

SHRINK, A.D. 2075

By: EDGAR ALLAN MONAGHAN

WHY WE LIKE IT: *We all feel the World is going crazy and Monaghan's story of future madness seems all too eerily real. On the bright side, when madness becomes commonplace, all of us will be lining up to see the shrink. Madness's beginning is its end and there is no end to it. We are intrigued by the author's quirky style: the telling seems to take place in some kind of vacuumed environment of psychological surrender and the repetitive slightly mechanical voice is curiously soothing while hinting at diabolical subliminals. Troubled duality is everywhere. Quote: 'And some of my lovers were turned on by me but I tried not to hypnotize them to love me. "It was unprofessional," I told them. But I wasn't against sex with my women in general.'*

I said to him, his pretence to be a "normal human," was flawed. There are no longer any "normal humans." Everyone was crazy and most were freaks.

Of course, the law required everyone visit a psychiatrist once a month.

And I was one of the more expensive shrinks, so I got to meet many of the rich and famous.

I told my latest client that I had seen it all, but I hated what humanity was becoming. Everyone was mad on crack cocaine, PCPS, LSD, miscellaneous opiates and stimulants and other drugs. All drugs were legal.

And people were selfish, greedy and bizarre in addition to being crazy.

And many people were having bizarre sex with "aliens," and multi-sexuals and android love dolls. And people changed their sex often and with it their whole ID. There was a lot of theft of Credits.

And people wore bizarre scents and had weird accoutrements, weird plastic surgery and colorful skin.

And some of my lovers were turned on by me, but I tried not to hypnotise them to love me. “It was unprofessional,” I told them. But I wasn’t against sex with my women patients in general.

And some patients wanted me to write a letter of introduction on their behalf to famous people. I was a skilled writer.

In fact, I was a well-known ghost writer, writing as a female about love affairs. And of course, I had written, “Tales of Madness.” The books were about different scenarios and cultures in a different time period from our own.

Science fiction, fantasy, horror, romance of course my new genre, madness.

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Then, in January of that year, 2075, I met a patient, who I asked, “So what is right and wrong in your life madam?”

She said, “She was having nightmares of herself being torn apart. And she heard, “Voices.” The voices kept saying she was, “Mediocre” and “Ugly. I suggested, “She was attractive, and all she needed was a good night’s sleep and I gave her strong sleeping pills. And I said, “Maybe you could try new dream stimuli programs. And just ignore the voices.

“And you are just stressed out,” I said. “Take some tranquilizers,” I added. “And if that doesn’t help, I’ll send you to the Underground. For illicit drugs

And she and I went to a VR in which everyone was a fighter, men and women. So we each had a fight and each of us was badly beaten and had to be briefly hospitalized. But then I went to her room in the hospital and we loved one another. It was unprofessional, but I couldn’t help myself.

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And then I had a paranoid schizophrenic. I hypnotised her and found she'd been hypnotised many times by a number of people. I told her, "To weigh each action, the pros and cons and choose what is best for you. It was very dangerous to be cross-hypnotised I told her. "She should concentrate on what is important. And not let anyone hypnotise her again."

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And then I spoke with a fledgling writer who was trying to write an autobiography, entitled, "Journal of a Useless Persona." He said, "He felt like many others that he had no use. He had previously worked in customer service but was replaced by an android." "Are you an android?" He asked me.

I said "No way. I am pure human." and I said, "Don't worry you have use. If only to your lover and children." He said, "I don't like it, but I guess I have to accept it."

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She was already a famous writer, but she suffered from bipolar syndrome. I told her, "To go camping and take it easy with stress to perform and travel. It is not natural to be so famous." But I said, "Don't be afraid of madness, it can yield great fruit."

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Then I had a patient that was very depressed. She said her lover cheated on her and her kids drove her mad... I told her, "To put her kids in boarding school and have affairs of her own. Plenty of potential lovers out there." And she said, "And her job was a

masseuse, she was one of the last as machines could do a better job.” “But it was good loving, to love your clients? I asked. But she said, he had a new sex disease that would take a few weeks to cure and was limited sexually. I said, “So, that’s why you are depressed.”

She said, “She drove everyone around her mad, they thought that she was an evil bitch. I said, “You can have your mate wear condoms and boxer shorts while they love you. And that should solve your problem. All you need is one man!”

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Then I had a nymphomaniac. She was psycho and smothered her lovers in attention. “She ruined their lives.” I said, “Why not get a job in an expensive resort where she could meet interesting people. Rich people are on the whole interesting. It’s clear to me that you crave variety and elite lovers. Or alternatively work as a high-class escort service. She said, “It seems like I have no choice but to be a whore.”

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Then a skeletal woman who looked ghastly. I said, “You’d look prettier if you gained some weight. Anorexic. You look like a ghoul,” I said. And with that she stormed out of my office.

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Next a guy who, “Heard everyone talking about him in English.” He was Chinese but spoke fluent English as well as Mandarin.

I said why would anyone want to talk about you, you are not famous.

He said the secret service was in his head because he was the smartest man in the world.

He said they were holding him back. I said, “Even if it’s true, you have to use your intelligence in a good way so as not to attract attention.” He said, “That’s just it they think I will make waves.” And he handed me his “Manual for True Freedom.” The manual spoke of making an IQ test the fundamental requirement for government. If government was cleverer, society would be improved. I said maybe if you take medicine for paranoid schizophrenia, they will leave you alone. He said “It’s a brilliant idea, I will try it. And he did and the voices receded somewhat.

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Then I had a professional virtual reality wrestler. I said it’s fake isn’t it? He said, “Yes but I broke my leg and lost some teeth.”

I asked, “Why he liked dominatrix’s?” He said, “He had many sexual fantasies.”

I said, “He should try and be an actor.”

He said, “He was 49 and it was high time he settled down and had a family, but he couldn’t find a girl. I told him to go to Philippines and find a nice, loving girl who would be very grateful to live in the US.

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Then I had a patient who suffered from vertigo. Afraid of heights. I said, “Civilization is “Too high. Just like the Tower of Babel.”

One time she started running in a dense crowd and started a stampede and 15 people died.

She was claustrophobic and felt she was out of control.

She suffered from MS and had a walker. But I told her new experimental treatments were showing great results

She said she wanted to die. I said, "They are on the verge of a cure and why not just relax on heroin and feel good." She said, "Neo heroin is something I've been afraid of my entire life!" But I guess it will help me to stay alive."

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Next a somnambulist. He would go walking in the night and in his apartment many doors were unlocked. He would get into bed with people and have no memory of it. He had a rare skin disease that caused him to be insane. I said, "You need to cure your skin disease."

And I suggested he lock himself into his home and hide the key in a safe so if he was sleep walking he couldn't get out. He said, "Why didn't I think of that?"

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Then a kind nurse who had bad luck in love. She was in love with a male nurse, but he found other women he liked more. I told her to meet other people outside the hospitable and for sure she could find her soul mate. "Most men want a kind woman," I said.

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As Herman Hesse said, "Many madmen pass for normal."

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Then I had a patient who lost both legs in Afghanistan while serving there as a peacekeeper. But now surgeons could regrow lost limbs and so he was fit. He said, "He was always the soldier."

I told him to go to university and get a B.A. so that he could join the officer corps. He could study something easy like geography or sociology. He said, "It was good advice. He said, "He'd make a good general."

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Then I had a patient who was a gay architect.

He heard voices saying he was a homosexual and a jerk and a bad lover

And he said, "It was the secret service in his head as he was so talented as an architect.

They didn't want him to be famous and have power, as he had radical views. I told him,

"Take some drugs to calm him and try his best to be subtle with his buildings. To not amaze everyone. Make your buildings esoteric, for the best."

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Then I met a man who played in a rock band. I listened to their music and it was great,

but somewhat discordant. I said, "Go ahead push the barriers of sanity. Luck favors the

bold. But as Syd Barret said, 'Hold on to the steel rail.'" He said, "You are right, life is

all about knowing when to stop!" I said, "You don't need my advice. Just follow your heart."

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Then I had a patient who claimed he was perfectly sane, which caused me to doubt his sanity. So, I did some psychoanalysis. He said he kept hearing Geiger counters buzzing...

He said he was on "The dark side of the moon." I said sanity is just a word, we are all

mad some of the time, if not always.

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Then I met a patient who had murdered her lover with a knife. She said she was a high-class lady who her boyfriend didn't respect. She said, "Anyway they would soon invent eternal youth it seemed so she could look forward to years of youth, after she served her term. I visited her in prison.

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Then I had a patient who was in a virtual reality experiment. She said, “It was still experimental, and made her feel dizzy in the virtual mover.”

I asked, “What brought you to be a virtual reality experiment? She answered, “It was the future.” I said, “But it is driving you uncontrollably insane. I recommend that you just try and live in simple reality.

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Then a woman who said, “Money doesn’t buy happiness.” She was a rich banker. I said, “She was spoiled and should try and live simply for a while and forget about business. I said, “Why not fall in love with someone? And enjoy life?” She said, “You are probably right.”

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I said, “So you are power-crazed. You want sex power, fame power and political power.

He said, “He was just ambitious. He wanted to make a difference. And he said, he was a true statesman and would love a job as Australian ambassador to the UN.” I said, “Take some tranquilizers to calm you, so you can make a conscientious decision about your future.” He said, “He didn’t want to take any drug. He’d just come to me for advice.” So, I told him, “If he figured he could make a difference then he should go for it. Green light go,” I added. “Don’t worry about the consequences, just do what you think is right.”

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Then I met a patient who was afraid of the dark. He hallucinated in the dark and saw demons and devils. I told him he needed to take anti-hallucinatory medicine. And just stay home at night.

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Another patient, he said, "He was driven insane by the cold weather. He would wear a balaclava and a ski mask and many layers of clothes in winter. He had spent some time in Indonesia and after that couldn't get used to the cold."

But he said, "It was a CIA plan to heat up the United States while other regions grew too hot/ suffered drought. It was said that they bombed ocean rifts to heat up the oceans which in turn heated up the land."

He said, "He loved the CIA." I said, "Why not move to Puerto Rico or Bahamas or something where the weather is hotter than ever and the milieu is festive."

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Then I met a hermit who never left his house. He was on welfare like so many others. His supplies were delivered and he enjoyed working in his garden which was quite large.

He liked to brew beer and daydream while drinking. He would paint pictures, fantasies mostly.

I told him, "You are truly wise." He said, "He didn't need love, he was happy as a hermit."

And he was covered in hair and tall and looked like a sasquatch.

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Then a man who had ADHD. And serious allergies to the environment.

I said he had dyslexia and that was the main problem.

I recommended he live in Alaska where it was snowing and frozen most of the year, but he said he was allergic to the cold also. He said, “He’d like to go to space, but couldn’t do the training.” Finally, he was on oxygen and got into the business of selling oxygen to terminally ill patients. But the job was stressful and when I met him again, he said, “Modern society is, ‘information overload.’ And he couldn’t handle it. He just wanted a simple life with a wife and a family and enough food to eat. Is that asking too much he wondered?” I said, “We live in complex times, and the strong survive as always. You need to be strong and hold it together.”

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Then a girl who had neo psoriasis which drove her mad and she looked at all the beautiful women who had plastic surgery and was dismayed. I said, “We can cure that. Why didn’t you seek treatment when it first began to bother you?” And so I gave her some healing cream and I said to frequent dark bars where they wouldn’t notice so much her rashes. One-night stands... anyway the medicine would take effect in a week.

She claimed she was the true Empress of China and she wore yellow colored robes, the color of Emperors.

I recommended, “She continue to smoke opium and carry on. Only keep taking the medicine.”

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She was an Arab and was raped in the Middle East by a US serviceman, who she didn’t know the name of. In her mind life was like a war. I told her to, “Join the peace corps.

And stop fighting herself.” So, she changed her name to, “Jenny Peace.” And she put the rape incident behind her. And all was well. And I gave her some stimulants to inspire her.

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In Africa, he caught amoebic dysentery. It caused him to act totally crazy, like grab people on the street and demand they “Cure him” I said, “Maybe you are crazy anyway and the dysentery just brought it out.” I cured him of dysentery and I put him on tranquilizers and told him to take it easy.

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I reflected, insanity is a kind of default mechanism when the body and mind are under very stressful conditions.

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Then a pyromaniac. He was obsessed with fire and confided in me that he had started 50 fires in California over the last two years. He said he was an agent of the God, Prometheus. I told him to try and be constructive. And then I told the authorities about him, breaking psychiatrist-client silence.

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Next, a woman who had a nervous breakdown. She was an educator/tutor and the kids drove her crazy. But now she was 56 and could retire. I said, “Your suffering is over, you can live in grace and comfort and travel the world.” She said, “I drive myself crazy, I know. But I don’t know what I would do with my time if I retired. Conceivably I could live on for hundreds of years. One gets bored of travel and comfort.” I said, “Contrary to popular belief, there are worse things than boredom.”

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He was from a backwards part of Asia, which still had lead pipes and lead poisoning made him crazy. He groped women and flashed them. And babbled about “Do you believe in the devil?” And he said the devil was within him. I said he needed new blood and drugs to calm him.

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Then a girl who was a virtual zombie. She just wanted to listen to death metal.

I gave her the shock treatment and tried various drugs on her.

Then I loved her. She thrashed about like a wild cat. It worked well and she said she felt she was waking up from a long dream/nightmare. And I helped her improve her website to garner many new loves. “Love cures all wounds,” I told her.

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Then a girl who said, “She had Parkinson’s and wanted to die.” I said, “The cure is just around the corner, why not hold on? So she did and I later found out they had cured her., just one month later.

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Then a woman who had just got out of the mental hospital. She said most people in the mental hospital will never leave.

I said, “One Who Flew Over the Cuckoos’ Nest,” was inspirational. None of us wants to go there. But I said, “Congratulations, you made it out.”

Many patients figured I was crazy.

And I observed that driving people crazy was a new offence in the criminal code.

People brought suits against one another. Love was madness.

Anyway, I told her to carry on madly, but don't make trouble or the spies will be after you.

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And the government was sued by many for driving them insane with their spies, and hypnosis. The cat was out of the bag and most believed however, that the Leadership was sane, but a strong minority doubted it.

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Sometimes contemporary people went back to the farm or life as a hunter-gatherer. Some went into those kinds of virtual reality and never came out. Like one former client who had no use for civilization, but she said, "Finally she got sick of VR. She said, "She would only spend a few minutes with me, but hoped for advice." I responded by saying, "She try and find kindred spirits on the Internet. A perfect love awaits all decent people," I said. "Maybe it won't last long but it will be there for you, always." I added.

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Next a woman who said she was a CIA experiment with eternal youth. She was 32 but she thought she looked like 18. I said, "It is probably just good genes." She said, "No, she was unique in her family."

And she also said, "The secret service was in her head because she was a brilliant astrophysicist who claimed to have found intelligent radio waves from a far-off star. It was disturbing to hear her. I told her to take some of the latest stimulants in order to be happy. And told her, "To keep such discoveries to herself and try and make a deal with the spies."

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She said, “She was impoverished but she really wanted to be treated by me. I said, “Yes.” And she was very grateful.

I diagnosed her as having, “Modern day disease.”

I asked her what was the craziest thing she had ever done, she said, “She fell in love with a jerk who mistreated her and confused her.” “Yes,” I said, “Love is madness.” So I prescribed inspirational stimulants for her.

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Then I met a patient who had gunned down his 3 bosses. He said, “They maltreated him, treating him like an insect. And if he could do it all over he’d kill them again. Anyway, jail is a joke,” he said.

And he told me that I was the crazy one who drove his patients mad.

And he refused to be hypnotised.

“Post-hypnotic suggestion was evil,” he said.

I said, “We could use hypnosis to end all wars. We all firmly believed we were improving the world, step by step.”

Anyway, I talked to him in prison, and he said, “It wasn’t so bad. And he would live forever.” I said, “Maybe once they discover eternal youth ex-cons will be left out of the equation.”

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Next a woman who said, “She kept falling in love. It was good confusion. Love.” But she said, “She was out of control.”

I said, “You are, like many, totally spoiled.

She said, “Those who admit they are mad are the best people.”

I answered, “Love makes the world go round. But you need to stop losing control, I am prescribing tranquilizers to calm you down.”

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Then I had a gorgeous female patient and I asked, “You’ve gone to 10 different shrinks, why come to me?” She said many people recommend you Online.

She said, “She’d been selected for the new mind reading technology (MRT) program experiment.”

She said, they massaged peoples’ minds.

But, she said, “She couldn’t take it. It was like rape only worse.”

I said, “MRT is the future. It will put a stop to all wars and criminal activity. It will make Utopia.” She asked, “If there was any way to protect against MRT? I said such technology is forbidden. I really can’t help you.” But then I loved her, and she felt better.

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Next a patient who laughed at psychology and said, “All we did is give opiates to people and didn’t help them to become sane.” But I used hypnotism on him and rearranged his thinking. “Respect mental health,” I told him. I made him more respectful and humble and charitable. It was all possible with post-hypnotic suggestion.

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Next a woman who said, “She would run for President of the US as an Independent.” But she said, “The US Secret Service was in her head and making her miserable.”

She said she would run to fight for sanity in a mad world.

And she said she would have referendums on all important issues confronting the government.

And she wanted to concentrate high rises in all the cities and get everyone to live in urban areas.

And she wanted everyone to have a peace quotient (PQ).

But she said, “The spies wouldn’t let her run and so she was depressed.”

I said, “There’s nothing I can say to you that you don’t already know. Fight the good fight; it’s all you can do. But you can help the needy and help humanity in other ways, besides politics. Earn yourself the Nobel Peace prize, or something.”

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He was a megalomaniac, a rich multi-trillionaire. He told me he wanted to be the world’s first zillionaire. He was involved in all kinds of business. But he complained, “The spies were in his head and were preventing him from getting richer...

I said, “You want to be good, maybe not a saint, but hat’s off to you. You have to be content with what you have and not be too greedy. Perhaps the spies just don’t want any one person to be too powerful.”

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She was paralyzed from the neck down until she was cured 20 years ago. She said, “It’s a wonderful world.” I said, “Get in touch with other people who are in the same boat and together write a book about your experiences.” “And do it also in virtual reality, which will give you a chance to really use your imagination.” She said, “But she couldn’t recover from the paralysis mentally. She needed psychiatric help. I said, “I’ll be there to hold your hand.”

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Next a man who complained that, “All the women were too tough. So, he set up a feminine school for girls. His school attracted old-fashioned girls and girls that didn’t want to be tough. But the students drove him mad.” I told him, “To leave the teaching to others and just be the Principal. And I prescribed some tranquilizers.”

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Then a woman who had an attitude problem. She thought life should be paradise for all, and blamed politicians for her unhappiness. I felt compelled to tell her, “You have a pretty face, but it is not an intelligent one. “You need plastic surgery on your face and body.” She stormed out of my office.

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I reflected that 90% supported the status quo. But the vast majority of my patients were unhappy with the World milieu.

But I worried that spies made dissidents disappear.

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And then I had a dissident patient who said, “This world was all coldly calculated and didn’t want to see what these people might have achieved. Everyone knew dissidents disappeared, but some still insisted on being radical just like those who were accused of heresy in the Middle Ages, who wouldn’t recant. I had nothing to do with it,” and said, “It was wrong. But they left me alone.” I said, “She had to bow down to the powers that be. And not be so egotistical.”

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American spies were trying to overwhelm other countries through MRT hacking.

No spies were assigned to me, full time, but I heard them in my head sometimes and so I had to curtail my love with patients. The spies told me, “I was corrupt.”

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Then I met a woman who told me she kept her thoughts on government to herself and this is why she was still alive. But she was forming the new CEO’s Business Party which sought lower taxes and more free trade and more businesspeople in government.

She said, “The richest are the brightest and should rule. And we should make everyone even richer.” But she was having mental problems. She said, “There were voices in her head stating that she back down from her stance and political ambitions.” And she said, “We can’t improve the World if we neutralize those who have ideas to change it.” I gave her some tranquilizers and wished her good luck.

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Then I had a patient who was a clown and he came to me all dressed up. He said, “He sought to make people to look on the light side and feel good about themselves, mostly children. Socialism and ambition. “God helps those who help themselves,” I said.

And I advised him to stop clowning around and get serious about this serious world. I gave him some stimulants.

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Next I met lonely Lucy. She said she craved adventure, but virtual reality was boring, and the people in it were mostly holograms, who didn’t interest her.

I told lonely Lucy to go climb Mt. Everest and meet some kindred spirits. She did and she died, and her family blamed me.

My reputation was tarnished.

But there's too many people, I reflected.

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Then a "Bored mad man." I told him there's worse things than being bored. He said "He knew but he didn't feel like living any more.

I gave him a special kind of stimulant that inspired a lot of people to do great art.

Maximizing cognitive ability. But I learned a week later, he was dead.

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She told me she couldn't stop committing crimes. So, I hypnotised her and told her to work in rehab for criminals to do some good.

She said she admitted it she was insane. I said but you can be creative in your madness, and contribute to peoples' entertainment. (She was a poet). I said, "Stop your graffiti and get down to Earth with your fellow poets.

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She was known as the world's greatest lover. She had a pretty, intelligent face and told me she was a sex machine. She said she had superhuman energy and would find your erogenous zones and give you an oil massage.

But she fell in love with many of her customers and it was unrequited love.

I said, "If you are such a good lover you should be able to win the hearts of the rich and famous.

She said they liked me, but felt I was just a slut and not a worthy companion. They preferred to have children with more stable women, not her, their crazed lover. I said, "I want to love you." And she acquiesced. And it was the best sex I ever had. She was so

creative and energetic. We made love with dream music and she followed the beat hypnotically. I was mesmerised and nearly lost control of myself. But she said, “She had to move on.” So, I thanked her.

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Next a woman who said, “She’d surfed on the net filtering out 2 billion men looking for true love, but it was difficult to know which would be best for her. And she changed her desires as she got older.” But she said, “Right now I want you.” So, I loved her, and it was good. I reflected it was a corrupt thing to do, but she was so hot and ready.

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Then a crazy man who howled like a wolf. I asked him, “Why do you think you are a werewolf?” He said he had a brotherhood with wolves and feral dogs. He’d bite people out of the blue and then howl. He was very hairy. And I told him, “To take some ‘humanizing drugs.’ Such drugs would make him saner and bring his instinctual human skills to the forefront. No more howling like a wolf,” I said. He said, “He just wanted to be free.

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I thought to myself, maybe one day everyone will be a shrink.

The whole world is going insane.

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She said she was probably the second richest person in the world with an estimated net worth 600 trillion. But in all her companies she was a silent partner. No one knew her true identity. I said I am amazed that you can get away with it!

She said her children all hated her. Just like King Midas she turned everything into gold including her kids.

And she said she reached a plateau of happiness 3 years ago and now every day she felt worse. She said she was tired and strung out and was juggling too much work.

And she said, "She should have perhaps been an actress. But now she was too old to change." I told her she still looked good. And I said, "You depress me, the Shrink." I said, "If even the richest aren't happy, who is?" And I put her on tranquilizers to calm her down.

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Then a politician mad man. I said to him, "Continue with your political activity." He said anti-aging medicine which was newly discovered should be only for the richest 50% so that people would remain ambitious. And he said supercomputers should be banned as they were too powerful.

I said don't fall away from the law, however.

I said, "We need to share eternal youth with everyone. It's the right thing to do. And it was then that I first started to take this medicine. My age disappeared and I became youthful again. And I wanted to tell my patients to all take this drug.

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So, to cap off this year, I simply temporarily retired and spent my time raising my numerous children and looking for new mates.

My kids and I experienced virtual reality worlds together. We only went to sane, decent Worlds.

And I lived happily ever after.

There would always be more and more people with mental problems, so I was assured of a job in perpetuity.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *I believe these days the World gets crazier and crazier. This is a story about future madness that will no doubt be the milieu in the future. Everyone will need to see a shrink. And everyone will no doubt boast how crazy they are. As the Greeks believed, madness is divine, a gift from the immortal Gods. And people will cultivate their madness. And it will be a good thing for better or worse....*

BIO: *Monaghan is a sixth generation Canadian who published extensively, mostly in the sci/fi and speculative fields. He was previously published in Fleas on the Dog in Issue 1.*