FIRST PERSON ACCOUNT

The Second World

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Years ago when it all began, when I was 16, I was lying in the grass and I heard a crying child. I looked for it. I couldn't find the child. When I went home I heard the child again. There was also some other person, who kept repeating my name. It was friendly, even kind. I thought this will be my secret. The child and the person who repeated my name belong to a world of freedom. A world where everything is possible. You may cry, you are a person. You can be invisible. You are an important person, you are not alone. The Sympathy World.

I remember the day when I saw a river of blood in the middle of the city where I live. A World in the process of being created—with blood and a beast with a head consisting of tails and voices who told me things about death and that I am a misfit.

All the things the voices told me, I believed. All the things I saw, I believed. I didn't make contact with the World of my friends nor with that of the passers-by. I must have been in the World of Death for quite a while. It felt so lonely. No one could help me. The man who I loved told me that I had to take the medicines. I was certain that the pills would not work, in fact I thought it was poison. Yet I took them for him, because I loved him. He would have left me had I refused to take my medicines. I made a choice: I chose him.

The first days I did not notice any difference. But after a few weeks I stepped into another World. I became one with my friends again, not an outsider anymore. I became a part of a World where you can live and not die. The medicines made me think in a different way: I wasn't afraid of the usual things anymore. My thoughts were still negative but I wasn't afraid. To be or not to be? That's what it is.

Now I am 41. The lonely World of Death hasn't vanished completely. It is still there, every day. But it doesn't possess me like it used to. I can live with two worlds. I even play with them. Sometimes when the voices say “You are a misfit,” I can say to myself, “I’m not a misfit”; and sometimes I say, “What the heck! So what? It’s OK: I am a misfit.” The cognitive-behavior therapy taught me to make my life comfortable. One thought can make you feel very down and another thought can make you feel fine. Make a choice: it doesn’t matter which one.

When I go to the supermarket I see a spot of blood and I take a step aside. When I go to work, a man is hanging in a tree: it doesn’t matter. When I close my eyes and look behind me, the man in the tree is gone. I can’t trust my senses. I’m not able to take control of my senses. Yet I can control my thoughts. Most of the time.

I remember when I lost myself. I had no contact with the World of Life. But a friend once said to me, “Don’t be silly.” I took inspiration from that. Now I recognize the different worlds. It is silly to think that everything is reality.

Now that I accept that this is just the one World playing tricks on me, it doesn’t bother me all that much. I know there is another World for me too. Sometimes it’s lonely but I can write about it, and that helps. Perhaps I can make the world of live a sympathy world.