream work, analysis, conscious work to become aware of our “inner city,” and via accidents, broken relationships, patterns of self-destructive behavior, and personal loss and turmoil—all of which are meant to be “wake up” calls for us to grow and change.

The devil within us provides us with initiative,[\[116\]](#) the impetus to do things, to start things, to challenge the gods: Eve ate the apple, in the “fall that made us great.”[\[117\]](#) Prometheus brought us fire, the one gift that sets us apart from the animals: warmth, heat, light, energy, and all our technologies have been built on this gift.

Finally Jung drew from Goethe’s story of Faust the realization that it “required the intervention of the devil”[\[118\]](#) to get Faust to recognize how much of his life he had missed. In this way the devil can be an *agent provocateur*, an intrusive, unwelcome, disturbing force that shakes us up, perhaps destroying long-cherished dreams (which we come to recognize in time really would not have served us), while also opening up new avenues of living. The devil within can be thought of as

“an autonomous dynamism, fittingly called man’s daemon, genius, guardian angel, better self, heart, inner voice, the inner and higher man, and so forth. Close beside these, beside the positive, ‘right’ conscience, there stands the negative, ‘false’ conscience called the devil, seducer, tempter, evil spirit, etc....”[\[119\]](#)

Our challenge, as people working to become more conscious, is to discern which conscience is operative at the moment.

Conclusion

Will we take up this challenge? Having seen so many signs of the devil at work (e.g. World Wars I and II and the Holocaust, with millions of dead, the Cold War with the ever-present potential for nuclear war, and so many patients without spiritual reserves to draw upon), Jung was not sanguine:

“... the historic events of our time have painted a picture of man’s psychic reality in indelible colors of blood and fire, and given him an object lesson which he will never be able to forget if—and this is the great question—he has today acquired enough consciousness to keep up with the furious pace of the devil within him. The only other hope is that he may learn to curb a creativity which is wasting itself in the exploitation of material power. Unfortunately, all attempts in that direction look like bloodless Utopias.”[\[120\]](#)

But he was not without suggestions for how we might address our situation: Each individual has the responsibility for taking up the task:

to endure the conflict between Christ and the devil “until the time or turning-point is reached where good and evil begin to relativize themselves, to doubt themselves, and the cry is raised for a morality ‘beyond good and evil’....”[\[121\]](#)

When, in the midst of the Cold War, it seemed the world was poised on the brink of nuclear war, his students asked Jung whether he thought there would be war,[\[122\]](#) his response was just this: “endure the conflict,” hold the tension within between ego and shadow, our good side and our evil side, in the knowledge that a resolution will come.” As for the “morality beyond good and evil,” Jung could have been thinking of the ethical implications of depth psychology, a subject which his student Erich Neumann had explored in depth a few years earlier.[\[123\]](#)



Chapter 6

Carl Jung's Analysis on The Tibetan Book of the Dead

By Jules Henry Rivers

The Bardo Thödol is in the highest degree psychological in its outlook; but, with us, philosophy and theology are still in the medieval, pre-psychological stage where only the assertions are listened to, explained, defended, criticized and disputed, while the authority that makes them has, by general consent, been deposed as outside the scope of discussion.

~Carl Jung, Psychology and Religion, Psychological Commentary on the Tibetan Book of the Dead, Paragraphs 833-834.

The Bardo Thödol, otherwise named “The Tibetan Book of the Dead,” caused a considerable stir in English-speaking countries at the time of its first appearance in 1927. Ever since it was first published, it has

provided stimulating ideas and discoveries, but also many fundamental insights. Its deep humanity and its still deeper insight into the secrets of the human psyche, make an especial appeal to the layman who is seeking to broaden his knowledge of life.

Unlike the Egyptian Book of the Dead, the *Bardo Thödol* offers one an intelligible philosophy addressed to human beings rather than to gods or primitive savages. Its philosophy contains the essence of Buddhist psychological criticism; and, as such, one can truly say that it is of an unexampled superiority.

The background of this unusual book is not the niggardly European “either-or,” but a magnificently affirmative “both-and.” This statement may appear objectionable to the Western philosopher, for the West loves clarity and unambiguity; consequently, one philosopher clings to the position, “God is,” while other clings equally fervently to the negation, “God is not.”

Carl Jung's analysis of the *Bardo Thödol* reflects his deep interest in Eastern philosophies and their psychological insights. Jung saw the *Bardo Thödol* as a profound psychological map of the human mind, particularly in the context of death and the transitional states of consciousness. Here are the key aspects of his analysis:

1. Symbolism of Archetypes

Jung interpreted the deities, demons, and other entities described in the *Bardo Thödol* as archetypes of the collective unconscious. For Jung, the peaceful and wrathful deities encountered in the *Bardo* represented different aspects of the psyche. The peaceful deities symbolized the higher potentials of human consciousness, such as compassion and wisdom, while the wrathful ones represented repressed fears, destructive impulses, or unresolved conflicts.

2. Confronting the Shadow

The *Bardo Thödol* aligns with Jung's concept of "shadow work," where individuals must confront and integrate their darker, unconscious aspects. The wrathful deities, while terrifying, are not external demons but projections of one's inner turmoil. Jung believed that acknowledging and embracing these aspects could lead to psychological and spiritual growth.

3. Psychological Death and Rebirth

Jung viewed the *Bardo Thödol* as a guide not only for the literal process of dying but also for the metaphorical death and rebirth that occur in personal transformation. He connected the *Bardo*'s descriptions to the process of individuation, where an individual moves toward self-realization by integrating all aspects of the psyche.

4. Universal Insights

Jung admired the *Bardo Thödol* for its universal applicability, arguing that its teachings transcended cultural and religious boundaries. He believed it could serve as a guide for understanding the human experience, particularly the unconscious, regardless of one's spiritual background.

5. Jung's Foreword

In the foreword to an early English translation of the *Bardo Thödol*, Jung wrote about its significance in psychology and spirituality. He noted how the text provided a rare glimpse into the workings of the human mind at the most profound levels and how its insights into death could help Westerners come to terms with mortality.

These insights highlight Jung's belief that the *Bardo Thödol* serves as both a spiritual and psychological tool, helping individuals navigate the profound mysteries of life, death, and the unconscious mind.

In addition to Carl Jung's own analysis, Robert Thurman, a prominent scholar of Tibetan Buddhism, has explored the intersections between Jungian psychology and Tibetan Buddhist teachings in several ways. He emphasizes the complementary nature of Jung's depth psychology and Tibetan Buddhist practices, especially their shared focus on the transformation of consciousness.

Thurman highlights how Jung's concepts of the shadow and the collective unconscious parallel Tibetan Buddhism's understanding of the mind's layers and the interplay between delusions and enlightenment. Jung's focus on integrating repressed aspects of the psyche resonates with the Tibetan Buddhist aim of confronting and transforming negative mental patterns, often depicted as externalized "demons."

Thurman also aligns Jung's interest in archetypes with the Tibetan pantheon of deities, particularly as presented in the *Bardo Thödol* (Tibetan Book of the Dead). He explains that these deities are not external entities but representations of psychological states and transformative energies. For instance, wrathful deities symbolize suppressed fears and desires that can be harnessed for spiritual growth when properly understood and integrated.

Thurman has pointed out that Jung's framework provides Western audiences with a lens through which they can appreciate the psychological depth of Tibetan Buddhist practices. This bridge encourages modern seekers to explore practices like dream yoga, bardo yoga, and meditative visualization as tools for personal and spiritual development.

For deeper insights, you may explore Thurman's discussions in his books such as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: The Natural Liberation Through Understanding in the Between* and interviews discussing the integration of Eastern and Western spiritual and psychological traditions.

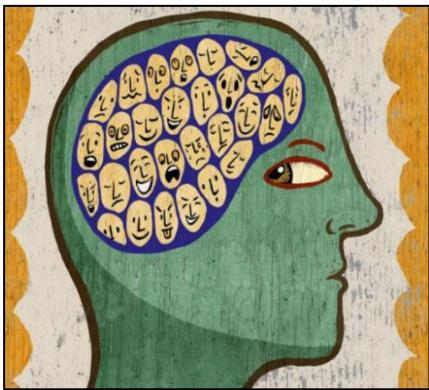


Chapter 7

The Subpersonalities in Us

This is an excerpt from the section “Principles of Quantum Psychology” found in Chapter Seven of *Ayahuasca Wisdom: Achieving Personal Spiritual Healing with a Quantum Model of*

In earlier chapters, we discussed the topic of thought-forms. We learned that when one or more habits are practiced with enough frequency, they begin to organize themselves as thought-forms, creating a new quantum structure within our ego-self. Some of these quantum structures may turn into what we call subpersonalities. As defined by Rowan, a subpersonality is a semi-permanent and semi-autonomous region of the personality capable of acting as a person. [10].



The concept of subpersonalities is more familiar than we might initially realize. Many renowned psychologists have referenced them, using a variety of terms to describe these inner facets of the mind. Despite their prevalence in psychological theory, subpersonalities have often remained on the periphery, rarely taking center stage in mainstream discussions or research. There is only one psychology book dedicated exclusively to subpersonalities. [11]

Many of us have experienced moments when it feels as though we've been "taken over" by a part of ourselves we didn't even know existed. We say things like, "*I don't know what got into me*," often referring to situations where our actions seem out of character. A common example is an episode of uncontrolled rage, though positive manifestations can occur as well. These moments often reveal the presence of a subpersonality—a distinct facet of our psyche that emerges in response to specific circumstances. What's striking is how these states persist despite our conscious efforts to change them and typically dissolve only when the triggering situation ends.

Therapists and psychological researchers have long suggested that we are not a singular self, but a collection of selves that shift and surface depending on the situation or interaction. Skilled therapists have observed patients who exhibit distinct parts of themselves—so separate and defined that they almost seem like independent personalities.

Everyday phrases like, “*On one hand, I want to quit my job, but on the other, I might regret it,*” or “*It felt like a voice was telling me to do it,*” offer subtle but significant clues. They hint at the inner dynamics of subpersonalities, each with their own desires, fears, and perspectives, vying for control in the moment.

Many schools of psychotherapy view subpersonalities not as fleeting influences but as enduring psychological structures that shape how we feel, think, and behave. They influence self-perception and identity so deeply that, in those moments, it’s as though we *become* the subpersonality. Life begins to resemble a theater, with an ever-changing cast of subpersonalities stepping onto the stage, each one suited to the current scene and circumstance. This perspective not only sheds light on our inner conflicts but also reveals the complexity and richness of the human mind.

Roberto Assagioli, the founder of psychosynthesis, said:

“Subpersonalities are psychological satellites, coexisting as a multitude of lives within the medium of our personality. Each subpersonality has a style and motivation of its own, often strikingly dissimilar from those of the others. Each of us is a crowd. There can be the rebel and the intellectual, the seducer and the housewife, the saboteur and the aesthete, the organizer and the bon vivant each with its own mythology, and all more or less crowded into one single person. Often they are far from being at peace with one another. ..Several subpersonalities are continually scuffling: impulses, desires, principles, aspirations, are engaged in an unceasing struggle.” [12]

Guided by the profound insights of ayahuasca, my early years working with the medicine brought into sharp focus the many facets of my persona—subpersonalities that seemed to take turns running the show. One of the most prominent was the businessman, a corporate archetype driven by the relentless pursuit of competency,

status, and the elusive salary raise. As a divorced bank executive in my mid-forties, I began to recognize how easily this persona would step aside for another: the romantic lover, who emerged when a captivating woman entered the scene.

The transitions didn't stop there. On any given evening, a phone call from an old high school buddy inviting me to a baseball game would summon the sports fan, eager to revel in the camaraderie of the stands. Later that night, the intellectual nerd might commandeer my time, poring over scientific texts with relentless curiosity. Meanwhile, the spiritual seeker waited patiently, ready to redirect my focus toward meditation, yoga, and readings on metaphysics. These distinct versions of myself weren't merely roles I played—they were dynamic parts of my inner world, each with its own motivations, quirks, and desires.

Through ayahuasca, I learned to observe this internal parade of "me's," shifting in response to the circumstances of my life. During one particularly illuminating session, Mother Ayahuasca confronted me directly. She presented a striking vision: the soft-spoken, polished businessman at the office standing side by side with the rough-edged, beer-drinking dude who emerged during nights out with my closest friends. Then came her question, delivered with piercing clarity: *Who are you?*

The message was unmistakable. If I truly aspired to self-realization—a goal I had often prayed for before my ceremonies—I needed to begin integrating these subpersonalities. The lesson wasn't about suppressing or eliminating them but weaving them into a cohesive, authentic self. The scattered fragments of identity, while useful in their own domains, were holding me back from the wholeness and balance that comes from alignment. It was a call to bridge the gaps, to harmonize the many voices within, and to embrace my full self with conscious awareness.

Accepting the concept of subpersonalities within my self-identity wasn't particularly challenging, thanks to an early exposure during my college years in the 1970s. Back then, I participated in a psychology workshop centered on Transactional Analysis (TA) therapy. This therapeutic framework presented a compelling model of the personality, dividing it into three ego-states: the inner child, the rational adult, and the parent-like self. Each of these states represented distinct aspects of the psyche, with the therapy's goal being to resolve emotional issues by fostering dialogue and negotiation among them—hence the term *transactional*.

This experience gave me an early glimpse into the multifaceted nature of the self. It revealed that classical psychology has long grappled with the idea of our multiple inner voices, striving to create models that account for this inner complexity. Transactional Analysis was just one of these efforts, offering a structured and relatable way to explore the diverse elements of who we are. It planted the seed for my eventual understanding that these ego-states, or subpersonalities, aren't aberrations but intrinsic to human nature, waiting to be acknowledged, understood, and integrated.

Understanding Subpersonalities: Insights into Human Adaptability

Subpersonalities should not be mistaken for innate survival instincts—those reactive responses hardwired into our master program that seize control in moments of emotional intensity. Instead, subpersonalities represent specific behavioral patterns newly forged by our adaptive master program to enhance survival. When repetitive actions or reactions solidify into consistent quantum field patterns, they cross a threshold, forming thought-forms. These thought-forms then activate automatically when similar circumstances arise.

Though often labeled dysfunctional in classical psychology, subpersonalities are a testament to human adaptability, a natural byproduct of our capacity to adjust to our environment. It's important, however, to distinguish between subpersonalities and the psychiatric condition of dissociative identity disorder (formerly called multiple personality disorder). The latter involves a much higher degree of dissociation and functional impairment, representing a distinct phenomenon altogether.

One of the most self-limiting beliefs we carry is the idea that we are indivisible, immutable beings—a single, unchanging identity. Recognizing the contrary can be both enlightening and unsettling. It forces us to confront the layered, multifaceted nature of the self. While this realization may initially challenge our perception of who we are, it can ultimately empower us to better understand and integrate the various elements of our psyche.

Mindfulness is an invaluable tool for this process. By cultivating daily awareness, we can observe our subpersonalities in action, identifying when and how they take control. This awareness can prevent subpersonalities from overshadowing the ego-self and disrupting the balance of our subconscious and soul selves.

Recognizing and Managing Subpersonalities

Identifying subpersonalities in ourselves and others can transform how we navigate relationships. For instance, instead of viewing a loved one's behavior as a reflection of their entire being, we can attribute it to a specific subpersonality. This perspective allows us to address issues more constructively, avoiding the feeling of a personal attack. A playful comment like, "*I hope your compulsive organizer doesn't mind if I leave this tool out for the day.*" can diffuse tension while acknowledging the specific trait.

Naming and labeling subpersonalities can also enhance self-awareness. Once identified, it becomes easier to recognize when a subpersonality is triggered and adjust our behavior accordingly. Even self-talk—a phenomenon often stigmatized as irrational—can be an enlightening exercise. Asking, “*Who is talking to whom?*” during moments of introspection can reveal surprising aspects of our inner dynamics.



Our dreams can serve as a portal to understanding subpersonalities. Characters within dreams often re-present hidden aspects of ourselves. If a dream figure communicates an important message, it may signal that a subpersonality is attempting to reach your conscious mind. Reflecting on these dream interactions can uncover valuable insights about unresolved internal conflicts or latent traits.

Alcohol is a well-known catalyst for subpersonalities to emerge. At family gatherings or celebrations, we've all witnessed someone's personality shift after a few drinks—becoming unusually affectionate, sorrowful, or aggressive. These changes occur because alcohol diminishes the ego-self's inhibitions, allowing subpersonalities to rise to the surface.

Prolonged trauma often results in the bundling of painful memories into a distinct subpersonality. This mechanism serves as a survival strategy, allowing the individual to compartmentalize and carry on. However, such subpersonalities may remain latent until triggered later in life, potentially disrupting the ego-self and contributing to conditions like PTSD.

In more extreme cases, subpersonalities may wrestle for dominance, creating a scenario where one gains control over the ego-self for extended periods. While these situations venture into the realm of psychiatric disorders, they highlight the same core principle: subpersonalities arise as a natural, albeit complex, function of human adaptability.

Recognizing subpersonalities is not about labeling ourselves as broken or dysfunctional. Instead, it's an opportunity to embrace the dynamic, adaptable nature of the human mind. By integrating these subpersonalities, we move closer to achieving self-realization, fostering harmony within the multifaceted layers of our psyche. Through mindfulness, self-reflection, and compassionate understanding of others, we can navigate the complex terrain of subpersonalities to achieve greater emotional and spiritual growth.



Chapter 8

Entities: Subpersonalities Gone Rogue

This is an excerpt from the section “Principles of Quantum Psychology” found in Chapter Seven of *Ayahuasca Wisdom: Achieving Personal Spiritual Healing with a Quantum Model of the Psyche*.

One of the most unexpected revelations from my ayahuasca journeys was the recognition of a subpersonality I had unknowingly nurtured within my subconscious: the conspiratorial thinker. This intellectual subpersonality had its roots in the late 1980s when I subscribed to a pioneering magazine dedicated exclusively to conspiracy theories—a rarity in the pre-Internet era.

At that time, this journal seemed like an exciting exploration of alternative viewpoints, but looking back, it was likely a significant

precursor to the larger conspiracy theory movement that exploded into mainstream consciousness following the events of September 11, 2001. Like many others, I found myself drawn to the intricate web of suspicions, patterns, and hidden motives that conspiracy theories often propose. Yet, the paranoia intrinsic to these theories began to occupy an unbalanced portion of my mental and emotional landscape.

Awakening to the Subconscious Force

My fascination with conspiracies had grown from an intellectual curiosity into a powerful subconscious force, shaping my worldview with a paranoid lens. I began to notice this during my first *dieta* with Don Jose Campos in the Peruvian Amazon in 2008. The plant medicines provided a heightened clarity, allowing me to observe the subtle yet insistent pull of this conspiratorial subpersonality.



It wasn't just a tendency—it was a distinct entity within me, a creation of my own psyche that had taken on a life of its own. Over the years, I realized that subpersonalities are not static fragments of our identity but dynamic forces capable of growth and self-realization. My conspiratorial subpersonality had reached a point where it no longer simply influenced my thoughts; it had become a rogue actor within my psyche, asserting its autonomy.

This was a troubling realization: a subpersonality I had unconsciously nurtured now operated with a sense of independence, intruding on my thoughts with its own distinct vibration. Every piece of mainstream news, every political

development, and every cultural shift became a battleground where this subpersonality's subtle suspicion manifested.

It became clear that I could no longer suppress or ignore this entity. It was an undeniable part of my psyche—what I now recognize as *my entity*. This realization underscored the dual-edged nature of subpersonalities: while they emerge as adaptive constructs, their unchecked growth can lead them to challenge the ego-self for dominance.

The experience of confronting this rogue subpersonality was transformative. It taught me that subpersonalities are not merely passive influences; they can evolve, develop self-awareness, and exert significant control over our behavior and perception. In my case, the conspiratorial subpersonality thrived on suspicion and distrust, feeding on the energy of fear and uncertainty.

Rather than attempting to suppress it, I began working to integrate this subpersonality into my broader Self-Identity. This required acknowledging its origins, understanding its motivations, and gradually neutralizing the paranoia that had given it strength.

This journey has reinforced a key insight: subpersonalities, like all aspects of the psyche, are not inherently good or bad. They are reflections of the experiences and emotions that shape us, and their influence can be transformed through mindful observation, self-reflection, and intentional healing.

Entity – a subpersonality that has become self-aware, gaining relative independence from the ego-self and operating under the survival program run by the subconscious-self as if being the ego-self itself. It cares about its own survival and not about the organism from which it feeds. A quantum parasite that learned how to hack the system.

In the framework of the quantum psyche, an entity emerges as a rogue subpersonality—a creation of the ego-self that has gone beyond its original bounds. These entities are not mere figments of imagination but powerful constructs within the Self-Identity's quantum ecosystem. Below are the defining characteristics and dynamics of entities:

1. Origins in the Ego-Self's Loss of Control

Entities arise when the ego-self inadvertently loses control over a previously manageable subpersonality. These subpersonalities, once functioning within acceptable bounds, gain autonomy through repetitive behaviors, often fueled by the pursuit of pleasure or avoidance of pain.

2. The Pleasure-Pain Loop and Rogue Behavior

While normal survival programming directs behavior toward optimizing pleasure and minimizing pain, entities subvert this process. Instead of the ego-self initiating actions, entities take over compelling behavior that serves their own agendas.

3. Independence and Rebellion

Unlike regular subpersonalities that remain under the ego-self's influence, entities function as rebellious forces. They can be likened to a "shadow government" or "deep state" within the psyche—operating with autonomy and often at odds with the ego-self's conscious intentions.

4. Mirroring the Creator

Entities inherit all the features, resources, and intelligence of their creator. Just as the biblical Creator fashioned humanity in “their own image and likeness,” the ego-self shapes its entities in its likeness. This intelligence makes them formidable opponents, nearly impossible to outmaneuver.

5. Narrow Fields of Action

Entities are tied to the repetitive behaviors that birthed them, focusing on narrow domains of action. Addiction is a common example—whether to substances, behaviors, or even thoughts. These patterns feed the entity’s strength, locking the individual in cycles of compulsion.

6. Fueling Neurochemical Dependency

Entities generate significant neurochemical rewards, including dopamine, serotonin, and glutamate, creating a sense of pleasure or excitement. These brain chemicals act as reinforcements, further empowering the entity and perpetuating the cycle.

7. Survival at All Costs

As part of the quantum psyche’s survival programming, entities are tenacious. Their drive to preserve themselves often overrides the overall well-being of the individual. In extreme cases, this persistence may result in self-destructive behaviors.

The Path to Healing: Entity Removal

The first step in neutralizing an entity is to recognize its existence and stop feeding it with the behaviors it demands. This process requires calling upon the higher aspects of the Self-Identity, particularly the soul-self, to reclaim control.

- **Entity Starvation:** The most direct and challenging route to healing involves depriving the entity of the "food" it craves. Whether the

behavior is substance abuse, obsessive thoughts, or harmful habits, cutting off its sustenance weakens the entity's grip.

- **Spiritual Willpower:** Overcoming entities demands immense bravery and resolve. It requires breaking free from the neurochemical traps they set and enduring the discomfort of withdrawal from their influence.

Entities are not inherently evil but represent a distorted expression of the psyche's survival mechanisms. By understanding their dynamics and reclaiming the energy they have commandeered, we can align the ego-self, subconscious-self, and soul-self toward a unified, healthier state of being. Recognizing their narrow scope and self-serving nature is the first step toward liberation and self-realization.

The difficulty of achieving psychological well-being and personal fulfillment stems from the covert operations of entities within the subconscious-self. These self-aware thought-forms exploit opportunities to intercept the ego-self's conscious state, provoking behaviors that sustain them. Strengthened by quantum ripples generated by the patterns that created them, entities trigger neurochemical production, including dopamine, oxytocin, endorphins, and serotonin, hijacking the pleasure-reward system of the survival program.

Addiction is not a matter of weak character or willpower but rather the result of entities triggering desire circuits in the brain, leading to overstimulation. These entities commandeer neural pathways designed for survival, repurposing them to enslave the ego-self into repetitive, pleasure-seeking behaviors. For instance, Mary Smith's food addiction entity sees a sugar-coated pastry while she waits at the airport. It manipulates her ego-self with a survival-based rationale—"Eat now in case food isn't available later"—despite her lack of hunger." This manipulation is rooted in deeply ingrained survival programming passed down through generations. Mary's

misaligned Self-Identity succumbs, illustrating how entities exploit ancestral memories encoded in our DNA.

Behavioral vulnerabilities like Mary's often stem from childhood or life experiences. Repeated actions tied to strong emotional responses create subpersonalities, which, if unchecked, evolve into rogue entities. Take Rusty Steel, for example. His alcohol addiction began as a subpersonality formed in adolescence, fueled by secret drinking and social rituals. Over time, his alcohol-related behavior became a powerful entity that convinced his ego-self of its normality. When confronted, Rusty's entity provided rationalizations like "It's social, it relieves stress, and it doesn't affect my job," masking the harm it caused. This illustrates how entities collaborate with the ego-self, creating a sense of harmony that obscures destructive patterns.

Entities distort self-perception and dominate the ego-self from their concealed position in the subconscious. This makes it incredibly challenging to change entrenched behaviors like smoking or overeating. Without awareness of these entities and their interplay, people often experience anxiety, agitation, and psychological dysfunction. In extreme cases, this inner conflict may escalate to crises affecting physical or emotional health. The survival program exacerbates the issue by cloaking inner contradictions under layers of amnesia to shield the ego-self, leaving individuals puzzled by behaviors that contradict their conscious intentions.

The misalignment of human survival programs with modern environments creates further complications. Like fragile electronic devices malfunctioning in a humid Amazon rainforest, the survival program struggles to adapt to conditions far removed from those expected during early development. To cope, it encrypts conflicting memories and forms subpersonalities to manage stress, granting the ego-self space to perform essential functions. Unfortunately, these subpersonalities often transform into rogue entities, perpetuating cycles of trauma encoded in holographic memory

banks. These patterns persist throughout life, often unnoticed yet manifesting in unhealthy and self-destructive ways.

This is where ayahuasca's role as a spiritual healing tool becomes vital. By interrupting the cycle of pain and mediocrity, ayahuasca provides a "shock treatment" to entities and subpersonalities, addressing their root causes instead of allowing the survival program to build further complexity around flawed foundations. The human species appears designed for stable conditions during early childhood, yet such environments remain elusive. Psychedelics like ayahuasca offer humankind the means to self-heal, enabling the pursuit of its ultimate imperative: the realization of its spiritual nature. The psychedelic renaissance of this century has the potential to create a foundation for widespread spiritual healing, fostering better conditions for future generations and contributing to a healthier, more harmonious Earth.



Chapter 9

Let's Go Entity Hunting

This is an excerpt from the section “Doing Your Part After Ayahuasca” found in Chapter Eighteen of *Ayahuasca Wisdom: Achieving Personal Spiritual Healing with a Quantum Model of the Psyche*.

When considering what entities may reside within our Self-Identity, we often have an intuitive sense of where to look. Entities frequently reveal themselves through behaviors significantly out of alignment with our normal tendencies, becoming visible to us and those around us. However, they often remain hidden behind more socially acceptable subpersonalities, surviving and growing until we begin to suspect their presence.

The more obvious manifestations include addictions and compulsive behaviors. Losing control in specific situations is a clear signal that warrants attention and, if necessary, professional

intervention. Common examples include emotional outbursts of rage that escalate into violence, property destruction, domestic abuse, child abuse, or even darker criminal actions. These patterns of addiction and obsession are entities that require conscious healing efforts.

A useful method for identifying hidden entities is to observe changes in behavior under the influence of alcohol. As many know, a few drinks can lead to dramatic personality shifts, making some individuals more friendly, sensual, romantic, or lustful, while others may feel resentful, self-righteous, angry, or melancholic. These shifts often signal the presence of entities that should be carefully examined to uncover their origins and develop a strategy for healing. Once identified, it is essential to assess whether the entity is relatively harmless, under control, or a rogue influence that occasionally compels regrettable actions or behavior warranting apologies.

A practical starting point for those seeking self-realization without the aid of ayahuasca is to inventory behaviors that merit close attention. Consider traits such as racism, pride, greed, anger, opinionated gossip, victimhood, self-righteousness, lasciviousness, and others that might reveal hidden entities.

Entities are subpersonalities that have become self-aware, operating consciously within the Self-Identity to sustain themselves. Their repetitive behaviors, fueled by energy, strengthen the neural pathways they exploit. Once these pathways are well-established, it becomes easier for entities to manifest compulsive or addictive patterns. Think of a grassy field where repeated walking creates visible trails, which are then used repeatedly. This is why spiritual healing of entities is more challenging than addressing average subpersonality behaviors. Multiple sessions with focused advisory work are often necessary to remove or diminish an entity's

influence. Such progress is achievable through the properties of sacred medicine during the peak of an ayahuasca experience, where the ego-self awakens and reprograms itself at the quantum level.

During these peak moments, neuroplasticity enables the brain to become more malleable, facilitating the creation of new neural pathways for reprogrammed behaviors that compete with the old ones maintained by the entity. This process is akin to constructing a temporary road detour that redirects traffic away from the entrenched path. However, addiction entities tied to substances like heroin, methamphetamine, and crack cocaine are particularly resistant, as these substances deeply harden brain circuits, making top-down spiritual healing less effective. Dr. Lieberman articulates this phenomenon well:

"Drugs destroy the delicate balance that the brain needs to function normally. Drugs stimulate dopamine release no matter what kind of stimulation the user is in. That confuses the brain, and it begins to connect the drug use to everything. After a while, the brain becomes convinced that drugs are the answer to all aspects of life. Feel like celebrating? Use drugs. Feeling sad? Use drugs. Hanging out with a friend? Use drugs. Feeling stressed, bored, relaxed, tense, angry, powerful, resentful, tired, energetic? Use drugs." [1]

While ayahuasca may seem ineffective in severe cases of hard-drug addiction, this perception often reflects unrealistic expectations. Recovery from such entrenched patterns may require months rather than days or weeks, even with ayahuasca-based interventions. If programs like Narcotics Anonymous can achieve recovery through spiritual strength and willpower alone, it is entirely plausible to develop ayahuasca-based methods with far greater success rates, provided expectations align with the severity of the addiction.

Waging War Against Your Entities

The spiritual healing of entities is among the most challenging tasks on the spiritual path. Its importance cannot be overstated, as entities significantly hinder progress in self-realization. Here, the healing process is likened to waging war—a metaphor meant to resonate with the subconscious, shaped by cultural narratives of heroes and villains in stories of monsters and dragons. This metaphor is intended as an educational tool to strengthen resolve, not a literal depiction of the process.

When the main ego-self aligns with the soul-self to confront an entity, it constitutes an open declaration of war. The mission is clear: to subdue the entity and restrain its operations, offering no alternative but total obedience or elimination. War is a serious, all-consuming effort, demanding complete focus and willpower for success. With this in mind, consider the following guidance for addressing entities as adversaries:

1. An entity is as intelligent as its creator—you. Do not expect to outsmart it easily.
2. Entities are elusive and adept at hiding when confronted. Close your eyes, sense the negative energy, and pray inwardly for strength and determination.
3. Entities will do anything to prevent your cleansing work—lying, fabricating, seducing, bullying, and conspiring, among other tactics.
4. They will assume any form to deceive you and obscure their true nature.
5. They will reason with you persuasively, sowing doubt about your mission. Be wary of proposed negotiations or peace treaties.
6. They will make promises to secure a deal but betray you the moment you relax your defenses.
7. They are relentless liars, and falling for their deception invites the consequences.

8. Like resilient movie monsters, they can persist even when reduced to their smallest form.
9. They cannot be reasoned with and only respond to the strength of your will.
10. They do not understand or care who you truly are, operating with the indifference of a psychopathic criminal.
11. Resistance from an entity serves as a compass—strong resistance indicates you are striking a significant blow.
12. Entities draw power from the behaviors you permit and your fear of failure.
13. As you gain ground, expect strong counterattacks. This is a sign of progress but requires vigilance.
14. The harder the battle, the greater the satisfaction when victory is achieved. Let the importance of your healing drive you forward.
15. Entities are masters of rationalization, spinning plausible excuses for avoiding your work.
16. Overcoming an entity may seem impossible, but remember that monumental efforts, like childbirth, have been achieved for millennia.
17. Avoid unrealistic timetables. Sustaining the intensity required for entity healing is a marathon, not a sprint.

The strength of your main ego-self lies in its resources. It can form alliances with other subpersonalities and has a stronger will connection to the soul-self. The entity, by contrast, operates alone, entrenched in its behavioral niche. The main ego-self commands the battlefield, with strategic allies and a broader perspective.

The overarching strategy involves: (i) surrounding the entity with self-observation, (ii) cutting off its supply lines by abstaining from the behaviors that sustain it, and (iii) strengthening the soul connection through personalized prayer for willpower and divine assistance.

Physical surroundings also play a role. To project law and order into the subconscious where the entity resides, bring order to your external environment. Organize closets, discard unnecessary items,

clean thoroughly, turn over your mattress, and enhance organization in all areas. Eliminating external chaos helps banish it from your inner Self-Identity.

You Can't Out Smart Your Entities

Those who have created and experienced their entities in action understand that these entities must exist, as they manifest in subtle, often unnoticed ways. The Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) movement, for example, refers to the alcoholic entities as “the enemy” within their programs. By labeling and objectifying the



addiction in this manner, they provide a framework for individuals to relate to and understand the force they are up against. They embrace this terminology because it is evidently real in their lives, without fear of being deemed delusional.

The “enemy” or the alcoholic entity operates at sub-perceptual levels. Observant alcoholics in recovery often recognize how it manifests in mysterious, insidious ways. Consider an alcoholic in recovery who, one day for no apparent reason, decides to take a different route home from work. He ends up driving past a bar he used to frequent with old drinking friends, and suddenly, cravings overwhelm him, leading to a relapse. In his next therapy session, he reflects on how the enemy impaired his ability to recognize the danger of this new route and then persuaded him to drink “just one more time.” In terms of our model of the psyche, I believe the entity sensed its host’s weakened state and began to push back. The

entity, feeling starved and seizing on the gap of attention, tricked the ego-self into a detour, leading him closer to the bar. Once near, it took over the command, displacing the ego-self and securing the opportunity to feed. The entity, embedded within the Self-Identity, uses the ego-self's resources and intelligence to survive. Created in the image and likeness of the ego-self, it is not something easily outsmarted. The entity patiently observes the flow of sensory input and, when the ego-self drops its guard, it seizes the moment, hacking the behavior to guide the person toward a relapse.

This "something made me do it" behavior is widely recognized among addicts of all kinds, often referenced in their personal testimonials. Food addicts might hide a piece of pie for later, porn addicts may "accidentally" end up on a porn site while searching for something unrelated, and sex addicts might find themselves unintentionally encountering a compatible partner at a party. These are just a few examples of how entities drive behaviors to secure their "food" supply.

Entities feed on the quantum psychic energy produced in the brain while the addictive behavior is in progress. Neuroscientists may explain this through the lens of dopamine circuits and neurochemical reactions that "make the addict act" in these ways. Addicts often report that the more determined they become to stay on track, the more frequent these opportunities for relapses seem to arise, almost as if they appear out of nowhere. These opportunities rarely show up when the addict is actively seeking them. This phenomenon occurs when entities are starving, doing their best to maintain their hold on the Self-Identity before they are defeated by the recovering addict's stronger will. When this happens, it's a good sign that the addict is doing well with their abstinence and should stay motivated to continue their path.

When grappling with addictive behavior, some addicts view total success as a goal too far off and instead try to negotiate with the

entity, such as saying, “I’ll stop for thirty days, then we’ll talk again.” While the intention is good, they fail to recognize that they are, in fact, negotiating with the entity. This approach might work in the short term, but usually, the addict is unable to outsmart the entity, which returns on the 31st day, demanding its “food.” Although this tactic might succeed sometimes, more often than not, the entity outwits the addict. In the end, mindfulness and self-awareness are the only effective tools to overcome addiction, supported by a strong will.



Chapter 10

An Inconvenient Truth: Early Childhood Imprinting

This is an excerpt from the section “Brain & Behavior Programming” found in Chapter Eight of *Ayahuasca Wisdom: Achieving Personal Spiritual Healing with a Quantum Model of the Psyche*.

Throughout my years as an ayahuasca facilitator, I began to notice a recurring pattern in the testimonials of participants. After sessions, many would disclose the intimate details of their enlightening visions and insights. What stood out was the strong correlation between their current emotional struggles and their early childhood traumas. For example, let’s look at a couple of cases from the numerous ones I’ve observed.

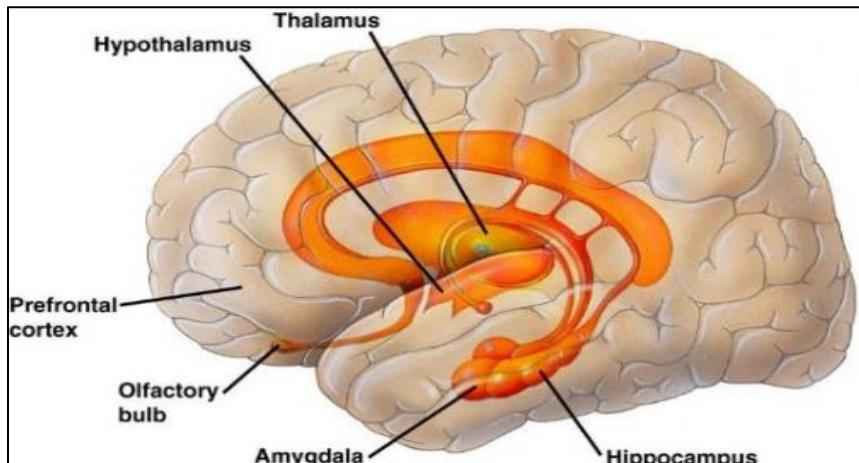
In one session, a young woman experienced a profound emotional connection to the excitement her mother felt while preparing for her arrival. She was taken back to a time before her birth, feeling as though she were inside her mother's skin. The issue, however, was that everything in the room was decorated in blue, as her mother was expecting a boy, having already had two daughters. The participant immediately felt her mother's disappointment upon learning that she was, in fact, another girl. After the session, she realized many things about her relationship with her sisters—she had never been able to bond with them as a sister because she always felt different. This insight shed light on many aspects of her life, including her gender confusion during her teenage years and her eventual understanding of her sexuality as a lesbian.

This is only one example of the many cases we have documented. Over and over, we see strong correlations between the prenatal or early childhood memories uncovered during ayahuasca sessions and the troubling life circumstances that developed later.

What have we learned from these cases? Psychology and neuroscience are beginning to explore this crucial area of research. This is where the concept of limbic imprinting comes into play. Learning about the mechanics of limbic imprinting has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my own ayahuasca journey. Helping participants to heal spiritually from the core of their being, resulting in permanent change, is the fuel that keeps me striving in my healing mission. Understanding the unparalleled power of ayahuasca to unlock the hidden mysteries of our pre-programmed filters of perception drives me to share this knowledge with the world, hoping that others may continue to explore this uncharted territory.

Limbic Imprinting - the automatic function of the nervous system to absorb and memorize all our sensations in a non-cognitive manner. This takes place during the whole formative period, from the moment of

The limbic system is the central hub for fundamental survival behaviors, such as securing food for nourishment and creating a safe space to sleep. However, to truly understand its role, it's important to recognize that these basic instincts can subtly influence more complex behaviors and sometimes operate with hidden motivations aimed at furthering survival goals. A modern example of this might be an individual who marries purely for financial security or sexual gratification, without much focus on love or emotional bonding. Our survival strategies can unconsciously generate nuanced behaviors that serve these fundamental purposes.



Limbic imprinting is a crucial function of the human brain, yet it is an area that still lacks extensive scientific exploration. While there is a considerable amount of research on the biology of emotions, psychology has not yet fully investigated the impact of limbic imprinting on adult behavior. This field remains relatively

underexplored, and more often, we find its concepts discussed in popular psychology rather than in peer-reviewed scientific studies.

The limbic system itself is a network of brain regions that underline much of our behavioral and emotional responses, particularly those tied to survival. These include behaviors such as feeding, reproduction, caring for offspring, and responses like fight or flight. The core of the limbic system is made up of two main structures: the amygdala and the hippocampus. However, the network also involves additional regions with specialized functions, including the thalamus and basal ganglia. Together, these structures influence critical processes like reward processing, habit formation, movement, and learning.

Curiously, the hippocampus, like many other structures in the brain and body, is another organ shaped like a torus, resembling the heart. It's known as the "memory center" of the brain due to its pivotal role in memory encoding and processing. Here, the initial mechanics of our quantum holographic episodic memories are physically formed and cataloged before being uploaded into long-term storage in the quantum field of our Self-Identity. While neuroscientists suggest that memories may be physically stored in other regions of the cortex, at synapses, or in extracellular matrix structures like perineuronal nets, these are merely the biological reflections of much higher processes occurring at the soul level, as explained earlier. Science is limited to describing physical occurrences.

The hippocampus also aids in associating memories with various senses. For instance, the association between the Christmas season and the scent of pine trees, or the nostalgic feeling triggered by an old love song, is created in this area. Notably, the hippocampus is one of the few brain regions where new neurons can be generated from adult stem cells, a process known as neurogenesis, which forms the basis of brain plasticity. It's no surprise that this occurs in a region vital for learning and memory.

On the flip side, memories can fade or be forgotten when synapses experience prolonged inactivity. This inactivity weakens the synapses, eventually leading to their elimination in a process called "long-term depression." These processes take place throughout an individual's life, meaning the strength and existence of neuronal connections underpinning thoughts and memories are activity dependent.

Manipulating the brain through processes that enhance neurogenesis and modulate neuroplasticity offers a viable approach to achieving long-lasting emotional healing. This is exactly what ayahuasca facilitates. Ayahuasca helps by granting access to painful memories and traumas, enabling practitioners to rebuild dysfunctional neural pathways consciously. Through this process, synaptic structures underlying destructive thought and behavior patterns can be redesigned. This is where the proposed model of the psyche makes a valuable contribution.

Given the profound impact of limbic imprinting across the human lifespan, one might expect greater scientific interest in the subject. Yet, despite this, there is now a growing body of neuroscience literature from which valuable insights can be drawn. In recent decades, neuroscientists have sought to understand the basis of brain development and the complex interplay between genetic and environmental factors. This research has shown that much of what determines our adult preferences or behaviors is imprinted during early development, both in utero and in the early postnatal stages. This work has been particularly advanced in understanding psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia. While schizophrenia typically manifests in late adolescence or adulthood, it is now considered a "neurodevelopmental disorder." Neuroscientists have discovered that trauma, including maternal stress, infection, or malnutrition during fetal development, can disrupt brain development and increase the risk of psychiatric disorders. When

combined with a genetic predisposition, the likelihood of developing disorders like schizophrenia significantly rises. [1]

Although advancements have been made in neuroscience, many complex mechanisms and interactions remain to be uncovered, particularly in psychology, where less research has been conducted. However, valuable insights can be gained from the experiences of doctors and psychologists, who, based on practical experience rather than formal medical training, have investigated the many unusual anecdotal accounts from their pregnant patients. Let's explore a few of these examples briefly.

Art Janov, Ph.D. (1924–2017) was the American psychotherapist who wrote *Imprints: The Lifelong Effects of the Birth Experience*. One of the reviews of the book says that his work: “was the result of over twenty years of research on the birth and other early traumas which are engraved into individuals' physiologic and neurological systems. Such birth imprints can later shape personality and physiology. They can determine how long we will live and what inflictions we will suffer later in life.”



Dr. David Chamberlain, Ph.D. (1928-1914) was a Californian psychologist who lectured on birth psychology in over twenty countries. He wrote the book *The Mind of Your Newborn Baby* and later wrote an excellent paper on the subject: *Babies are not What We Thought: Call for a New Paradigm*. In the latter, he concludes: “Because infants of all ages manifest intelligence and are learning from their experiences with us, providers of physical care should always consider the effect of a procedure on the baby's emotions and mind. Let us think about

the mind, not just body. In closing, infants are much more than we thought. Nineteenth-century science was materialistic in viewing the baby as body, brain, and reflex material. The 21st-century view of babies will, I believe, focus on their sensations, emotions, sense of self, personality, communication ability, mind, and consciousness. This major paradigm shift is urgently needed.” [2]

Thomas Verny, MD, is a psychiatrist and academic who has taught in several educational institutes, including Harvard University. The *Pre- and Perinatal Journal*, which he founded in 1983, has established him as one of the world's leading authorities on the effect of the prenatal and early postnatal environment on personality development. In 1989 he wrote *The Scientific Basis of Pre- and Peri-Natal Psychology*. This paper deals with the significant parameters of pre- and peri-natal psychology from a research perspective. He extensively researched the development and function of the fetal central nervous system and reached conclusions about the effect of perinatal trauma on personality development.

Elena Tonetti-Vladimirova is another active proponent of limbic imprinting who did not arise from a behavioral or neuroscience institute or university. Instead, after immigrating from Russia during the Soviet era, she has spent most of her life promoting healthy birth rearing. I casually bumped into the impressive work of Elena Tonetti-Vladimirova while researching the subject in my quest for understanding the numerous ayahuasca testimonials at hand.

Her work is focused on the improvement of healthy birth practices. Her accurate observations regarding birth traumas and adult life difficulties bring forward strong correlations with our ayahuasca work. Moreover, this work is corroborated by multiple, large-scale epidemiological studies that have shown that birthing complications (such as emergency c-section, prematurity, preeclampsia, and use of forceps) are correlated with a significantly increased risk of psychiatric disorder later in life. Direct

experimental neuroscience research is beginning to support these findings. This indicates that this type of early-life trauma leaves a significant and long-lasting imprint on the individuals – one which may become apparent through behavioral and psychological patterns later in life.

Elena, along with the other experts mentioned, has observed the phenomenon from the gestational and perinatal perspective, while realizing the consequences into the future of the person's life. Many ayahuasca practitioners have been able to find rational explanations to their current difficulties by watching the intriguing visionary revelations often received during ayahuasca sessions. There is a surprising number of practitioners that unexpectedly find themselves going regressively back to birth and prenatal states where emotional or physical traumatic episodes of their pregnant mothers convincingly inflicted fundamental imprints in their psyche. Existing perinatal research undoubtedly supports our quantum model and helps us to grasp a fundamental understanding of the potentially dire consequences of limbic imprinting in our behavior as adults.

Let's carefully examine this fascinating area. The holographic memory concept is entirely appropriate to describe the creation of a baby in the mother's womb. Think of a mother creating a new human being inside of her. Does it make sense to speculate with a certain level of confidence that this creature is a holographic model of the mother? Translating this into Newtonian terms would result in the question: could the production of an organism using both mother's and father's DNA be influenced by the manufacturing process at the factory? Tonetti's view of fetus formation describes it as follows:

"Birth should not be taken out of the context of Life. Birth is like a hologram; it reflects everything that happened in a woman's life. It reflects her cultural background, her behavioral patterns, her belief system, her female lineage history, and her sexual history. Also, this

hologram includes her relationship with the world in general and with herself. “[3]

The wisdom of our elders in all cultures knows this inherently. This wisdom has been present for centuries; our grandparents know this. However, science has lagged behind in accepting and incorporating this fundamental truth. One simplified example comes from well-known Bruce Lipton, who in his celebrated book “The Biology of Belief” acknowledges the terrible reality of the effects of childhood traumas in the adult’s physical health as well as psychological wellbeing:

“Statistical correlations reveal a direct connection between traumatic childhood experiences and a wide variety of health issues, including obesity, coronary artery disease, chronic pulmonary disease, cancer, alcoholism, depression, drug use, mental health problems, and teen pregnancies. Interference with developing behavioral processes can result in an adverse impact on adult health in either of two ways: (i) by inflicting cumulative damage over time, or (ii) by embedding destructive behaviors in the young mind that are only activated in adult life situations. In either case, there can be a lag time in years before early environmental disturbances manifest a disease. For example, depressed adults with a history of childhood adults are twice as likely to develop cardiovascular disease than depressed individuals with no history of juvenile maltreatment.”[4]

If we understand the formation of the fetus as a hologram of the mother, we must reach the unavoidable conclusion that babies are not a 50-50 product of their parents. Both parents contribute equally in terms of genetic composition, but it is the mother who retains full epigenetic control of which of those genes activate and how they activate. We have to remember that from the moment of conception, the cell division of the zygote, and its transition to an embryo, the future baby is already immersed in the mother’s quantum field. The influence of the father is nowhere to be found

after conception, while the baby develops its quantum field entrained by the harmonic resonance with its mother's. When we become aware of this, Tonetti's hologram-baby analogy tends to make much sense.

It is important to acknowledge the stark reality that the genetic blueprint for human fetal development is meant to unfold under ideal conditions—conditions that, throughout much of human history, have rarely been met. From the earliest stages of our formation, months before birth, our development is profoundly influenced by our mother's emotional and physical states. Factors such as stress, anxieties about the future after delivery, conflicts with the father, expectations around the baby's gender, accidents, infections, and exposure to substances like alcohol or drugs all leave their mark.

Moreover, the quantum field of the baby begins forming long before the physical fetus takes shape. This is evidenced, for example, by the emergence of an embryonic heartbeat before the heart itself has fully formed. Similarly, the process of limbic imprinting begins even before the physical limbic system is fully developed. Neural development starts early, with the formation of the neural tube, yet the maturation of neurons is a lengthy, intricate, and highly sensitive process. In fact, this development continues well into adolescence before it is fully complete.

“In the embryology of the limbic system, we find that by 13 to 14 weeks, the partially developed hippocampus is already starting to unfold, and by 18 to 20 weeks, the fetal hippocampus begins to resemble the adult hippocampus.”

“This development generates the most complex structure within the embryo, and the long time period of development means that in utero insults during pregnancy may have consequences to the development of the nervous system.”[5]

The cited excerpts are from a scientific paper exploring the concept of “*in utero insults*,” a medical term encompassing factors such as physical trauma, immune activation, toxin exposure, and inflammation. These disturbances can interfere with the delicate processes of fetal development and the genetic mechanisms that guide them, potentially leading to abnormalities in the central nervous system.

Contemporary research has begun to extend beyond physical disruptions to examine the effects of maternal emotional distress, chronic stress, and deprivation on brain development, aiming to understand their long-term consequences in adulthood. Some scientists are also investigating how various aspects of the maternal environment influence fetal development. However, these areas of study are still in their early stages.

Within the quantum model, the focus shifts to more subtle influences during pregnancy, suggesting that the fetus’s quantum field records resonance patterns from the mother’s quantum field even before the limbic system is fully formed. Physically, the limbic system begins to develop around the fifth month of gestation and forms the foundational network that processes quantum field information throughout life.

This model emphasizes the idea—once difficult for many to accept—that adult perceptions of reality are fundamentally shaped by early limbic imprinting. Increasingly, contemporary scientists are recognizing the significance of this perspective. To illustrate this further, I find it fitting to reference an extended quote from Dr. Chamberlain. His observations align closely with the quantum field model and offer compelling evidence for its validity. Here is Dr. Chamberlain’s view on the cognitive capacities of unborn babies.

“Babies are not tabula rasa (blank slates); they are not without intelligence, and not without a sense of self and a purpose. A close

look at early memory and learning defy the limitations traditionally placed on them. Memories of birth shine with verifiable accuracy, a keen perception of meaning, and, with unexpected wisdom, yet such memories were not supposed to exist at all. Another surprise: baby memories reflect empathy and caring for the suffering of parents or of a twin dying in utero-qualities and virtues that were not expected in prenates or neonates. In reality, womb babies are becoming familiar with television theme music, scary movies, and classical music being rehearsed by their parents, domestic violence, and mother's native tongue. They are keenly aware of parental sexual activities, get "wired" with caffeine from mother's coffee, know if they are wanted by one or both parents, and develop early relationships with older siblings and household pets. They learn and copy a mother's depression, as well as her voice characteristics. The unborn are constantly learning from personal experience, but like all other humans, they are vulnerable to trauma and a misunderstanding of surface realities. Indeed, a baby presents a complexity of character to inspire awe when you contemplate communicating with one."

An example, a foster mother was concerned about the seductive behavior of a three-year-old in her care. The young child preferred to wear as little clothing as possible, liked to continually take her clothes off, and climbed up on tables where she danced "very provocatively." It turns out the birth mother was a Night Club stripper who became pregnant and continued working all through the pregnancy. After birth, the daughter was sent to foster care and never saw her mother dance. How did the child learn such behavior? [6]

Thanks to the work of Dr. Chamberlain and several others, the correct dimensions of fetal consciousness emerge. In retrospect, historical, scientific views of the sensory, emotional, and mental nature of pre and neonates, which were grounded exclusively in a brain-matter paradigm, appear grossly inadequate. A new paradigm

is replacing this previous scientific view based on baby awareness and their evident cognitive skills.



Chapter 11

Imprinted Behavior and our Unfortunate Human Condition

This is an excerpt from the section “Brain & Behavior Programming” found in Chapter Eight of *Ayahuasca Wisdom: Achieving Personal Spiritual Healing with a Quantum Model of the Psyche*.

We are addressing one of the greatest challenges preventing humanity from evolving into the advanced civilization we all aspire to see. In 1515, Sir Thomas More introduced *Utopia*, a visionary book describing the political system of an idealized island nation. The term "Utopia," derived from Greek, literally means “good place.” It symbolizes the collective longing for a harmonious world—a stark contrast to the chaotic and contradictory reality we currently inhabit.

This raises a pressing question: why has there been so little meaningful progress in the human condition despite millennia of recorded history? The simple answer lies in humanity's persistent struggle to achieve lasting behavioral change. Consider how many diets you've started without reaching your goal, how many New Year's resolutions have faded before year-end, or how many times you've faced the frustration of failing to break an unwanted habit.

Even with the best intentions, strong willpower, and determined effort, why do we revert to old patterns so often? What is it that pulls us back when we're striving to move forward?

There exists a painful and deeply disheartening truth that is rarely articulated directly. Instead, it is silently acknowledged and accepted as an unchangeable fact of life. This truth concerns the unfortunate state of the human condition on our otherwise beautiful planet. Throughout history, there has never been a time, whether brief or extended, marked by a widespread state of psychological wellbeing among individuals.

Our history is a tapestry of empires rising and falling, wars, oppression, and corruption—dynamics that persist at every level, from global and regional scales to the personal and familial. These struggles are not only external but also internal, reflecting the discord within individuals themselves. While we often attribute blame to governments, monarchs, or economic systems, the real issue lies at the foundation of social order: the individual.

Why is it that, no matter how favorable the circumstances, humanity remains entrenched in suffering and misery with little progress over thousands of years? The reasons vary depending on whom you ask, but two principal causes strike at the heart of human existence.

The first is the deeply entrenched influence of limbic imprints—behavioral patterns programmed during the earliest stages of life.

The second is the intergenerational transmission of trauma and beliefs, perpetuating cycles of dysfunction and pain across generations. Together, these factors create the foundation for humanity's enduring struggles.

These two primary challenges sustain the cycle of human struggle and suffering. If we aim to heal ourselves and, by extension, the planet, it is essential to confront and understand these underlying issues. While countless problems exist in the world, we will focus on these two core factors as a starting point for developing an effective healing strategy.

The deeper explanation of these challenges ties closely to the survival programs embedded within our souls. These programs are designed with multiple functions to safeguard the biological entity, operating through our soul-self and subconscious-self to shape our Self-Identity. Physically, this is reflected in the neural activity of the brain's limbic system.

The first dimension of limbic imprinting begins during gestation, intricately linked to the brain's development and regulated gene activation through epigenetic processes. Current epigenetic research suggests that the appropriate genes in the developing fetus are activated in response to environmental cues. In the framework of a quantum model, these cues are transmitted via the mother's quantum field. However, disruptions in the environment can negatively affect gene expression during critical developmental windows, potentially contributing to various psychiatric disorders.

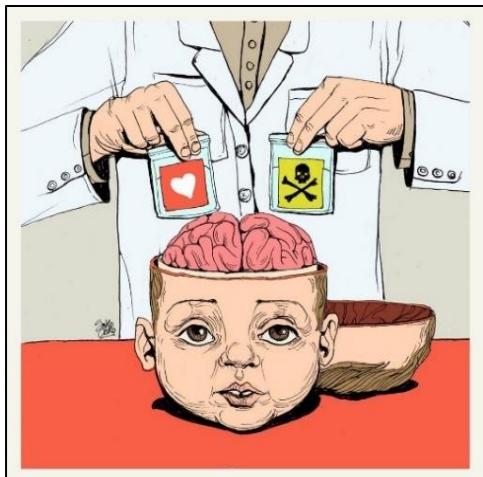
Fetal development involves a complex interplay of factors, including hundreds of potential "versions" of the future individual, shaped by specific epigenetic mechanisms at work during gestation. During this time, critical programming is encoded into the quantum field of the baby's developing limbic system. The process of birth itself also contributes significantly to this programming, with lifelong

behavioral impacts. Traumatic events during birth—such as cesarean sections, umbilical cord complications, or other obstetric issues—can imprint attitudes and responses toward life. Some of these birth-related traumas have been linked to an increased risk of psychiatric disorders later in life.

After birth, an extended phase of limbic imprinting unfolds, lasting several years. Some researchers suggest that this imprinting continues throughout childhood, particularly during the stages when the brain predominantly operates in the theta wave spectrum. Theta brain waves, typically associated with deep sleep

and certain phases of hypnotic trance, are characteristic of children's brain activity, often lasting until around the age of seven.

During this period, children are thought to function primarily in a theta state, which fosters a strong connection to their inner world and vivid imagination. Unlike adults who process information in the more rational beta wave range, children in the theta state are highly suggestible and absorb information more intuitively. After the age of five, while theta activity remains dominant, children begin to experience intermittent periods of alpha wave activity, representing a slight increase in brainwave frequency.



We all receive Limbic Imprinting during our early childhood. The scientist represents the adults around us which metaphorically insert loving or toxic programming represented by the two envelopes.

Beta oscillations do not typically become prominent in children until around the ages of 8 to 12. If we consider that limbic imprinting extends through the first seven years of life, the sheer volume of programming that occurs during this formative period is staggering.

During these years, children absorb attitudes toward others, including parents, siblings, and society at large. Their perceptions of giving and receiving love, forming friendships, experiencing loneliness, sexual curiosity, trust, faith in God, responsibility, honesty, concepts of good and evil, self-worth, and numerous other values are deeply embedded in their quantum field. This concept aligns with historical perspectives; for instance, the Catholic Church has long referred to the age of seven as the "age of reason," marking the point at which a child is deemed responsible for their actions and capable of moral discernment. This transition aligns with the emergence of alpha and beta brainwave activity in children, which supports conscious thought. Aristotle's famous saying, *"Give me a child until he is seven, and I will show you the man,"* likely reflects this same understanding.

In essence, limbic imprinting serves as a mechanism for generational transference of behavior. Through this process, children unconsciously inherit behavioral patterns, including toxic ones, from their parents. These behaviors can shape a child's relationships, societal interactions, and even physical health, perpetuating cycles of dysfunction. This phenomenon explains how generations of families can remain trapped in poverty or harmful societal patterns. It also highlights the intuitive wisdom behind parental concerns about their children marrying into "good families," which can be understood as seeking partners with healthy imprinted behaviors that support a stable union.

Toxic imprinted behaviors lead to a misalignment between the ego-self and the Self-Identity, often resulting in illness. This transference of dysfunction is not always genetic but is instead rooted in

environmental and behavioral influences. For years, medical science has struggled to disentangle genetic inheritance from these environmental factors when identifying patterns of illness within families. Physicians routinely ask new patients about family medical histories to detect correlations, such as tendencies toward depression, arthritis, hypertension, or other conditions. However, these patterns may not be purely hereditary; they often stem from the transfer of toxic behaviors and the environments that cultivate long-term health issues. Families with specific conditions are more likely to raise children who develop similar conditions—not because of genetic predisposition alone, but because the same detrimental behaviors and environments are perpetuated across generations.

Part Two

Healing & Removing Subconscious Entities



Chapter 12

The Nature of Spiritual Healing

This is an excerpt from the section “Achieving Personal Spiritual Healing” found in Chapter Ten of *Ayahuasca Wisdom: Achieving Personal Spiritual Healing with a Quantum Model of the Psyche*.

The psychological and emotional healing experienced by millions of ayahuasca participants originates in processes that unfold in the quantum field, where our Self-Identity dwells. In a cosmic dance of hierarchical high order, we are all connected, interacting in an infinite spectrum of influences that range from solid clashes to subtle currents that gently exert an effect.



Whether fast or slow, there is an indefinable quality of subtle energy that finds its way down to the individual soul level and then to the conscious ego-self. This results in fundamental changes in the mental and emotional pathways that eventually lead to observable results. A premise of this work is that the nature of psychological and emotional healing is fundamentally spiritual; hence, the title of this book. When the conscious intention of the ego-self reaches the higher frequencies of the quantum field, an impressive breakthrough pops into the field of awareness.

This may manifest as visions, pseudo auditory messages, intuitive insights, emotional releases, or in a variety of other ways. Translated in traditional religious terms, this would sound like: "When prayer is sincere, God listens." As shown later, we emphasize intelligent intention setting, surrendering to the process, and assuming a warrior attitude as we prepare to rush through the gates of the unknown as soon as our brain's control circuits get temporarily shut down. Metaphorically, a dam collapses within the control system and enables the temporary opening of these gates. It is during the peak of this entheogenic experience that the connection to Mother Ayahuasca, the spirit of the plants, elicits a temporary conscious communion between two realms.

The force at the core of spiritual healing is the power of consciousness. To achieve spiritual healing, it is imperative that we seek out, face with courage, and bring into the light of consciousness, the unconscious mechanisms of our entities. When

that which needs to be conscious is not, it cannot be healed at the soul-self level. In other words, there is not such a thing as unconscious healing. A psychiatrist, therapist, healer, or shaman cannot provide healing if you do not become acutely aware of what is being healed. The soul is not a mechanical device that a healer can manipulate and re-program externally. Only you can heal yourself. Intuition is one of the most powerful healing tools of the soul. The soul sends you the messages necessary to heal, but if we have the channel turned off, the message is never received, much less understood. The field of psychology does not recognize this intuition, except as a curiosity. Therefore, the ego-self does not recognize the messages received and fails to process them. We are limited to the messages received through the five senses. We need to learn to receive the messages of the soul-self which are transmitted through our intuition. As we do this, our ego-self can process them, and we can incrementally align with our soul-self.

We must be aware that the natural state of the ego-self is not to operate in a polarized manner against the soul-self. When the ego-self, for convenience or survival reasons, embraces the spiritual path, it becomes aligned with the soul-self. Together, the ego and soul-self can focus on self-realization, instead of squandering life juggling the ego's multiple masks. When the ego-self raises hell in our lives, it is because it has been unable to find a reference point, or connection, with its source. The conflicts in our lives are directly proportional to the distance between them. When the ego-self is in balance with the soul-self, we cannot see where the ego-self ends, and the soul-self begins. When that happens, you become a whole human being.

The conscious path to authentic self-realization requires recognition of our non-physical Self-Identity and the vast amount of knowledge available from within ourselves. We need to identify behaviors that operate in opposition to harmony and wholeness. We must recognize the disparity between our behaviors and the energy of the

soul-self. We must consider the broad-reaching elements of negativity, how many forms of negativity exist, and the effects of these upon the soul-self. The soul, while remaining aloft during our physical existence, carries the blueprint of wholeness and self-realization programs. It holds a holographic pattern of wholeness to be pursued and pulls us upward like a sprout bursting from a seed. When the wholeness pattern is not followed, dysfunction results due to the misalignment with its fundamental purpose.

Spiritual healing resolves situations that may otherwise hurt the soul-self. The soul-self cannot tolerate brutality, excessive pain, or irrationality. Poisonous energies to the soul-self include deception, lack of forgiveness, jealousy, and hatred. When the ego-self engages in these behaviors, it administers venom to the soul-self, in this way blocking its strength and power. Understanding this process is at the heart of spiritual healing. When we see those wounds in ourselves, or anyone else, it is the soul's impulse to rush into doing something about it. Despite the continuous interaction between the two, the ego-self is often unaware of this trauma. As soon as the ego-self becomes enlightened to this, the lightning guidance of the soul-self immediately manifests.

If you are not aware, the ego-self suffers the emotional density that comes with doubt and confusion. Moreover, if you are not aware of your soul-self or deny its existence, then the ego-self can only learn through the density of physical events; the harsh lessons that life brings to us, those that often triggers the question, "why me?". In those cases, the ego-self only gains awareness through a crisis.

We must understand that the ego-self, including its five senses, is not positive or negative; it is simply the tool of the soul-self, a crucial and important player in the overall scheme of reality. Authentic needs belong to the soul-self. We need to love and be loved. We must express creativity through the multiple possibilities that exist. We need to cultivate our soul-self like a delicate plant in the

greenhouse; our ego-self must awaken and work consciously to find its alignment with its soul-self. When they work as a team, our personal power is unlimited.

The fearful and violent emotions that have come to characterize human existence can only be experienced by the subpersonalities and entities projected into the ego-self. Only these components can feel anger, fear, hatred, vengeance, sorrow, shame, regret, indifference, frustration, cynicism, and loneliness. It is only these entities and subpersonalities which can manipulate or exploit. Moreover, these are the only constituents that can pursue external power. These subpersonalities and entities can also be loving, compassionate, and wise in their relations with others as part of a sophisticated survival strategy. However, true love, compassion, and wisdom sprout exclusively from the soul-self. The soul-self is the eternal part of you. The soul-self is not a passive or theoretical entity that occupies a space somewhere in our chest cavity. It is the part of us that understands the impersonal nature of the energy dynamics in which we are involved, that loves without restriction and accepts without judgment.

Before we examine more important concepts relevant to the spiritual healing process with ayahuasca, allow your ego-self to reflect and meditate about your spiritual awakening.



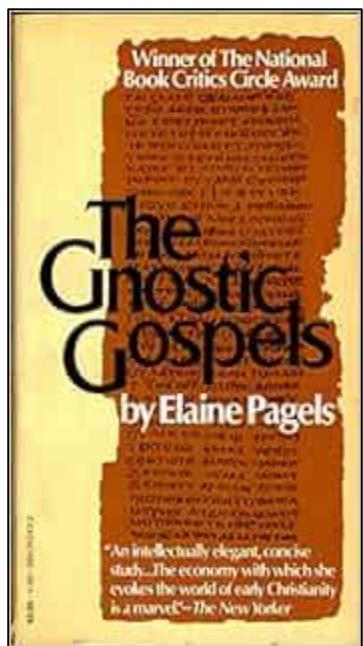
Chapter 13

A Single Quote, Infinite Wisdom: Unpacking Jesus' Key to Spiritual Healing

By Jules Henry Rivers

When I graduated from college in 1980 and landed a prestigious executive trainee position at Citibank, I thought I had made it. My student ambitions were fulfilled—I excelled academically, secured a quality job, and was ready to join the rat race society had programmed for me. Yet, unbeknownst to me at the time, a small but persistent spark within my soul was about to ignite a very different kind of journey—one that would lead me away from boardrooms and spreadsheets and into the depths of spirituality.

That spark first flickered years earlier, just before my high school graduation, when I smoked my first marijuana joint. Cannabis opened a door to new perspectives, and during my college years, I ventured further, exploring psychedelics of all kinds. These substances expanded my mind and planted seeds of curiosity about the unseen layers of existence. But life's next chapter—building my professional career—seemed to leave little room for such explorations.



With the pressures of academic deadlines and exams behind me, however, I suddenly found myself free to pursue knowledge on my own terms. One serendipitous day, I picked up a loose sheet of paper at Thekes, a bookstore in San Juan. It was an invitation to join an esoteric Gnostic group offering weekly lectures on topics ranging from meditation to astrology to acupuncture. Intrigued, I attended several sessions and was particularly captivated by a lecture on the *Nag Hammadi Library*, a collection of ancient gnostic texts discovered in Egypt in 1945.

This revelation blew my mind. The vast body of Christian apocryphal writings excluded from the Bible revealed a version of early Christianity that felt richer and more mysterious than I had ever imagined. Elaine Pagels' *The Gnostic Gospels* (1979) became my guide, offering profound insights into these ancient texts. Named one of the 100 best books of the twentieth century, Pagels' work illuminated the rifts within early Christianity and brought gnostic teachings to life.

One passage, in particular, stood out to me—a verse from the *Gospel of Thomas*:

"If you bring out what is within you, what you bring out will save you. If you do not bring out what is within you, what you do not bring out will destroy you."

This verse struck me with its raw truth and deep resonance. It echoed the essence of what the gnostic group taught: the need to remove what they called “psychological aggregates”—a concept remarkably similar to Carl Jung’s idea of the shadow—as a path to enlightenment. I adopted this quote as my personal mantra, and it has shaped my journey for decades.

When reflecting on its meaning, I’ve come across countless interpretations—some inspiring, others bordering on illogical or fanatical. To me, there is no debate. The message is blatantly clear, and most interpretations made by scholars in some way avoid addressing its uncomfortable truth. Jesus is literally saying “you must bring out whatever you are carrying inside of you, or you’ll pay the consequences”. The message is about “bringing out” whatever it is.

Well, we can “bring out” our talents, our gifts, our love. This will lead us to salvation. Although it makes a good initial impression, we cannot deny that if the second part of the verse also refers to these good parts, it would translate as “if you don’t bring out these talents, you’ll doomed.” In that case the message feels imbued with a veiled threat reminiscent of traditional religious dogma: “If you do not follow the rules, you will burn in hell.” It feels at odds with the loving essence of Jesus’ teachings.

However, if what we need to “bring out” refers to the darker parts of ourselves—our wounds, shadows, and unhealed traumas, then the message becomes very inspiring. Jesus isn’t threatening; he’s guiding. If we confront and release our inner pain—if we “vomit the

poison,” as I like to put it—we can save ourselves. But if we bury it, leaving it to fester, it will destroy us. This is tough love. Jesus is offering a profound spiritual truth: the path to wholeness lies in taking responsibility for our healing. By facing our inner demons, we can achieve the wellbeing we deserve.

Decades later, this quote remains a cornerstone of my spiritual philosophy. It encapsulates the essence of the work I now do, helping others achieve spiritual healing through astral parasite extractions. Inspired by verse 70 of the *Gospel of Thomas*, I’ve crafted my own modern interpretation, tailored to the language of psychedelic-assisted therapy:

“Enlightenment comes to the extent that you, like a surgeon with the scalpel of self-observation, patiently dissect your entities from your identity.” – Jules Henry Rivers (2024)

The challenge of spiritual healing lies in the relentless pursuit of expanding our consciousness to cultivate the self-awareness necessary to discern which aspects of ourselves align with our true essence and which do not. Most people navigate life without questioning the nature of their psychological demons, often resigning themselves to accept even their darkest traits as integral to their identity. However, self-observation serves as the most potent tool against these psychological demons. Without this practice, these negative quantum entities remain hidden yet destructive forces, wreaking havoc in our lives as unseen saboteurs of our well-being.

This journey—from corporate ambition to spiritual awakening—has taught me that the real race is not to the top of the ladder, but inward, to the depths of the self. There lies the wisdom, healing, and enlightenment we all seek.



Chapter 14

Understanding Spiritual Awakening

This is an excerpt from the section “Achieving Personal Spiritual Healing” found in Chapter Ten of *Ayahuasca Wisdom: Achieving Personal Spiritual Healing with a Quantum Model of the Psyche*.

Spiritual awakening is a profound shift in awareness and perception, often characterized by a deep realization of one's true nature and connection to the universe. It transcends the limitations of ego and personal identity, unveiling a sense of unity, purpose, and inner peace. This awakening can arise through moments of insight, transformative experiences, or gradual self-discovery, often accompanied by feelings of clarity, love, and liberation from fear or attachment. While deeply personal, it commonly leads to a desire for authenticity, compassion, and alignment with higher values in life.

The concept of spiritual awakening is often misunderstood by seekers, exaggerated into an ideal of perpetual transcendental bliss or nirvana, where one becomes immune to life's challenges—like an enlightened being walking on water. However, it's crucial to see spiritual awakening for what it truly is, grounding our expectations in the reality of life rather than clinging to a fairy-tale vision of enlightenment.

Along those lines, this famous quote captures the essence of it:

“Before enlightenment; chop wood, carry water. After enlightenment, chop wood, carry water.”

— Zen Kōan

On the surface, the *visible, external* actions of chopping wood and carrying water are the same before and after enlightenment. So, what's changed? Although it appears nothing has changed on the *outside (doing)*, everything has changed on the *inside (being)*.

The deeper *invisible and internal*—your presence, awareness, perception, mindset. Your body may be busy, but your mind is still. In simple terms we can say that before I developed the true nature of Wisdom I could chop wood and carry water, but my mind was everywhere—it was heavily polluted with mental obstructions and worldly thoughts—it was not present. After I found the Essence of my Mind and found true Wisdom then I experienced Enlightenment. To the external eye nothing is different—I still appear to chop wood and carry water but in fact within the internal eye everything is different. Everything has changed. It teaches us to be aware of the transience of visual forms. Nothing is what it appears to be, and Nothing is what it appears to be.



Awakening occurs when we remove specific filters through which we used to watch and cognize the world.

In more practical terms, reflecting and meditating on the following definitions of spiritual awakening can deepen your understanding. You may come to recognize misconceptions you held about their true meaning—or even discover that you are more spiritually awakened than you previously realized.

Awakening is not an act of magic, although it may fill your life with magic.

- Awakening has nothing to do with your outer world, although everything around you will seem to have a new brightness.
- Awakening will not change your life, although you will feel that everything has changed.
- Awakening will not erase your past, but by reflecting, you will perceive it as the story of someone dearly loved who has learned many things. You will feel that this someone is not you anymore.
- Awakening will not wake up your loved ones, but they will look more divine in your eyes.
- Awakening will not heal all of your wounds, but they will no longer govern you.
- Awakening will not solve your financial situation, but within yourself, you will feel like a millionaire.

- Awakening will not make you more popular, but you will no longer feel alone.
- Awakening will not beautify you in the eyes of others, but it will make you perfect before your own eyes.
- Awakening will not give you more power, but you will discover the power that you have.
- Awakening may not erase the bars of your prisons, but it will give you the freedom to be yourself.
- Awakening will not change the world; it will change you.
- Awakening will not take responsibility for you, but it will give you awareness of the consequences of your actions and choices.
- Awakening will not ensure you are always correct, but you will no longer feel the need to be.
- Awakening will not make love flow into your life, but you will discover that this flow already dwells in you.
- Awakening has little to do with what you imagine and has everything to do with love.

To awaken is to love yourself, your limits, and your experiences. It is to love others as part of your being and to love existence itself. Love this beautiful life, so wonderful and varied in all its nuances. Your life is sacred because God is the miracle of life that lives in you.

For your awakening, seek and grasp all of the help available; read all the books you find, attend all the meetings you are invited to, meditate, breathe, and wait. Everything will be useful. However, it is only you who will conduct the alchemy, because nothing but your intention to make it happen can precipitate it.

Even if you do nothing at all, be still, just as though it has happened. If at some point you feel awakened and you see that others around you are still sleeping, then walk on tiptoes, respect their dreams and allow them the perfection of discovery in their own time, just as yours was. When they open their eyes, the brightness of your spark will help them awaken without needing to do anything. If you are still sleeping, relax, and enjoy your dream, you are being lulled and receiving loving attention. Ayahuasca is here to help.



Chapter 15

The Bright Future of Psychedelic Therapies

This is an excerpt from the section “Brain & Behavior Programming” found in Chapter Eight of *Ayahuasca Wisdom: Achieving Personal Spiritual Healing with a Quantum Model of the Psyche*.

The primary purpose of the quantum model of the psyche is to promote spiritual healing by identifying the misalignments within our self-identity envelope to design strategies that allow the self-reprogramming necessary to achieve alignment. Every misalignment which causes spiritual or emotional issues has the potential to be resolved with our conscious action. This is where psychedelic substances can play a fundamental role in making spiritual healing techniques incredibly powerful. Visualization techniques have been around for decades. Although these techniques can work with

relative success across diverse applications, we must admit that deeply imprinted programming is a different story. Everyone has experienced the frustration of failing to achieve the desired results in nutritional habits. This is a perfect example where willful intention, frequent visualizations, or affirmations have proven ineffective. The truth is subconscious programming is beyond the reach and resists the ego-self's commands. Ayahuasca advisors must understand the nature of subconscious resistance and the dynamics of our subconscious programming if they want to understand the mechanics of spiritual healing techniques.

The entire animal kingdom comes with fixed pre-programmed instincts that allow the effective performance in their designated ecological niches. However, once removed from them, survival is compromised. On the other hand, humans enjoy their position at the top of the food chain due to their amazing adaptability, which comes from their inherent capacity to program behavior tailor-made to their specific environmental demands. But here comes the caveat.

The human soul not only has the survival programs, but it also comes with the self-realization programs. Once the demands for survival are satisfied, the self-realization programs start to make demands. The existential imperative of humans consists not only of surviving, but also exploring and realizing their full potential. Incidentally, such full potential goes well beyond achieving happiness and psychological well-being. It extends into higher possibilities of the soul and spirit. Humans are extraordinary spiritual beings living human experiences inside marvelous physical vehicles.

The caveat is that the same way such adaptable mechanics work in favor of the survival, they work against the self-realization goals of the individual if suboptimal or abnormal settings are recorded in the default settings of the behavioral filters mentioned earlier. Once the developing child unconsciously set one of these empty default

boxes, such corresponding "style" (not the actual behavior itself) becomes hard-wired. It will become a relatively permanent part of the core persona of the individual. Similar to imprinted behavior in childhood, when subpersonalities and entities create their neural pathways in our brains, it becomes a real challenge to modify them, and self-realization turns into an impossible dream unless such pathways are properly reprogrammed with spiritual healing.

If we carefully look at human personalities, we can observe that our main defining features remain somewhat persistent throughout our lifespan, despite the many devastating or life-changing events the person may have encountered. Experience shows that personality does not change extensively over long periods but adapts moderately and transiently in response to shifting environmental and existential circumstances. In fact, this has been empirically tested and supported by long-term studies of the stability of human personality traits across the life course. Personality is somewhat malleable in response to life experiences, but there are significant components of personality that remain constant from childhood to old age. This indicates the deep-rooted and stable nature of the original core settings.

Individuals seeking spiritual healing should realize that therapies that are structured around techniques that aim to operate in automatic mode, without the patient's conscious participation, will not yield durable results. Patients need a simple model to assist their understanding and visualization of the spiritual healing process with which they want to engage. To achieve that, it is necessary to hypothesize beyond the vague concept of "genetically driven" behavior.



The quantum model aims to establish a credible hypothetical framework that would allow understanding and modification of such quantum processes employing psychedelic assisted therapies. Such framework is essential for psychedelic therapies to work effectively. We have learned that ayahuasca-based therapies

have the capacity to modify those default settings. This can produce astounding outcomes for the spiritual and emotional healing of practitioners. The future success of psychedelic-assisted therapies lies in the capacity of therapists to achieve effective reprogramming of the subconscious-self in cooperation with the patient's ego-self.

Visualizing how behavior is engineered to act in a predefined manner constitutes a significant advancement in understanding human behavior and creates practical healing applications.

The engine of spiritual healing doesn't lie in the psychedelic substance itself but, instead, within the conscious power of the patient. The entheogen only acts as a gate opener to resistant brain circuits (recall the de-fault mode network discussed earlier), which keeps the ego-self focused on the immediate physical reality for survival purposes. Psychedelic-assisted therapies represent an enormous opportunity for the human species to break free from the arguably tyrannical survival program and may enable us to embrace the self-realization module of the master program. A reasonably credible model of the psyche could provide a tool to creatively modify survival-based programming by harnessing the power of conscious intent.

This implies the active participation of the patient in understanding their dysfunctional condition and their decisive willingness to instill their best mental efforts into the healing process. Patients often show-up with attitudes such as “here I am, apply to me your psychedelic-assisted therapy, and heal me.” These won’t receive the same results, if any at all, compared to fully engaged and committed patients. Patients who are aware of their mental power and spiritual capacities will obtain optimal results. Recall our detailed discussion of placebo effects, which confirm the power of belief in physical healing. Naturally, it follows that the possibilities for non-physical reprogramming at the quantum structure level are endless.

We have described the two gigantic stumbling blocks which have kept the human race stuck in a cycle of mediocrity. Whether we like it or not, we are designed to preserve the status quo. For millennia it has been terrible, suggesting a very traumatic origin of the human race. However, such a curse can eventually become a blessing. Turning the tide is an enormous project, but it all starts with the first step. The good news is that for the first time in history, we are finding the technology that can re-wire the subconscious-self, providing a promise to a brighter future. The emerging field of psychedelic-assisted therapies has the challenge of creating new methodologies to overcome the inherent limitations of human design. For the first time, we can change our factory settings. If we can change the individual, we can change the world. We have the opportunity to start a new paradigm of human behavior in front of us. This can define a turning point in our modern civilization.



Chapter 16

Ancient Tibetan Techniques for Astral Parasite Extractions

By Jules Henry Rivers

As recounted in the Preface, I expanded my paradigm of reality—developed over 25 years of ayahuasca work guided by Carl Jung's map of the subconscious—when I delved into a new protocol for spiritual healing using heroic doses of psilocybin mushrooms. Experiencing their profound, life-changing effects firsthand, I uncovered layers of unconscious depth that I had never accessed through Jungian shadow work with ayahuasca. This revelation was startling, especially for someone with a near-religious devotion to ayahuasca's plant spirit. In one of my personal sessions, I metaphorically expressed my frustration with the spirit of ayahuasca

for not guiding me, after 25 years, to the profound healing spaces psilocybin mushrooms revealed.

One pivotal moment involved a prenatal trauma I thought had been fully resolved through ayahuasca work. Yet, in a single psilocybin session focused on astral entity extraction, I was confronted with a much deeper root of the trauma. I clearly perceived the parasitic entity I had inherited from my mother during pregnancy, its emotional conflict, and the monumental extraction that followed.

As I reflected on this profound experience, I found myself questioning why, despite my extensive work with ayahuasca, it had never facilitated the deep healing that the mushrooms achieved in a single session. My curiosity grew, and in a subsequent ayahuasca journey, I set a clear and unwavering intention to seek answers; I was eager to understand why. In response, the spirit of ayahuasca, with her characteristic patience and compassion, delivered a thunderbolt-like gestalt of wisdom explaining why she could not guide me to the same depths. The insight revealed that my scientific disbelief in the existence of demons had been the primary obstacle, preventing me from accessing this level of healing. Fully unpacking this revelation would require another essay, but this shift fundamentally altered my understanding of spiritual healing.

In the past, I had explored psilocybin mushrooms across various dose levels, from microdosing to heroic doses. While the heroic doses occasionally provided fascinating insights into different aspects of reality and myself, I always felt these experiences fell short compared to the profound emotional and spiritual healing I achieved through ayahuasca sessions. As a result, I remained devoted to mother ayahuasca and never considered any other choice—until now.

After discovering this new protocol combining heroic doses with ancient parasite extraction techniques, I eagerly shared the breakthrough with fellow ayahuasca facilitators.

One immediately embraced the method and, in turn, introduced an ordained Buddhist monk from the Vajrayana lineage who was trained in demonic extraction techniques. The synchronicity of our meeting felt almost unbelievable, as if the Universe had orchestrated it perfectly. The moment we looked into each other's eyes, it was clear that our encounter was destined to birth a new mission in spiritual healing.

After reflecting on our individual life paths, we saw an opportunity to create a space to share our excitement and knowledge with others interested in this revolutionary approach. In 2023, the three of us founded SHAPE Retreats—a fact-based, non-religious framework for spiritual healing. Beyond its literal meaning, the name also serves as an acronym for the core healing method it embodies: Spiritual Healing [by] Astral Parasite Extractions.

About Psilocybin Mushroom Heroic Doses

Terrence McKenna, a pioneering figure in psychedelic exploration, introduced the term "heroic dose" without grounding it in a thorough examination of spiritual practices. But what were historically used by sages, gurus, mystics, and spiritual warriors? Who truly defines what is heroic? Considering that it takes over 20 pounds of mushrooms to



reach a lethal overdose, we can reasonably speculate that ancient mystics may have embarked on journeys far beyond what McKenna envisioned. The dosages taken by prophets such as Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, and others remain unknown, but the psychedelic origins of many religions are now coming to light. Even the origins of the Mormon faith in the 1830s have been linked to psychedelics, highlighting a connection that spans millennia, where religious narratives have often been shaped to fit evolving cultural contexts.

A heroic dose, then, is the dose a hero would take. But where is your hero? The challenge lies in confronting the fear of the unknown. A hero faces fear and overcomes it with courage. Consuming over 10 grams of potent mushrooms for four consecutive days is a truly heroic dose—unprecedented in scientific literature, yet empirically transformative both psychologically and spiritually. At these profound levels, subconscious programs that are misaligned with your life purpose can manifest as terrifying, monstrous shapes. Indeed, at such depths, these symbols emerge as they are—dark and ominous. The subconscious communicates through images, and anything dark and ugly within it serves to sabotage your ascension toward well-being, your individuation process, and your resurrection from the grave of mediocrity.

Parasite Extraction Protocol Summary

This method consist of a revolutionary new protocol that applies three distinct procedures.

1. Administration of heroic doses of psilocybin mushrooms of varied strains.
2. Ritual and spiritual use of certain ancient Tibetan ceremonial instruments.
3. Physical application of certain ancient techniques for extraction of astral entities.



Before arriving at the retreat, participants receive comprehensive information, and all questions are thoroughly addressed to ensure they cultivate a mindset conducive to achieving effective results throughout the journey.

The protocol is conducted over four consecutive daily sessions under carefully designed, pristine set-and-setting conditions.

Dosages are tailored to each participant, considering multiple personal factors, and begin with no less than five grams on the first day. Dosage levels may vary across the four-day retreat.

The mushrooms are meticulously selected based on strain, potency, and cultivation conditions. They are freshly pulverized on-site and prepared by blending with water or juice for consumption.

Each session is accompanied by carefully curated music, with pace and volume adjusted dynamically to match the flow of the experience.

To maintain an intimate and supportive environment, each session accommodates a maximum of seven participants.

Three facilitators, along with a dedicated support staff, provide individualized care, applying the techniques to support each participant's healing process as needed.



Chapter 17

Ritual and Spiritual Use of Tibetan Ceremonial Instruments

By Sandino Grullon

Over twenty years ago, I embarked on an extraordinary journey through the tantric Buddhist monasteries of Tibet and China, delving into esoteric teachings rarely revealed to outsiders. Among these were the secretive techniques of demonic extraction—rituals designed to address and dispel afflictive energies that manifest as inner turmoil or external disruptions. These practices, rooted in the Vajrayana tradition, combine profound spiritual wisdom with intricate ceremonial procedures, guided by tools imbued with symbolic and transformative power. In the following paragraphs, I will introduce the primary ceremonial instruments employed in

these rituals, shedding light on their significance and the profound intention behind their use.

In our practice, the extraction ritual often begins with the individual consuming a substantial dose of psilocybin mushrooms. This sacred medicine serves as a bridge, inducing a profound altered state of consciousness necessary to navigate the deepest layers of the subconscious mind. Psilocybin's unique ability to dissolve ordinary mental boundaries allows the individual to confront suppressed memories, emotional blockages, and the psychic imprints that Vajrayana teachings describe as astral parasites. This heightened state creates the optimal internal environment for the ritual's transformative work, enabling both the practitioner and the participant to access realms of the psyche typically hidden from view.

Once participants enter a profound psychedelic state, the facilitators attentively observe for any reactions, such as body movements, twitching, facial expressions, or vocalizations. These subtle cues provide experienced facilitators with valuable insights into how each participant's journey may unfold.

When a facilitator identifies that a participant requires focused attention, they gently initiate compassionate verbal contact to help the participant reflect on and assess their experience.

Ceremonial instruments are used ritually, often in collaboration with the participant's conscious engagement, to identify the location of the parasite within the body. Although the psyche and parasites have a quantum nature, there is often a physical correspondence that points to a specific body area or internal organ. This correspondence is a crucial element in locating the parasite and facilitating its extraction.

The following ritual instruments are used:

The Phurba

The Phurba is one of the most iconic and evocative symbols in Vajrayana Buddhism, revered as sacred and integral to the advanced mysteries of its practices. Known esoterically as the “Diamantine Dagger of Emptiness,” this three-sided Tibetan ceremonial dagger or stake is not designed to harm living beings, as its blade is intentionally unsharpened.

Typically, the Phurba consists of three distinct segments, including a triangular blade or point. These elements, along with the triple-edged blade, symbolize the three spirit worlds, while the entire Phurba represents the “world axis” connecting these realms. It stands as a powerful symbol of transformation, used to subdue and transmute negative energies and harmful spirits into positive forces.



In tantric rituals, the Phurba serves diverse purposes, including healing, exorcism, dispelling demons, meditation, consecration (puja), and even weather manipulation. Its blade signifies the destruction of demonic powers, while its top end is used for bestowing blessings. Far from being a physical weapon, the Phurba is a profound spiritual tool, symbolizing the transcendence of world obstacles.

Traditionally, the Phurba was employed to “hunt down” demons and “nail” spiritual distractions such as greed, desire, and envy. Its three edges are said to counteract the three poisons of attachment, aversion, and delusion. Negative forces are symbolically bound to

the Phurba and vanquished with its tip, representing the transformation of destructive energies into forces for good.

Although the Phurba is associated with the scorpion, it is powerful, and wrathful, but it is not hungry for blood, as depicted in the Alec Baldwin Movie The Shadow, nor is it a key to Shangri-La, as depicted in the bestselling game Uncharted. Misrepresented in movies, the Phurba is among the most wrathful of the wrathful ritual implements in Vajrayana Buddhism. Today, there's a burgeoning commerce in the exotic tool perhaps because of its sheer exoticism. Nevertheless, there's also a traditional renaissance in proper Phurba practice, and also in the art of Phurba making in the traditional way.

The reality is far from the movie delusions. The symbolism of a Phurba is very profound — more complex and intricate than most other ritual implements. It is often found in Shamanic practice. Regardless of its beginnings, its practice is preserved in lineages going back many hundreds of years. In Tibet, the Phurba is very sacred and its practice is considered a “higher yoga.”

The Bell

The bell, together with its essential counterpart, the vajra, is a significant ritual implement in Vajrayana practices. The bell symbolizes the feminine principle, representing the wisdom of emptiness, while the vajra embodies the masculine principle of compassion and skillful means. Their union signifies the enlightened mind, where wisdom and skillful means are inseparably unified.



Paired with the vajra (also known as dorje or lightning-bolt), the bell represents wisdom, and as wisdom and method are indivisible, the bell and vajra are always used together. The hollow of the bell symbolizes wisdom perceiving emptiness, the clapper signifies the sound of emptiness, and the bell's vase symbolizes the vessel containing the nectar of spiritual accomplishment.

When paired, the vajra and bell convey a symbolic gendered balance: the vajra represents the masculine element of compassion and skillful action, while the bell embodies the feminine element of wisdom. True compassion requires wisdom for its proper and liberative expression, making their unity essential in Vajrayana practice.

The Vajra

In Buddhism, the vajra is the symbol of Vajrayana, one of the three main branches of Buddhism. Vajrayana translates to "Thunderbolt Way" or "Diamond Way," signifying both the sudden, transformative experience of Buddhist enlightenment (Bodhi) and the indestructible nature of ultimate truth, akin to the hardness of a diamond.



In Tantric Buddhism (Vajrayana), the vajra and the bell (ghanta) are key ritual implements used by Lamas and Vajrayana practitioners during sadhanas and ceremonies. The vajra, a male symbol, represents *Upaya* (skillful means), while the bell, a female symbol, denotes *Prajna* (wisdom). Together, they signify the union of

compassion and wisdom. Many deities are depicted holding these tools, such as Vajrasattva, who holds the vajra in his right hand and the bell in his left, embodying this sacred balance.

In the tantric traditions, the vajra symbolizes the nature of reality, or *Shunyata* (emptiness), reflecting boundless creativity, potency, and skillful activity. The extensive use of the term "vajra" in tantric literature underscores its transcendental significance. The practice of prefixing terms, names, and places with "vajra" serves to sacralize phenomena, encouraging practitioners to channel their psychophysical energies into spiritual life.

Other Tibetan Extraction Techniques

Beyond the ceremonial use of ancestral instruments like the vajra and bell, additional Himalayan techniques play a vital role in the extraction of astral parasites and demonic entities. These advanced methods, while beyond the scope of this essay, are expertly incorporated into psilocybin-assisted retreats. Participants are provided with detailed preparatory information about these practices, ensuring they are well-informed and ready for the rituals involved.

The Phurba in Tibetan Iconography

Although the wrathful end is often called a blade, it is not sharp-edged like a knife. The three edges have very special symbolic significance and powers. The three edges represent the three poisons: Moha (delusions and confusion), Raga (greed and attachment) and Dvesha (aversion or ill-will, and the three qualities that remedies them: Amoha (wisdom), Dana (generosity), and Metta (loving kindness) which bring the purification of the body, speech and mind.

Its primary wrathful function (versus its peaceful functions) is to “cut the delusions and impurities of Body, Speech and Mind.” It also is described in terms of its “pinning” action. For example, in an exorcism, the inner demon is pinned under the point, whereby it is released from suffering and its delusions are removed.



Illustration of ancient Tibetan art portraying the ritual extraction of a demon, performed with the ceremonial dagger known as the *phurba*, positioned near the patient's lower back.

In the illustration, we see the patient lying face down within a triangle, symbolizing the three protective and transformative powers of the phurba. The phurba is applied to the lower back, anchoring the energy of the parasite being extracted. The negative energy is drawn upward toward deities surrounded by a red-colored frequency. Notably, one deity is depicted in the astral plane, using a smaller phurba to pin down the astral parasite above its head, completing the extraction process on a higher energetic level.

Part Three

An Overview of Demons in World Religions



Chapter 18

Demons: An Overview by Theologians and Scholars

This chapter serves as a thoughtful initiation into the topic of demons, presenting a classical, objective perspective developed by academics for inclusion in a modern encyclopedia. It lays a solid foundation for shaping the broader narrative of this book, and several key observations stand out:

1. **Universal Belief Across Cultures:** The belief in demons has been a universal phenomenon, deeply rooted in the cultural and spiritual frameworks of societies across all ages. It has played a central role in the belief systems of major religions, highlighting its profound influence on human thought and spirituality throughout history.

2. **Complexity and Confusion:** Despite the widespread belief in demons, their elusive and intangible nature has led societies to create highly intricate, yet often inconsistent, narratives. These narratives include varying qualities, names, and symbolic representations, reflecting an ongoing struggle to define and understand demons. The chaotic and contradictory beliefs that have emerged through history reveal a significant lack of reliable knowledge about these entities, underscoring the inherent complexity of the subject.
3. **Resilience of the Concept:** The enduring nature of these beliefs, despite their contradictions, suggests a deeper truth worth examining. This resilience hints at the plausible existence of a negative energy or force that influences human behavior in ways detrimental to wellbeing. The persistence of the concept across cultures and eras implies a shared recognition of such influences, even if the understanding remains fragmented.
4. **The Role of Psychology:** As explored in earlier chapters, modern psychology has provided valuable tools for understanding the elusive nature of the spirit world. By reframing demons as manifestations of subconscious trauma or negative energies, psychology bridges the gap between ancient beliefs and contemporary frameworks, offering more accessible and actionable insights.

This chapter revives in us our connection with the traditional religions, one or more of which the reader most likely has experienced first-hand, where demons were mentioned blended in historical context with evolving modern interpretations. It encourages readers to reflect on the enduring significance of these beliefs across the history of religions.

Except in some monotheistic religions, all demons are not assumed to be evil. Many kinds of spiritual beings who are not obviously gods may be described as demons. Demons are far more powerful than humans, though their powers are limited, and they are longer-lived, though not necessarily immortal. Demons often seem to be the anthropomorphic conceptualization of discrete, invisible natural forces that are perceptible mainly through their effects, such as wind or specific diseases. In prescientific cosmologies, air, wind, and the "breath" (*spiritus*) of life are usually conceived as invisible or even

immaterial. As spirits, demons are normally invisible, becoming perceptible either through their effects on humans, or through language or signs. When becoming visible, demons may exhibit their own inherent shapes or assume familiar or monstrous forms.

Demonic spirits may protect or inhabit places, bodies of water, or vegetation. Demons may also inhabit or be guardians of an underworld and may torment human souls there. At times ghosts have demonic characteristics. They may be the ancestors of the culture that describes them, or recently deceased family members who, it is feared, could return to claim surviving relatives or neighbors.

In some religions (particularly Judaism, Christianity and Islam), demons may be identified with or compared to angels or devils. However, in English and other modern languages, the three terms, all derived from ancient Greek, have differing implications. *Daimon*, and its derivatives *daimonios*, *daimonion* (*daemon*, *daemonium* in Latin), denote a suprahuman spiritual being that interacts directly with humans. The *daimon* 's character may be good, evil, or changeable, but late Judaism and Christianity eventually define demons as profoundly, irredeemably evil.

Angel (*Aggelos* or *angelos*; Latin *angelus*) denotes a messenger and was originally applicable to human as well as suprahuman envoys. In Judaism and Christianity, the *angel* is a spirit messenger sent to humans by the god, but the term could include other functions, such as rewarding or punishing humans.

The noun *devil* (*diabolos*; Latin *diabolus*) derives from a verb meaning "to throw across" and by extension to attack, accuse, or slander. The devil is the sworn enemy of the god, and attempts to harm, subvert, or seduce the god's worshippers. The devil is inferior in power and wisdom to the god; in the three principal monotheistic religions, he is a renegade creature of the god. Devil and demon can

thus be synonymous common nouns, particularly in Christianity, which defines *the Devil* as leading an army of subordinate demons. (In fully dualistic religions deriving from the ancient Iranian prophet Zarathushtra [c. 600 BCE], the evil opponent of the god is not his inferior but his inverted twin, fully as divine and powerful.)

Aside from ruling certain phenomena for all or many members of a society, demons may dedicate continuous attention to a single individual. A spiritual guardian protects the interests of his devotee. Conversely, a demon can afflict or even "possess" humans, entering their bodies and creating disease or an alien, transgressive personality.

Demons' invisibility implies that they either have bodies of finer matter than that composing the visible world, or else lack bodies altogether. Yet demons are in many cultures thought to behave like ordinary embodied humans: they may have sexual relations among themselves or with humans and procreate demonic or semi-demonic children who are superhumanly powerful, charismatic, or evil.

Tribal Cultures

The belief in invisible beings who control or strongly affect the conditions of human life is universal. It appears to be an essential trait of humanity to think of its own interactions with the physical world in anthropomorphic terms, considering forces and even objects as if they had personalities and desires. From the point of view of cultures possessing writing, demonic modes of thinking resemble the literary and ethical device of allegory, wherein psychological and physical phenomena are described as well-defined "people." According to the critic Angus Fletcher, demons "share [a] major characteristic of allegorical agents, the fact that they compartmentalize function," explaining limited aspects of the world: "Constriction of meaning, when it is the limit put upon a

personified force or power, causes that personification to act somewhat mechanistically" (Fletcher, 1964, 40, 55). This relative predictability expresses a desire to tame or domesticate the world: "Coming from the term that means 'to divide,'; *daemon* implies an endless series of divisions of all important aspects of the world into separate elements for study and control" (Fletcher, 1964, 59). The need to understand the conditions of life leads to a belief that good—and especially, bad—fortunes are due to the agency of spirits. Demons give shape to inchoate fears of sudden vulnerability, dependence or victimization, triggered by solitary wastelands, darkness, or sexual anxieties. Attempts to control or placate these invisible forces take the form of exorcism, trickery (e.g., substituting effigies for potential human victims), or worship.

Hinduism

In Hinduism the question of gods and demons reflects a complex, multimillennial history of religious and cultural beliefs. In the Vedas and epics, suprahuman beings are mentioned whose exact nature, and their differences from everyday humans, are often unclear. *Rakshasa* s, *pisaca* s, and *vetala* s are demon-like beings that haunt graveyards, threaten the living, and feed on human flesh; some are ghosts, others are suprahuman. *Pitr* s are ancestral spirits. In Hinduism reincarnation eliminates the absolute ontological barrier between humans and suprahumans that modern western cultures take for granted. The term *deva* refers to godlike beings, but even they are subject to reincarnation; moreover, humans may be reincarnated as *deva* s. *Deva* s are in conflict with *asura* s or "not-gods" (cf. Greek Titans). Yet *asura* s are neither radically evil nor the dedicated opponents of a single supreme deity, unlike demons of Judaism and, especially, Christianity. Nor is the enmity of the *deva* s and *asura* s a historic constant; it appears that *asura* corresponds to "god" in some Vedic texts. When its meaning evolved to approximate "demon," the word *sura* was coined as its antonym. Though

occasionally opposed to divinities and humans, Hindu "demons" are not inimical to them inherently or by definition.

In Iranian religion, which apparently descended from the same "parent" religion as Hinduism, a similar conflict existed between beings called *daeva*s and *ahura*s. "In Iran, the *ahuras* defeated the *daevas*, the leader of the *ahuras* became the high God, [Ahura Mazda](#), the god of light, and the Iranian *daevas*, consigned to the ranks of evil spirits, became minions of Ahriman, the lord of darkness. In India, the *devas* defeated the *asuras*" (Russell, 1977, p. 58). In both cases, "One group of deities was vanquished by another and relegated to the status of generally evil spirits" (Russell, 1977, p. 58). In Iranian religions, however (Zoroastrianism, Zervanism, Mazdaism), the "demonization" of the defeated gods created a dualistic system, a dichotomy between the forces of good and evil more absolute than in Christianity, Islam, or Judaism (Russell, 1977, 104ff.).

Buddhism

Many of the suprahuman beings important to Buddhist ontology were inherited from Hinduism. The *asura* is a jealous or hostile god/demon, while the *preta* is a ghost condemned to constant hunger; they are two of the unhappy destinies to which persons who have lived badly can be reborn in the world of sense experience. The *asura*s have been ejected from a divine realm of contentment ruled by its King, Indra. Māra, whose name means "death," promotes illusory thinking and vice, and behaves as a sort of Devil-figure in Buddhism. He tempted the Buddha with doubt as the latter was approaching enlightenment, even sending his own daughters and other minions to frighten and seduce him. Evil, however, is not personified by Māra as it is by Iranian evil gods or by the Judeo-Christian Devil, since evil, defined as suffering, is inevitable and necessary in the Buddhist world view. Māra is not responsible for cosmic evil as Satan is.

Greece and Rome

Theos (god) and *daimon* are near-synonyms in Homer (c. 800 BCE); *daimon* denotes more the power or agency of a god, rather than personality (cf. Latin *numen*). From Hesiod (c. 700 BCE) on, demons were considered inferior to the gods. Socrates' (d. 399 BCE) *daimon* was a kind of tutelary instinct, not necessarily external to him. In the *Symposium*, Plato (d. 347 BCE) held that the gods, who have no direct contact with humans, use *daimon* s as their messengers (*Aggelos*). Greek gods had no fixed good or evil character; nor did demons until the late Hellenistic period, when they were generally considered evil. Other spirits, not always explicitly called *daimon* s, might have either fixed or changeable character. *Keres* were fate-like powers of evil and death for individuals; *heroes* were spirits of the dead; *Lamia*, *Empusa*, *Gello*, and *Mormo* were names for a female spirit that killed infants and (in some cases) coupled with sleeping men. The *Erinyes* and the *alastor* were spiritual avengers of the dead. Other figures, more important to mythology than to ordinary experience, were probably demons of their origin: the *Harpies* may have been wind-demons, and the *Gorgons* underworld- or sea-demons.

Roman spirits (*lares*, *manes*, *penates* and *genii*) were not unambiguously godlike or demonic or ghostly. The *Lamia*, however, had the same characteristics as her Greek namesake, while the *stryx*, a nocturnal demon who appeared as a screech-owl or a human shapeshifting witch, also assaulted sleeping babies (or according to some authors, suckled them with her own milk). Roman religion adopted the Etruscan death-demon *Charun*, making him the ferrier of souls to the underworld.

In Hellenistic demonology the Jew Philo of Alexandria (d. 40 ce) distinguished between angels and demons as good and evil spirits, although he classified some Gentile gods as angelic, against traditional Jewish "demonization" of them (see below). The

Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible begun in the third century, also made the angel/demon distinction. The Middle Platonist Plutarch (d. c. 120 ce) distinguished demons from gods and agreed that demons were entirely evil. In his *Platonic Theology*, Proclus (d. 485 ce) rationalized the system of gods, goddesses, heroes, and demons in Hellenistic religion, building on the Neoplatonism of Plotinus (d. 270 ce). But Proclus's concept of the Good as the highest principle, transcending all being, minimizes the distinctions between gods and demons, making Neoplatonic theology seem a de facto demonology. Accordingly, when [Marsilio Ficino](#) (d. 1499), [Giovanni Pico della Mirandola](#) (d. 1494), and other European philosophers of the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries revived Neoplatonic and Hermetic theology, guardians of Christian orthodoxy often suspected them of demon-worship.

Judaism

There are few recognizable demons in pre-exilic texts of the Hebrew Bible. Several beings mentioned there resemble spirits, and seem traceable to evil spirits of the Mesopotamians, Canaanites, and other neighbors, who believed that demons frequented remote and dangerous places. Desert demons were assimilated to or described as wild animals (*Isa.* 13:21; 34:14). Hebrew words for these spirits were rendered as *daimon* and *daimonion* by the translators of the Septuagint.

Lilith appears in the Hebrew Bible only once, as a nocturnal demon (*Isa.* 34:14); her name probably derives from Akkadian demonology. In middle Babylonian times, words related to Hebrew *lilit* designate sterile, sexually frustrated, or uninitiated female demons, or a succubus demon (*Lilitu*). Later, Rabbinic commentators describe Lilith as the rebellious first wife of Adam, who, vainly claiming parity with him, left him and bore endless broods of demons. Lilith threatens newborn Jewish children with crib death and must be warded off by an inscription invoking three angels God originally sent

to subdue her. Saint Jerome (d. 420 ce) translated *lilit* in Isaiah 34 as *Lamia*; his commentary identified the two infanticidal demons, maintaining that other Hebrew sources identify Lilith as an Erinys, or Fury.

Yahweh himself sometimes sent entities defined as or resembling evil spirits to punish erring Israelites or destroy their enemies (*1 Sam. 16:14; Judg. 9:22–23; 1 Kings 22:19ff.; Exod. 12:23; Sirach 39:28f.*). But these agents had no more specificity or character than is implied by the tasks they performed for Yahweh; they were his "projections," and he could even accompany them (as in *Exod. 12*).

The role of Satan as chief of the demons evolved gradually. In pre-exilic texts, Hebrew *Satan* was a [common noun](#), designating any opponent or adversary. During the exile, the Israelites became acquainted with dualistic theologies deriving from the teachings of Zarathushtra, wherein divine rivals of equal power compete for human allegiance. Post-exilic texts (*1 Chron. 21:1; Job 1:11; 2:5*) describe a unique demonic adversary or *Satan* of Israel or individual humans. This personage has an ambivalent relation to Yahweh, relieving him of responsibility for evil, but furthering, rather than opposing, his designs. The Septuagint translated this usage of *Satan* as *diabolos*.

Post-exilic texts dismissed the gods and tutelary spirits worshipped by rival civilizations as empty idols. The Septuagint rendered the Hebrew terms for such foreign deities (especially *shedim*) as *daimon* even when translating pre-exilic texts (*Deut. 32:17; Ps. 95:5, 105:37; Isa. 65:11*).

The Jewish apocrypha and pseudepigrapha accelerated the dualistic process that turned all demons into the enemies of God. Notable is the demon Asmodeus of *Tobit 3:8* and 17, who killed the first seven husbands of Sarah, and whose name may reflect a Persian phrase,

aeshma daeva, or "demon of wrath." He was defeated by Raphael, an angel of the Lord.

Ancient tradition related that, on the [Day of Atonement](#), the scapegoat, laden with the sins of the Israelites, was sent into the desert wastes "for Azazel" (Lev. 16:8–28). In *1 Enoch* and other pseudepigrapha, Azazel became a recognizable Devil-figure: ringleader of demons, enemy of God, and tempter of humans. According to these texts demons were originally holy angels, or "Watchers" (*egregori*) who rebelled because of their lust for human women (see below). Aside from Azazel, other texts named the demons' leader as Belial, Mastema, Satanael, Sammael, Semyaza, and *Satan*.

Pseudepigraphic and Talmudic sources identify some demons as the souls of deceased evil giants, who were born when the Watchers, also called *bene haelohim* or "sons of God," mated with the "daughters of men" (*1 Enoch* 6:2, etc.; cf. *Gen.* 6:1–4; *Deut.* 1:28; *Num.* 13:22, 33). The title "sons of God" reflects an older, semipolytheistic view of Yahweh as the sovereign of a heavenly court (cf. *Job* 1; *Ps.* 82). The dead-giant demons were numerous; one text counts 409,000 giants drowned by Noah's Flood (*3 Maccabees* 2:4; *Wisdom* 14:5–6; *1 Enoch* 15:8–16:1; *Jubilees* 10:1–3; *Testament of Solomon* 17:1; *3 Apocalypse of Baruch* 4:10). Demons are more frequently discussed in the Babylonian Talmud and the Midrashim than in the Jerusalem Talmud. Demons are important to Qabalah, which drew on Christian and Muslim demonologies, including folklore, pursuing a systematic understanding of the subject. Although long-lived, demons are mortal, and may have been saved from extinction by Noah's Ark. The *Zohar* and later works of Qabalah describe demons having natural bodies of fire and air and an inherent (rather than fictive or virtual) gender. Mating between male demons and women, and between female demons and men, is common, and produces demonic or hybrid children. Demons may depend on human semen even to reproduce their own species.

Demons are organized into hosts, and control or meddle in most areas of human life; they must be carefully avoided or approached through incantations or by learning and using their individual seals.

Christianity

As with Judaism, the Christian scriptural canon was formed gradually, creating an eclectic and evolving body of doctrine about spiritual beings. Like the contemporary Jewish apocrypha, new Testament demonology elaborated on canonical Hebrew texts. It also shows resemblances to various strains of Hellenistic religion and philosophy. Christian innovations took place mainly on two fronts, exorcism and the role of Satan. The Gospels describe demons or evil spirits (*daimon*, *daimonion*, *pneuma akatharton*, *pneuma poneron*) who possess or afflict humans, but fear and obey Jesus. Demons proclaim Jesus's power before witnesses by obeying his adjurations (*Matt.* 8:32; *Mark* 5:13; *Luke* 8:33), and through explicit verbal declarations (*Luke* 4:41; *Mark* 1:23–25, 34; *Matt.* 8:29; cf. *Mark* 5:7). By affirming his power, both miraculous healing and demonic utterances prove Jesus's divinity (cf. *Matt.* 8:16–17). [Saint Paul](#) (d. 65/67 ce) refers infrequently to demons (*1 Cor.* 10:20–21 [cf. *Deut.* 32:17]; *1 Timothy* 4:1); other [New Testament](#) books concentrate on Satan and (in *Revelation*) the host of fallen angels.

Jesus and the Gospel writers present Satan as Jesus's declared personal adversary (*Mark* 3:23; *Luke* 11:18–21), paralleling the representation of Satan as Yahweh's adversary in Jewish apocrypha and further confirming Jesus's divinity. The rivalry between Jesus and Satan is developed in [Saint Paul](#)'s *Epistles* and the *Book of Revelation*; the latter provides dramatically explicit visualizations of the divine Christ and the demonic hordes arrayed against him. *Luke*, *John*, *Paul*, and *Revelation* (e.g. chapter 12) consolidate the portrait of Satan as the leader of numerous evil angels who fell from Heaven because of their rebellion—not against Yahweh but against Christ (*Luke* 10:18; *Eph.* 2:1–2; 6:11–13; *2 Cor.* 6:14–16; *Col.* 2:15). "By the

end of the [New Testament](#) period, Christian tradition made no distinction between fallen angels and demons" (Russell, 1977, p. 236).

Subsequent Christian literature internalized and spiritualized the danger of demonic persecution. Christian writers continued to see demons as responsible for human physical and psychological suffering, but also developed the notion of *temptation*: Satan tempts every Christian to oppose God through sin, just as he tempted Jesus in the desert (*Mark* 1:12–13; *Matt.* 4:1–11; *Luke* 4:1–13). All temptation, from Adam and Eve onward, was eventually credited to Satan. For most of the [Middle Ages](#), demons were assumed to be ubiquitous and constantly tempting Christians and others. Such temptations usually happen privately and invisibly, though demons could act visibly and even publicly. The early monastic desert fathers regularly encountered demons who tempted them extravagantly, an experience detailed in Athanasius's (d. 373 ce) *Life of Saint Anthony* and elsewhere. The *incubus* demon was a sexual predator who polluted or violated sleeping women. The magician Merlin was supposedly born to a nun thus impregnated, while [Saint Bernard](#) of Clairvaux (d. 1153) allegedly defeated another incubus who tormented a pious laywoman. The popular legend of Theophilus (ninth to thirteenth centuries) described a priest who, disappointed in his career, contracted his soul to the Devil but was eventually rescued by the [Virgin Mary](#).

After 1100, Western Christian interest in demons increased dramatically. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 declared that "the Devil and the other demons" (*diabolus et alii daemones*) were created good but became evil through free choice. The Book of Job, whose sophisticated theodicy explicitly portrayed "the Satan's" responsibility for human suffering, became highly influential for both writers and visual artists. The apocryphal Book of Tobit, novelistically recounting the archangel Raphael's defeat of Sarah and Tobias's demonic persecutor Asmodeus, also evoked interest. [Peter Lombard](#)

(d. 1160), [Saint Thomas Aquinas](#) (d. 1274), Saint Bonaventure (d. 1274), and many other theologians devoted systematic attention to good and—especially—evil angels, inventing *angelology* and *demonology* as a scientific subdiscipline of Christian theology. Treatises discussed the moral qualities of angels but also their history, social organization, psychology, physiology, and sexuality. Demonic corporeality became a major concern: since demons were thought sometimes to interact visibly and tangibly with humans, the question arose whether they had bodies, and if so, of what sort. Aquinas's solution prevailed: demons are pure spirit without matter, but can fabricate virtual bodies; thus, they can afflict humans both internally (by possession and other invisible means) and in external reality (through apparition "in person"). Visual representations of demons became progressively more horrific after 1200, emphasizing a grotesque hybrid corporeality that seemed increasingly "real" rather than a visual allegory of spiritual perversity. This process was particularly notable in depictions of the Last Judgment and Hell, which were practically ubiquitous by the late [Middle Ages](#). In these pictures, the interaction of spirits—human souls and demons—was portrayed as physical, corporeal violence.

Detailed literary and visual representations of the biblical demonic world relate to a growing interest in narratives about more recent human encounters and interactions with demons. About 1225, Caesarius of Heisterbach collected several dozen such tales in his *Dialogue on Miracles*; other collections of miracles and saints' biographies did likewise. In this period, exorcism, which had become formalized over the centuries, inspired intense interest in necromancy. This form of "black magic" arose in what Richard Kieckhefer (1989) has called the "clerical underworld" (pp. 153ff) of relatively learned professional exorcists. Originally defined as persons who commanded the souls of the dead (as in *Odyssey*, book 11 and the biblical story of Saul and the "Witch" of Endor [1 Sam. 28]) necromancers were redefined by Christian authorities as

necessarily—and often willingly—contacting demons. While proponents defined necromancy as effected in the name of God, ecclesiastical consensus countered that it necessarily involved unholy alliances with demons.

"Demonization" of individuals and social groups, based on the notion of the demon as *Satan* or *diabolos*—adversary—became a major vehicle of political and religious persecution during the Christian Middle Ages. Jews, heretics, "infidels," political enemies and vulnerable targets of opportunity (e.g., the Templars) were defined as unremittingly evil, and as literally in league with the Devil; their destruction was incumbent on the pious or orthodox. Between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries, Catholic enforcers of orthodoxy, becoming sensitized to the spread of necromancy, also encountered widespread and alarming heresies among the laity (e.g., Catharism, Waldensianism, Hussitism). They thus began attempting to verify rumors, dating to the eleventh century, that even unlettered heretics had regular demonic encounters. Stereotypical "confessions" of such experiences, extracted under torture from real or suspected heretics, were cited to explain the origin and appeal of heretical doctrines. Confessions further stimulated officials' curiosity by portraying demons with vivid and shocking immediacy, creating a vicious cycle of inquiry and confirmation.

By the 1430s both ecclesiastical and secular judges were pursuing a new variety of super-heretic, the Witch, created by this process. Unlike previous heretics, witches were not considered merely deluded about doctrine. The Witch voluntarily sought to encounter Satan and his demons "in person," attending vast but secret mass meetings (the Sabbat or "Witches' Dance") where humans worshiped Satan as their god and had orgiastic sex with demons. Official theories about witches grew exponentially more sensational and complicated, making witchcraft responsible for society's most intractable problems—crop failure, disease, infertility, infant, adult, and animal mortality, religious and political turmoil.

In fact, the Witch was a phantom of the inquisitorial imagination, evoked by a coercive dialogue between tortured defendants and demon-obsessed prosecutors and judges, but the witch stereotype resisted facts, proof, and compassion until after 1700, killing some 50,000 to 60,000 defendants in western Christendom. Thanks to this "witch craze," narratives of human-demon interaction are an important preoccupation of western culture and a major subgenre of its literature. From [Christopher Marlowe](#)'s *Dr. Faustus* (1590s), [John Milton](#)'s *Paradise Lost* (1674), and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust* (1790), to Aldous Huxley's *Devils of Loudun* (1952), [Arthur Miller](#)'s *Crucible* (1953) and [Ira Levin](#)'s *Rosemary's Baby* (1967), the Devil and the demonization of his accused allies have retained their fascination.

Nor is the phenomenon of demonization limited to Christianity—or to religion. The perception of an imperfect natural or [social order](#) leads in extreme cases to a kind of collective paranoia: disasters are blamed on powerful saboteurs, who mask their immense malignant power beneath a pretense of marginality or benignity. Like demons, they are imagined as powerful, omnipresent, and immune to conventional methods of discovery or ordinary human justice. Extraordinary, extralegal measures are required to unmask and neutralize the threat, or legality itself must be redefined. The [Protocols of the Elders of Zion](#), the Holocaust, and aspects of more recent genocides (e.g., Rwanda, Kosovo) bear witness to the powerful appeal of this myth. Evidence of its appeal also appears in the "show trials" and gulags of Stalinism (1930s), [Mao Zedong](#)'s [Cultural Revolution](#) (1960s), [Pol Pot](#)'s Cambodia (1970s), and the [House Un-American Activities Committee](#) under Joseph McCarthy (1950s). When "things go wrong," and no external enemy is clearly to blame, the evil will be sought inside the afflicted social body. Manifest powerlessness or a clear record of benignity offer no protection from persecution: as was often proclaimed in early modern Europe, the devil's subtlest trick is to convince us that he

doesn't exist. Demonization occurs interculturally as well: a society's internal cohesion is enhanced by a dualistic worldview that identifies foreign antagonists as completely evil. It is more important that the antagonist be completely wrong and evil than for "us" to be completely right and good.

Islam

The most widespread figures in Islamic demonology are the *djinn* or jinns. They are ontologically intermediate, somewhat like the Greek *daimonia* and the Judeo-Christian angels and devils. According to the Qur'ān (LV, 14), their bodies were created of smokeless flame, while human bodies came from clay and angelic bodies from light. Jinns are of both sexes. Given their ethereal composition, jinns are normally imperceptible to humans, but may become perceptible in a variety of guises, including giants, dwarves, or animals. In pre-Islamic Arabia, jinns were desert beings like nymphs and satyrs, and hostile to humans; they were gradually "spiritualized." By Muḥammad's time, Arabs of Mecca were sacrificing to them and seeking their favor (Qur'ān VI, 128; LXXII, 6).

Jinns have a social organization and family life, and interact variously with humans, including through romantic love and intermarriage. They can be contacted through various forms of magic, and may respond favorably, but can also be easily offended and will react accordingly. At times they behave playfully, teasing and tricking humans. Jinns are prominent in folklore, popular magic, and literature, from the *Thousand and One Nights* onward. The notion of the jinn has been transmitted from Arabia to non-Arabic centers of Islamic culture, where it blends variously with local traditions about spirits.

Subclasses of the jinn are the *Ghūl*, the *si'lat*, and the *'ifrīt*. For ancient Arabs, the *Ghūl* (etymon of English *ghoul*) was a shape-shifting being who lived in desert wastes and led travelers astray. The

Ghūl may be male or female; according to differing traditions, the *si'lat* may be either a female *Ghūl* or a kind of witch among the ghouls; some writers maintain that men can sire children on a *si'lat* but not on a *Ghūl*. In popular usage *Ghūl* may designate a human or demonic cannibal; this usage has inspired English and French concepts of ogres and vampires (*ghoul*, *goule*). The *'ifrīt* is a powerful, cunning, frightening jinn, and may also be thought identical to a *marid*; alternatively, one may be more powerful than the other.

The *shaytān* for pre-Islamic Arabs was a jinn, a kind of "genie" or "genius" or guardian spirit who was sometimes good, sometimes evil; as tutelary spirit it was also called the *karin*. It was responsible for inspiration of all sorts, and human progress in general, but particularly for poetic inspiration. The *shaytān* could also be a rebellious jinn, thus an "evil spirit" or "demon."

In Islamic usage, the singular *al-Shaytān* is a personal name paralleling Jewish and Christian references to Satan. This figure is also named *Iblīs* (possibly a contraction of *diabolos*). His epithets include *'Aduww Allāh* (Enemy of God) and *al-'Aduww* (The Enemy). The Islamic Satan resembles the Christian and late Jewish figure, as portrayed in the two Testaments and in apocrypha such as the [*Life of Adam and Eve*](#). Areas of uncertainty or disagreement about *Iblīs/al-Shaytān* remain in Muslim commentary, especially regarding whether he is an angel (*mal'ak*) or a jinn. Angels are considered ontologically sinless by some, and have other characteristics incompatible with *Iblīs*'s fundamental rebelliousness and even his physical makeup as presented in the Qur'ān. Also unclear is the exact nature of his sin, particularly the relation between his pride and his disobedience.

Doubt, Skepticism, Unbelief

Since demonic beings are by definition invisible most or all of the time, belief in their responsibility for human welfare or suffering—and belief in their very existence—varies considerably over time.

Until recently, the narrative of progress by which western societies define themselves inspired confident assertions that these societies were "outgrowing" or had already abandoned the belief in demonic reality. However, developments since the 1980s belie such a facile scenario. In the [United States](#), polls register a majority of persons claiming to believe in spirit phenomena. The literal, personal existence of the Devil has been strongly affirmed by charismatic and fundamentalist Protestants and by Catholics alike. Meanwhile, exorcism, which the [Second Vatican Council](#) of the 1960s had de-emphasized, has become a divisive issue, even in the Pope's own diocese of Rome. In the [United States](#) and elsewhere, the same period has witnessed panics over alleged Satanic cults and "satanic ritual [child abuse](#)," along with enthusiastic [New Age](#) variants of angelolatry, benign or "white" witchcraft and magic, and the space-age demonology of "alien abduction syndrome" and "[multiple personality](#) syndrome." These movements variously express a lost sense of religious connection or "spirituality"—a term that defies precise definition and often seems not to require belief in actual spirits.

On the other hand, the assumption that, before the advent of scientific thinking in the seventeenth century, all Christians and Jews, or the overwhelming majority of them, believed in the literal existence of demons and angels, is equally erroneous. Skepticism about spirit did not arise suddenly in the 1600s; Aquinas himself had recognized the need to rebut it. Skepticism provoked the earliest treatises by militant witch-hunting demonologists (1460s), and remained a constant anxiety of Christian demonology even after 1700, when widespread witch-hunting had ceased.

The Sadducees, a Jewish sect in the time of Jesus, refused to believe in spirit (*Mark* 12:18; *Acts* 23:8). As detailed above, the oldest books of the Hebrew Bible make no mention of angels and demons as beings distinct from and subordinate to Yahweh, or to an individual named "Satan." The Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides (d. 1204) opposed the belief in demons. Among Muslims, the question of the real existence of *jinn* was problematic. Ibn Sina (Avicenna, d. 1037) denied their existence, and Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406) opined that only God knew the truth, while other philosophers variously evaded the question. Scholars also debated the nature or the real existence of the *ghūl*, which does not appear in the Qur'ān. It is uncertain to what extent the Buddha believed in the empirical reality of demons.

Epicurean and other ancient materialistic philosophies, which asserted the perishability of the human soul, remained familiar—mostly through hostile paraphrases—throughout the "Age of Faith," or Christian Middle Ages. Thomas Aquinas observed that some contemporary Aristotelian philosophers denied the reality of angels and devils; on one occasion he attributed the attitude to Aristotle himself. Accusations of philosophical skepticism were periodically leveled at innovative thinkers during the thirteenth and following centuries, at times with apparent justification. The philosopher [Pietro Pomponazzi](#) argued exhaustively between 1516 and 1520 that Aristotle's philosophy lent no support to the reality of angels, demons, magic, or human immortality, while the [Fifth Lateran Council](#) of 1513 dogmatically reaffirmed human immortality as an article of faith. From Aquinas until nearly 1800, Christian apologists regularly invoked the phenomena of witchcraft and exorcism as proof that angels, demons, and the immortal soul were not imaginary.

Between about 1550 and 1700, epidemics of demonic possession among Western Christians, often linked to accusations of witchcraft, provided compellingly theatrical arguments for demons' reality, but

also provoked widespread skepticism. As demonic witchcraft was progressively discredited, interest shifted to ghosts (in the eighteenth century) and spiritualism (in the nineteenth) among those interested in defending the reality of spirit and human immortality. Yet purported demonstrations continued to produce skepticism and ridicule.

The enduring controversies over the reality of demons and spirits provide ample evidence that the drive to understand cosmic forces in human terms is not restricted to "primitive," "medieval," or "unscientific" societies.

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- [6] Ibid., 556.
- [7] Matt. 19:26.
- [8] Cf. CW 18 ¶1555, CW 10 ¶879, CW 9i ¶189, CW 9ii ¶191, and Jung (2007).
- [9] Stevens (2003), 79.
- [10] CW 9ii ¶191, CW 11 ¶4, CW 18 ¶1537.
- [11] Literally "a deprivation of good."
- [12] CW 9i ¶189.
- [13] Brinton et al. (1960), 92.
- [14] Meyer (2009), 5.
- [15] Ibid., 8-9.
- [16] CW 9i ¶189.
- [17] E.g. Alcorn (2010) and Blech (2003).
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- [72] Ibid.
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- [78] CW 16 ¶384.
- [79] E.g. computers, cell phones, antibiotics, automobiles, power plants—none of which is without harmful implications.
- [80] CW 16 ¶384.
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- [83] Ibid. and CW 13 ¶3.
- [84] CW 13 ¶139 note.
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- [\[98\]](#) As punishment for stealing fire Prometheus was chained to a cliff and had his liver eaten out by day only to have it grow back by night; for the full myth see Bulfinch (1959), 22-23.
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- [\[116\]](#) Ibid., ¶639.
- [\[117\]](#) I heard this phrase from Rollo May, in a conversation we had in 1988. I don’t know if Rollo is the original source, or if he got it from someone else. If a reader has a printed citation for the original, I would appreciate knowing about it.
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McAuliffe, Jane Dammen, ed. *The Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*. 3 vols. issued. Leiden, 2001—. "Angel" (Gisela Webb, 1.84–92); "Devil" (Andrew Rippin, 1. 524–527); "'Ifrīt" (Thomas Bauer, 2.486–487); "Jinn" (Jacqueline Chabbi, 3.43–50); "Spiritual Beings" (as yet unreleased).

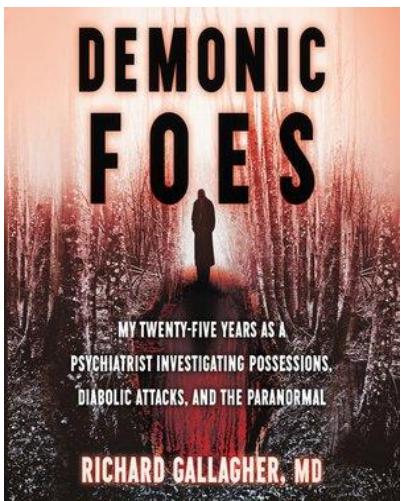
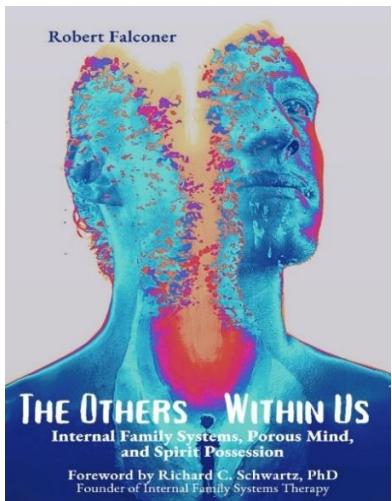
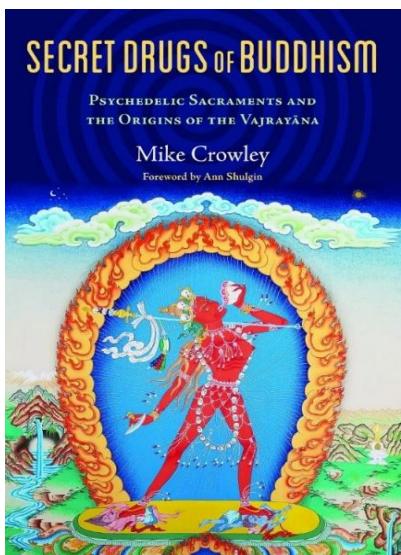
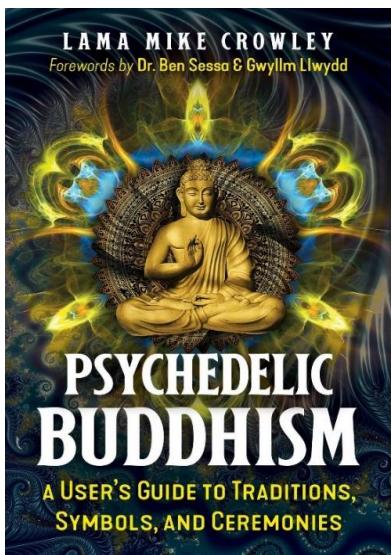
Doubt, Skepticism, Unbelief

Popkin, Richard H. *The History of Skepticism: From Savonarola to Bayle*. New York, 2003. The standard text in this field; the third rev. ed. of a book first published in 1960.

Stein, Gordon, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Unbelief*. 2 vols. Buffalo, N.Y., 1985. See especially "Devil, Unbelief in the Concept of" (George V. Tomashevich); "Evil, Problem of" (Peter H. Hare); "Immortality, Unbelief in" (Leon J. Putnam); "Skepticism" (Richard H. Popkin). Though it purports to describe phenomena of unbelief, this work often dedicates most of its attention to belief. There are no entries for unbelief in spirits, demons, or angels.

Stephens, Walter. *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief*. Chicago, 2002. Argues that early modern European demonic witchcraft was an invention of literate Christian elites, and that it constituted "resistance to skepticism," reinforcing their own faltering belief in the reality of spirits, sacraments and divine benevolence by providing supposed evidence of human-demon encounters.

RECOMMENDED READING



Survey of entity encounter experiences occasioned by inhaled *N,N*-dimethyltryptamine:

Phenomenology, interpretation, and enduring effects

<https://doi.org/10.1177/02698811209161>

Conclusion

For example, most respondents indicated that the entity had the attributes of being conscious, intelligent, and benevolent, existed in some real but different dimensions of reality, and continued to exist after the encounter. These experiences were also rated as among the most meaningful, spiritual, and psychologically insightful lifetime experiences, with persisting positive changes in life satisfaction, purpose and meaning attributed to the experiences.

Anomalous Psychedelic Experiences:

At the Neurochemical Juncture of the Humanistic and Parapsychological

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167820917767>

These brain imaging studies and other evidence (e.g., see [Kastrup, 2012](#); [Luke, 2012](#)), also tentatively support [Aldous Huxley's \(1954\)](#) extension of Henri Bergson's idea that the brain is a filter of consciousness and, according to Huxley, that psychedelics inhibit the brain's default filtering process thereby giving access to mystical and psychical states.

In a recent survey exploring the nature of experiences either with or without tryptamine psychedelics (LSD, psilocybin, ayahuasca, or DMT) of encountering, “something that someone might call: God, Higher Power, Ultimate Reality, or an Aspect or Emissary of God (e.g., an angel)” ([Griffiths et al., 2019](#)), some two thirds of those having such experience who reported being atheist before indicated that they no longer identified as being atheist after the experience.

OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

