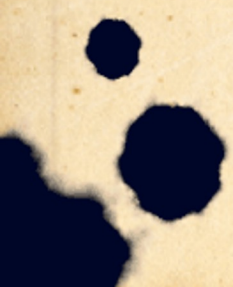


“Writing is not necessarily something to be ashamed of, but do it in private and wash your hands afterwards.”

~Robert A. Heinlein



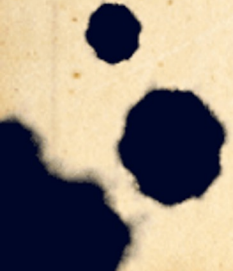


Writing Out of the Cave

LMG Swain

with an

Apology to Plato



We are Wordsmiths

Forging ideas with words

First epithet for myself

Talewright

TaleRider—my kutte epithet



I write stories, and I ride a Softail

Yes, I sometimes write on this 50's Royal portable (the first laptop), just like the one Hemingway used.

No, that's not a Softail. That's a 1940s Shovelhead model I found at Hobby Lobby.

They enjoy each other's company.

The Sparks of the Anvil

Beating the nearly molten piece of metal into something new and different

The sparks flying from the fire of the metal are beautiful.



The Sparks of the Anvil

However—

the sparks are not what are important

What's important is what is left after the sparks fly, the metal (words) is beaten and cools into the desired shape, and the tool/instrument (poem/story/novel) is placed in the hands of your Reader.

Smashing Words Together

She was awfully pretty.

She was pretty awful.

Same words: Order determines
intent.

Punctuation & Letter arrangement
are the rivets

What's that down the road ahead?

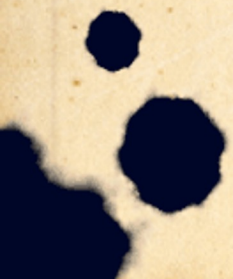
What's that down the road, a head?

Bias of the Reader/Listener



GPS: Police reported ahead.

ME: I wonder if they'll find the rest of the body?

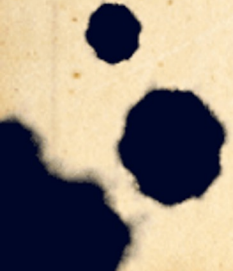




Warning:

Shameless Self
Promotion Blvd.
Dead Ahead—

Fasten your seatbelt,
its going to be a bumpy ride



LMG SWAIN



For the SECRET Within
For Within is the TRUTH

POPINJAY

2023-2024



A Perfect True Gender Society

Jaden knows Four Important
Truths:

Gender Defines you as a
Person

Gender Regulates your
Employment Opportunities

Gender Determines your Status
in Society

And, the most important
Truth—

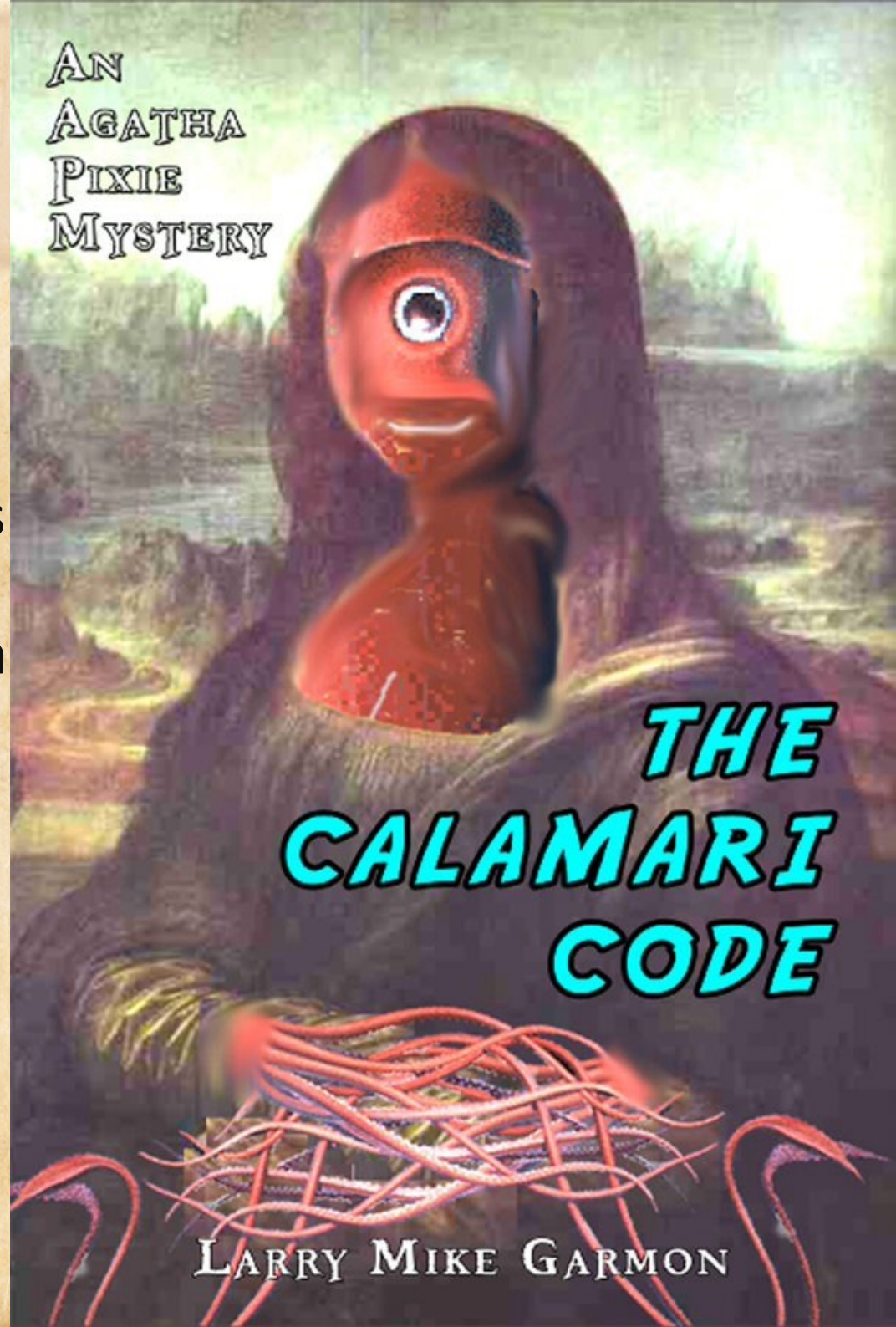
There are Two and only Two
True Genders.

The time has arrived for sixteen-year-old Jaden Davjak to adolescere, to attend Gender Education and Assignment Seminary, where mental, intellectual, physical, and psychological test results reveal Jaden's Secret Within—Jaden's True Gender. Eager to become a productive full CitiGen, Jaden enters the rebirthing Chrysalis for the six-month process of metamorphosing into TruGen.



2007—Re-release Fall 2023

Art shouldn't be a crime; however, when Agatha Pixie gets her hands on The Omma Lisa, the world's most famous painting, evildoers are determined to paint the town from a palette of mischief and mayhem to take the painting from her. The Calamari Code: An Agatha Pixie Mystery is an exciting romp through the fascinating world of Zuopolis.



Agatha Pixie Mysteries



Agatha Pixie—PI and Mystery Writer

Those in her detective agency:

Shirley Dachshund

Edgar Allen Crow

Earl Stanley Garter

Bulldog Drummond



Sept/Halloween 2023
Feary Tales: Vomit I

The Dead Boy
The Secret of Bones
A Little too Much Salt
Empty Bed Blues
All is Forgiven
Because, His Eyes
The Grotesque
Unicorn Tears
Poochy and Sheba
Superstition



SHADOWS

a Feary Tale novella by LMG Swain



September
2023



More about
Shadows
later

“The Cave”—a Brief Explanation

- Why?
- Because that’s what I do.

The Republic

- In his lengthy treatise, Plato includes a dialogue between Socrates and Glaukon, Plato's brother
- nature of BELIEF versus KNOWLEDGE

BELIEF vs KNOWLEDGE

BELIEF—acceptance without proof;
based on feelings, senses,
subjectiveness, faith, intuition;

TRUTH without EVIDENCE

When a person dies, the spirit
continues in another
realm/dimension.

BELIEF vs KNOWLEDGE

KNOWLEDGE—FACTS that are
indisputable—never change;

ABSOLUTE TRUTH

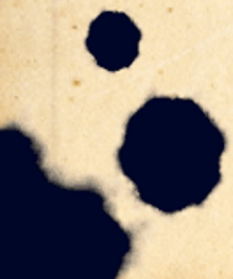
We will all die.

BELIEF & KNOWLEDGE Collide



We are all Born—Knowledge

We are all Born of married Male and
Female Parents—Belief




BELIEF & KNOWLEDGE Collide



Belief or Knowledge?

We are all Born through the birth canal.

Didn't nature (God, if you wish) create us to be born through the birth canal?

- Are you truly Human if you're born any other way?
- 

Is Neo Human?



THE CAVE

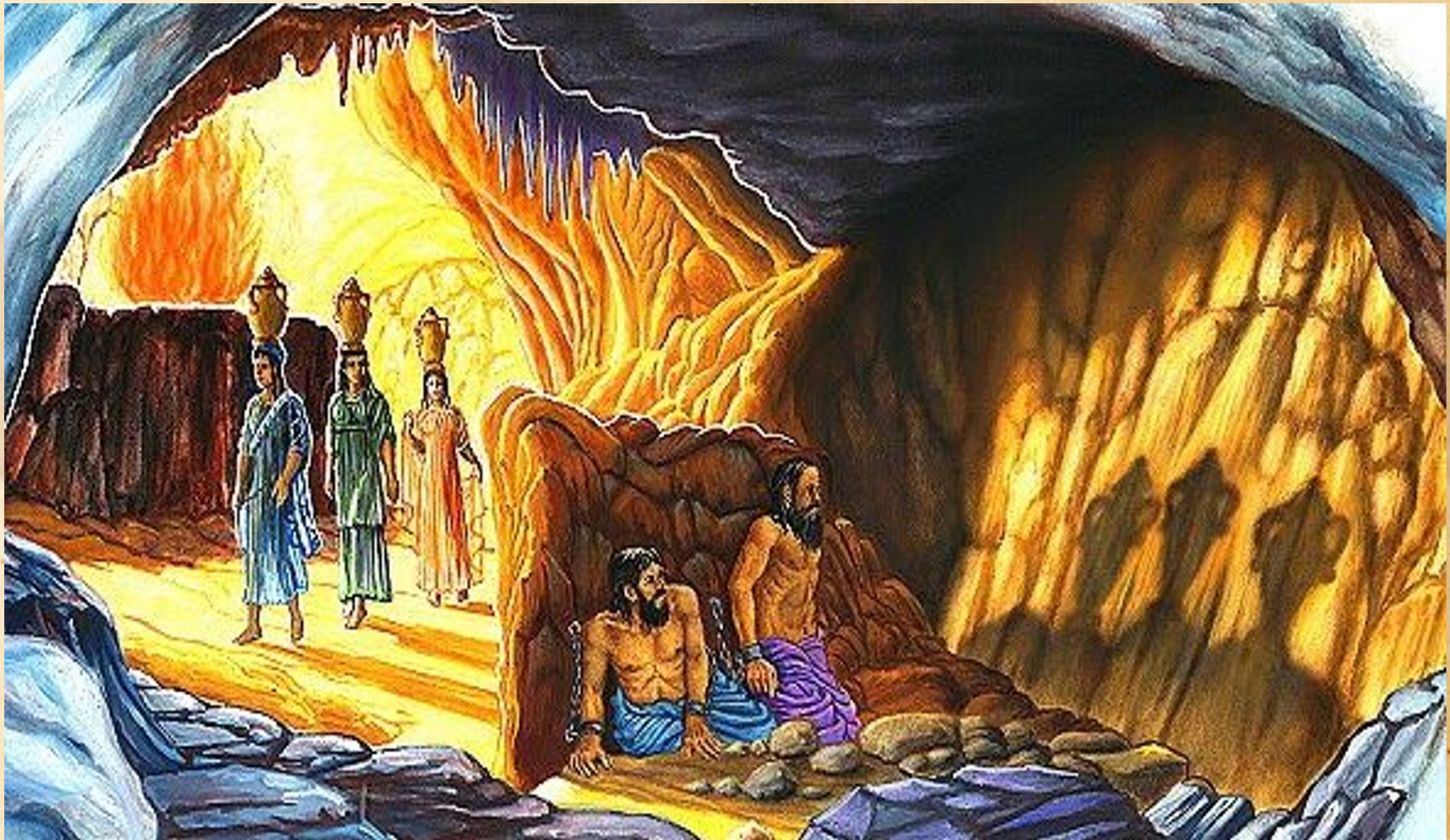
The Cave—no other Experiences

prisoners are chained to a wall deep in a cave

they have been there since Childhood

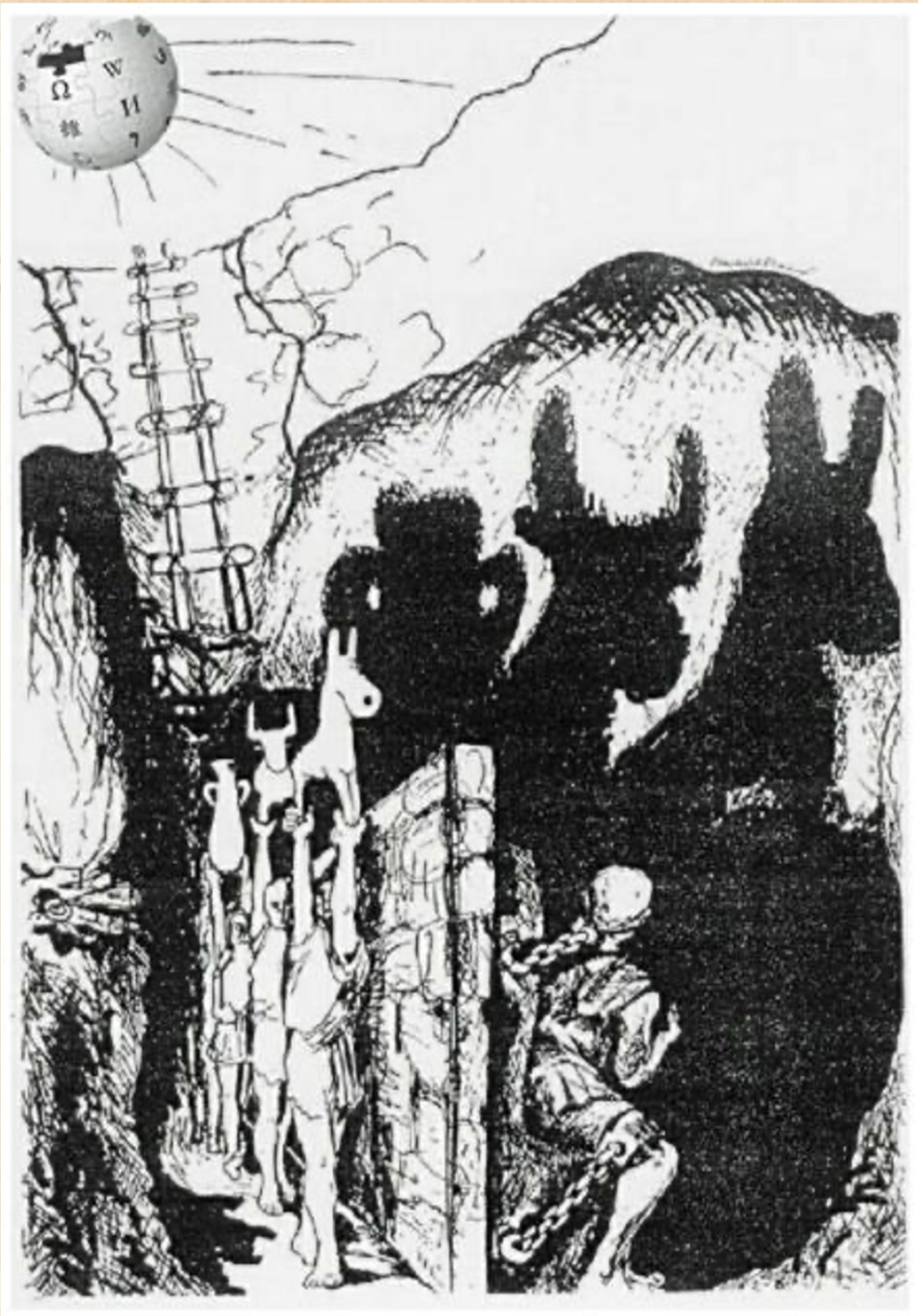


behind the wall is a great fire on a platform

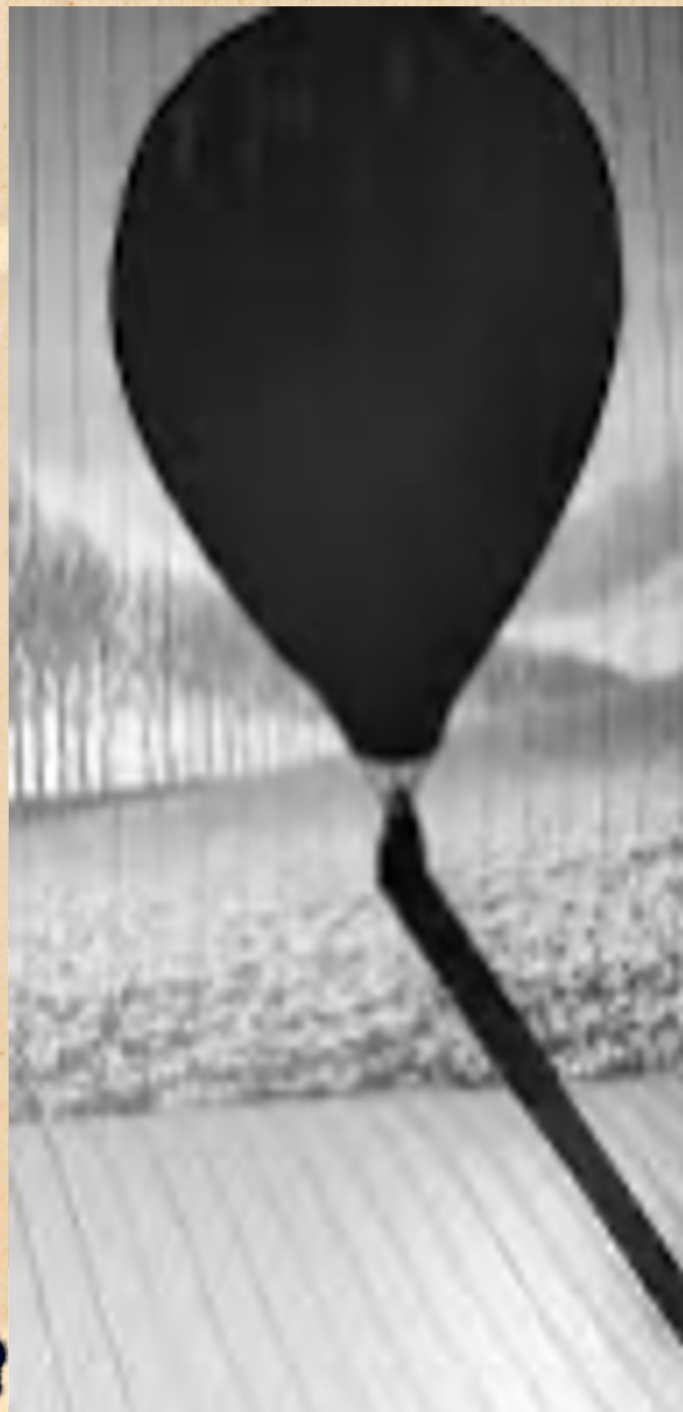


between the platform and the wall,
people carry objects or cut out puppets,
whose shadows are projected onto the wall

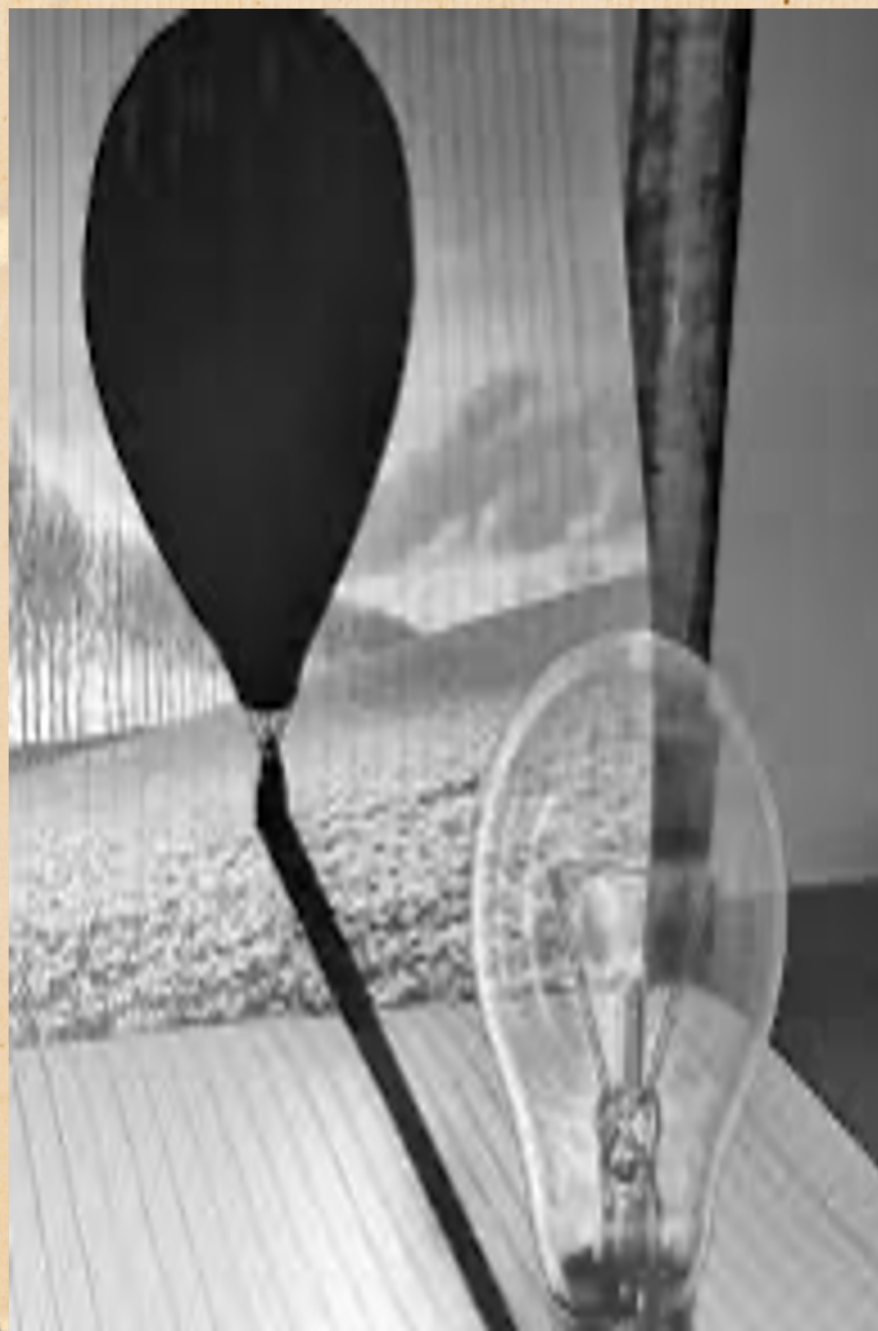




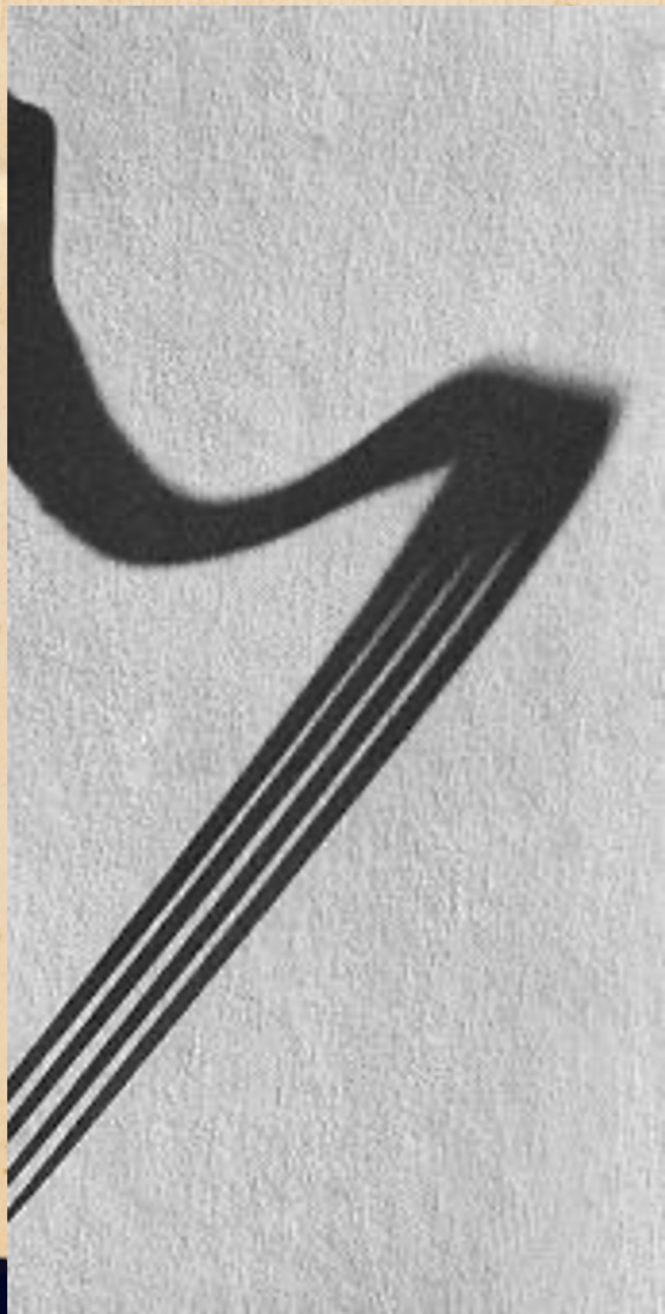
the objects'
shadows are
distorted
by the flickering
flame



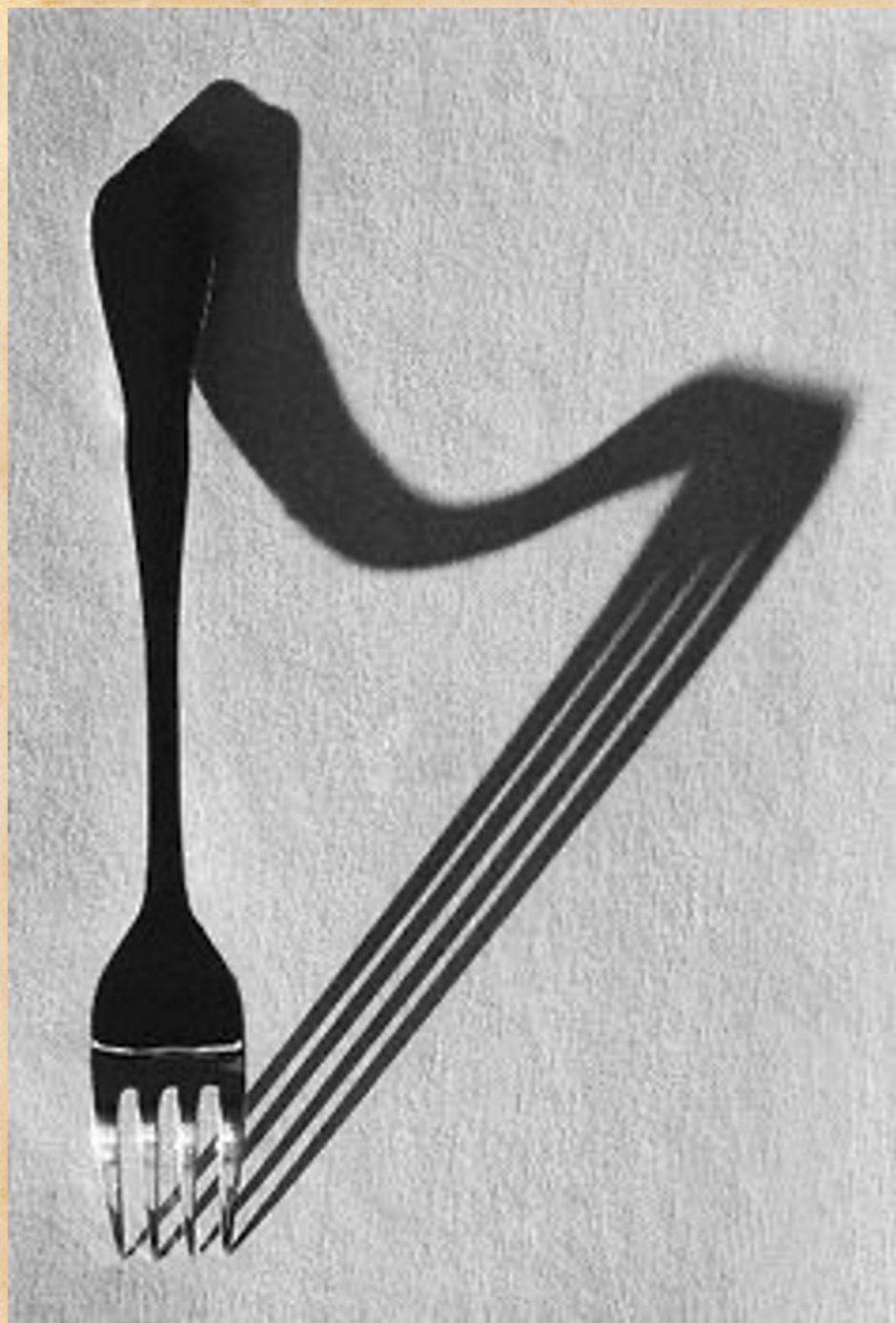
Tell me
what you
see.



Reality
distorted
by Light



Do you
want to
play the
Harp?



Shadow
of
Reality



- the prisoners have no choice but to watch the shadows projected onto the wall;
- those holding the objects are behind the wall and do not cast shadows



Sounds of those carrying the objects echo and reverberate off the walls

The prisoners think the sounds come from the shadows

Looks like a movie theatre or home big screen on the wall, doesn't it?



the shadows are distorted
by the flickering light;

the voices are distorted
by echoing—bouncing
and repeating—off the
walls

Shadows of Reality

Suggesting a Belief
(Idea/Conspiracy) is
more powerful than
Knowledge
(Reality/Facts)



What's this person doing
with that sword?



the Prisoners never know they are looking at the dark distorted representation of a real object, animal, or person, and the implied actions and echoed sounds are a distortion, a deception, a lie



your Senses CANNOT be Trusted



One WHY?

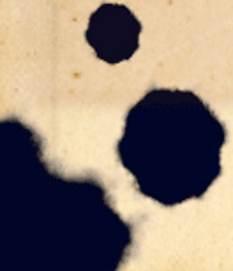
Two WHAT?s






WHY . . .

is this Distortion of
Reality *Reality* to the
Prisoners?




WHAT'S . . .

the objective of the wardens
projecting puppets, animals,
objects on the wall in front of
the Prisoners, Shadows
distorted by the flickering
light?



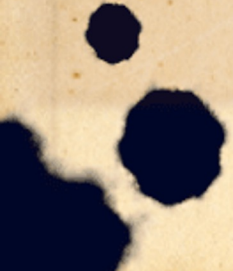
Mark Twain said,
“Write what you know.”





WHAT...

are the Prisoners thinking
as they watch the parade
of Shadows and hear the
Voices of Shadows?

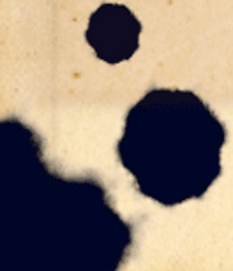




Two questions:

What do you know?


How did you come by
what you know?





Okay, three questions:

How do you know that what
you know is not merely
distorted Shadows of Reality
projected on the wall by
society, culture, family et al?





What is Truth?

We both have Truths.

Are mine the same as yours?

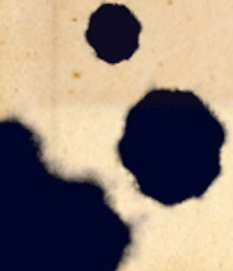




Yeesch!

I have a headache.

Okay, maybe that
wasn't so brief






Applying this to
Creating Fiction



Get yourself
out of your Cave





1. Unshackle yourself from the wall.

In modern parlance:

Get out of your comfort zone

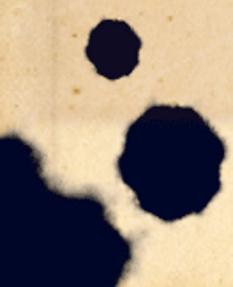





2. Walk behind the wall.

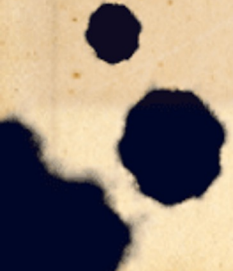
Explore the World around you.

See the Objects, Animals, and
People are two-dimensional
cutouts not **REAL** three-
dimensional beings

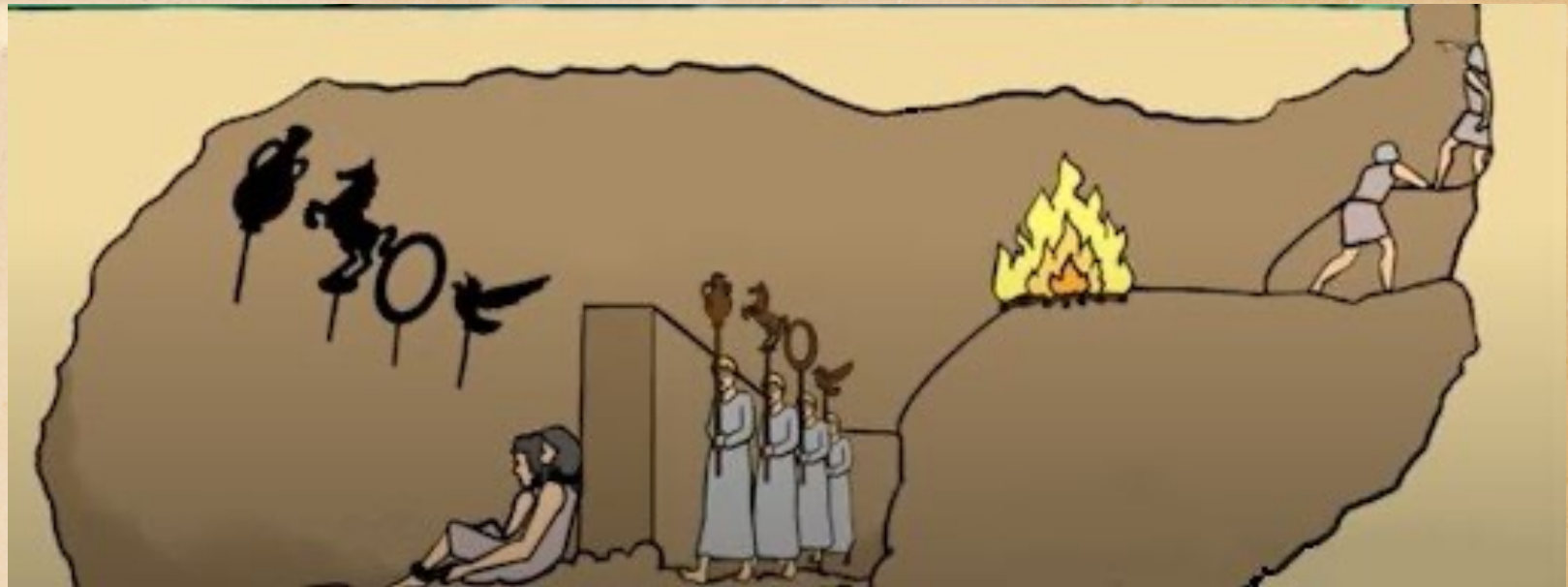




3. See the brightness of the
Flame, feel its Heat, know that
it's the Flame that has created
the False Reality you've been
observing, have even been
devoted & obedient to



The Flame is your Guide Out of the Cave




The Flame that has deceived you will free you.

The Flame lights the way to the Path leading
● you out of the Cave

Whew! Finally, out of that Cave

Now What?

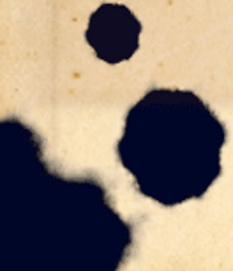


How do you Write?

Do you write from Belief (the Shadows on the Cave wall) or from Knowledge (indisputable Facts)?

Most of us produce Fiction from Both.


Capote's term for this type of Writing—





Faction.

Research—Vicariously and Directly



Professionals love to talk about their work

Pathologist

Doctor

Detective

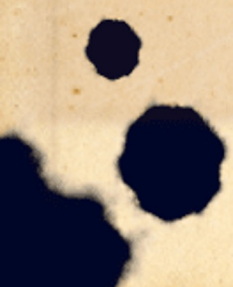
Patrolman

Combat Soldier/Sailor

Teacher

Hacker

Scam Artist



Michael Baden



This coroner loves to talk about his work:

JFK, OJ Simpson, Jeffrey Epstein, Michael Brown, George Floyd

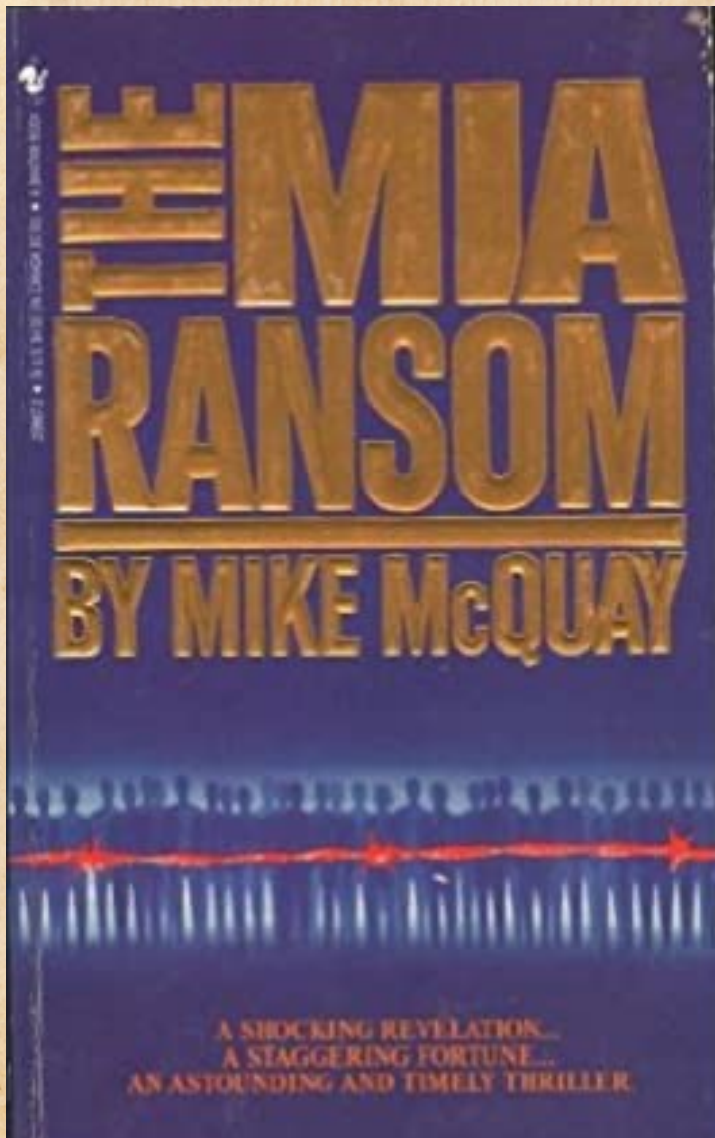
Vicariously: Studying Baden will help with your hero Coroner or autopsy scene

Directly: Your local coroner may not be as famous as Baden, but he/she will love to talk about the work, cases, problems—and may invite you to observe an autopsy or two

Perhaps you'll find your own
Dr. G



The MIA Ransom Mike McQuay



1986

- Vietcong declares it has 2,000 American soldiers who were declared MIA
- Want \$1 million for each
- Will execute all within a week if not paid
- Main character taken ashore in Vietnam accompanied by sailors wielding M-16s
- Sailors wouldn't have had M-16s
- Marines would have escorted the CIA agent (or Navy SEALs)

Learning without Living

Sounds contradictory

- If you write murder mysteries, how many murders have you committed?
- How do you know that the method of murder in your tale is accurate, believable, real?
- Movies/TV fiction show someone strangling another person, and the victim is dead in moments (Cave mentality).
- BLAH: Strangling takes several minutes and a great deal of effort and strength to kill the intended victim not moments.

Research without going to Jail

A drug dealer, pimp, gangster in your story?

Which method is better?

Vicarious or Direct

Hollywood (the Consummate Cave)

Remember Huggy Bear?

Stereotype, cliché

A distorted Shadow
thrown on the screen
(wall) in front of us

Cave Mentality



Frank Lucas

One of the most infamous, notable, and successful gangsters in American history—a Real person.

Treated his criminal activity as a business.

Not all drug dealers, pimps, thieves are thugs and gangsters.

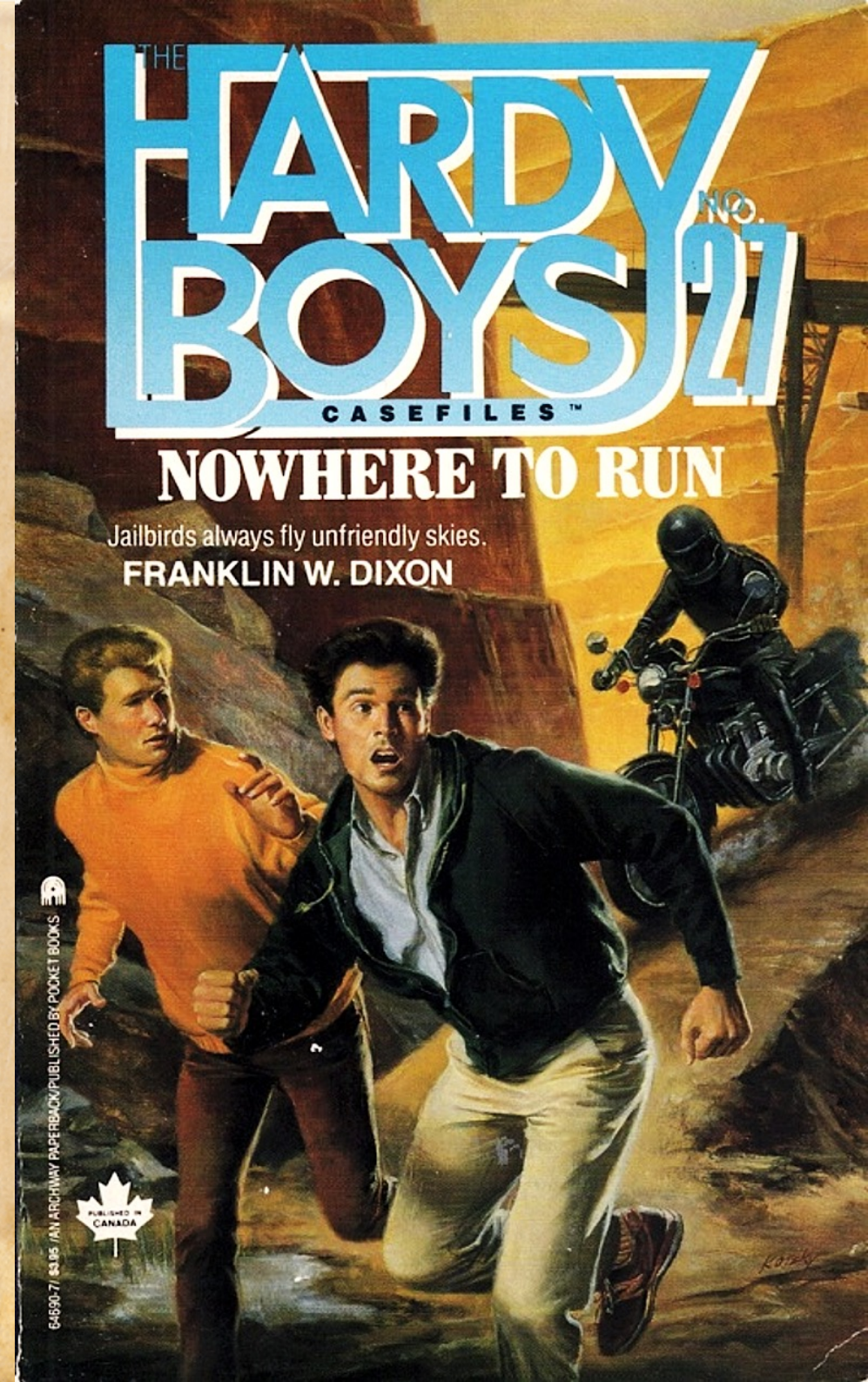
Freed from the Shadows of Reality



Denzel Washington as gangster Frank Lucas.
Now, that's a killer suit!

Ghost wrote several of the CaseFiles—learned to deal with editors, publishers, and deadlines

Provided the background story on why Joe was always interested in cars and motorcycles



Direct result of & reference to my
interest in bikes—and the Wild West



Tough Roadhouse Bikers

Language All
Their Own

Kutte Patches

Colors Brother Old Lady Lone Wolf Nomad
Pipes Back Warmer Mushrooms Road Rash Whip
Binned Pillion Cage Blood Bikers Rockers

Two Legs Up/Two Wheels Down

What happens on the Road stays on the Road

MC RC MM LE FF



Pee Wee and Satan's Helpers

- Pee Wee experiences an Out of Cave moment when he searches for his stolen bike and enters a bar, the home of Satan's Helpers MC.
- They're riding Harleys: Shovelheads, Dynas, Sportsters, Cruisers, Softails, Electra Glides, 114s, Road Kings



Pee Wee's a biker, too, looking for his
Stolen Schwinn Western Flyer



In his search for his Schwinn, he left his
personal Cave and wandered into the Cave of Satan's
Helpers

The Helpers tell him to LEAVE!



He leaves, but not graciously.
The Helpers are gonna 86 Pee Wee

13



1%
er

Dance Out of the Cave

In reality, the MC would have burned Pee Wee
Writer breaks the Cave mold with Absurdity
Pee Wee dances—the MC love him



Satan's Helpers are released from their Cave; Pee Wee IS a biker—one of them give him a bike to help him find his Schwinn



What Reality did Satan Helpers Learn?



It's not the ride (shadow); it's the Rider (Reality).

The ride is preferential.

The Spirit of the Rider is imperative.



It's okay to go Back.

Of course, after entering Large Marge's cave, Pee Wee thinks Satan's Helpers' Cave is nice.



What Happens Once We're Released from the Cave?



Chaos, Confusion, Skepticism



The Light of
Reality
(Knowledge) hits
us like a Mack
truck, shattering
the Shadows of
Reality (Belief)

We don't believe what we see
because it's not what we've seen
all our lives.





Light is the Lie; Shadows are the Truth

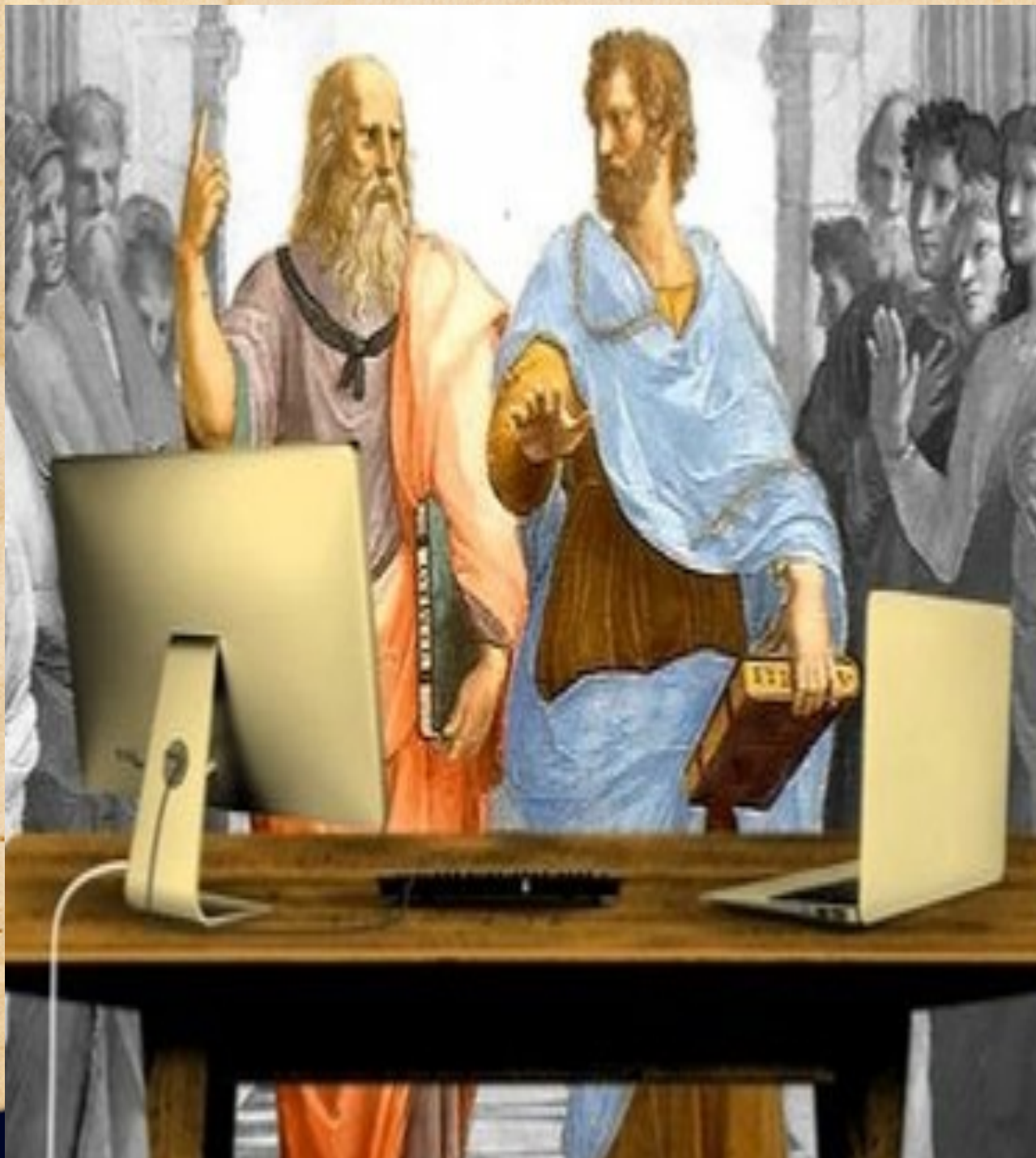
REAL!

Virtual Reality




Factual Reality

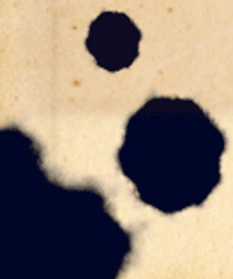
NOT REAL!



Socrates says
to Glaukon,
“You can’t
trust every-
thing you see
and read on the
Internet.



In producing Fiction, the
Writer contends with
Three Caves, Not One!



First Cave

The Cave of the Writer

Some writers want to invite the Reader
into his/her Cave

Propaganda, Agenda Oriented,
Only my Experience is Real and True

Second Cave

The Cave of the Reader—Comfort Zone:
I'm happy where I am, Thank you
very much.

Sometimes the Reader will free
him/herself and read out of the
Comfort Cave—desire for something
different, wants to learn, feels a
calling, a yearning

Third Cave

The Cave the Writer creates & dwells in during the creation of Story

Lures the (captive) Reader in with the promise of presenting a New Reality

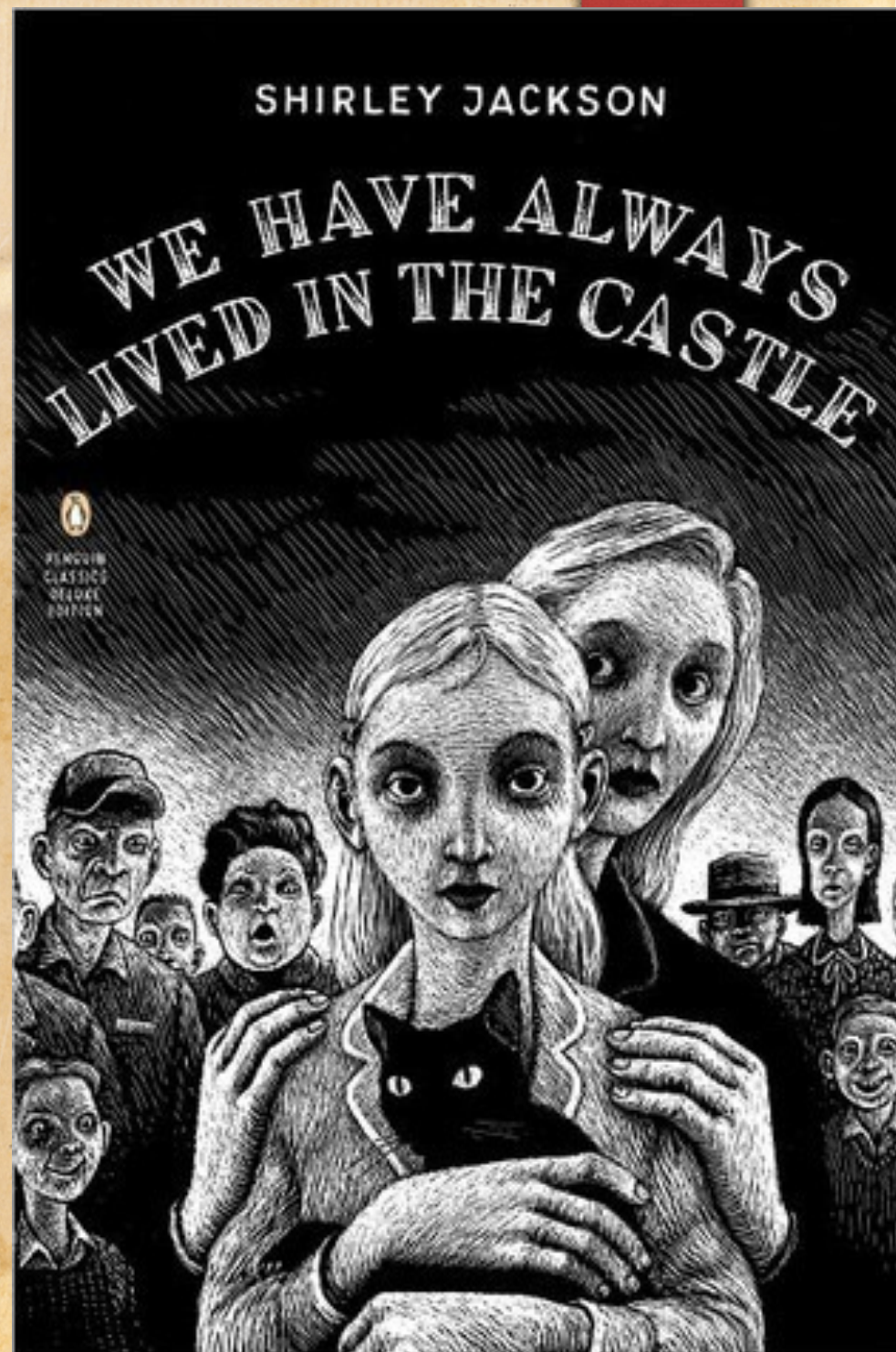
Sometimes the Reader stays

- Sometimes the Reader runs from this Cave

To repeat:

The Third Cave is the Cave the Writer creates & dwells in during the creation of Story


This can be the most dangerous of the Three Caves.



Shirley Jackson was so deep in the Cave she created for this novel that after finishing it she suffered a nervous breakdown, a bout of Agoraphobia, and didn't go outside for six months.

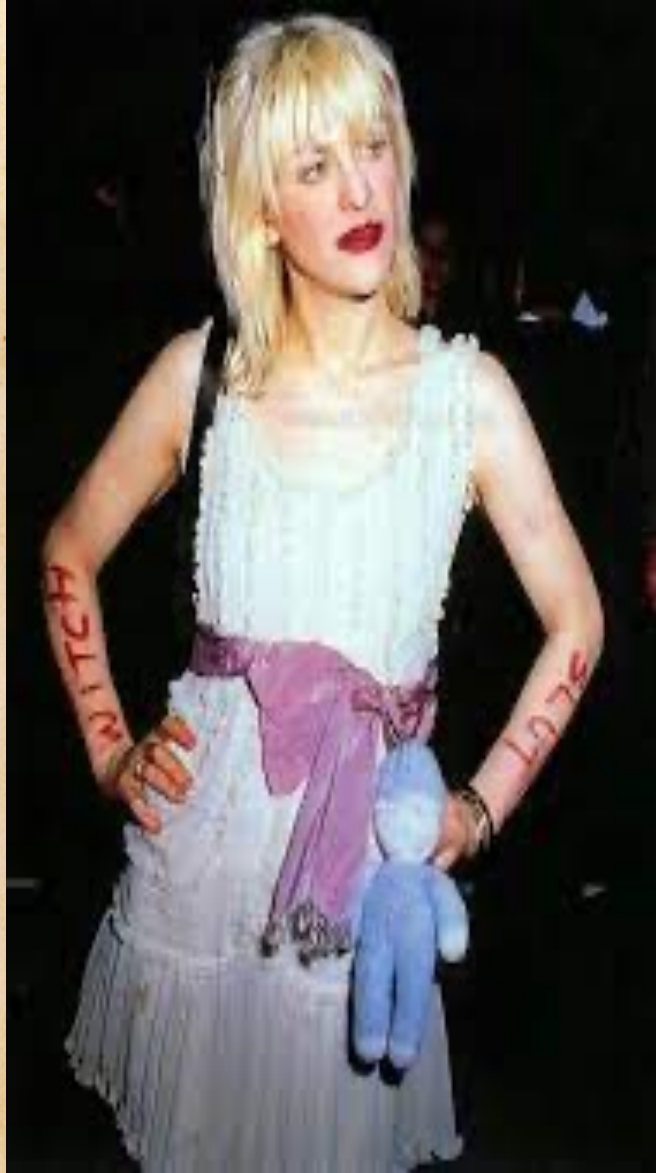


“I have written myself into the house.”



Sometimes the Third Cave is
Dangerous for the Reader





Kinderwhore is a clothing style used by a handful of mostly female grunge bands in the US during the early to mid-1990s.



Deanna M. Lehman

When a virtual FB friend told me of the release of her novel *Kinderwhore*, I bought her novel expecting a story about a 90s female punk rock band.



“Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few are to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention.”

— Francis Bacon



KINDERWHORE



DEANNA M. LEHMAN

Good writing. Enjoyed the structure and style.

Subject became too intense when I came to understand she was writing autobiographically about the sexual abuse she suffered from older men.

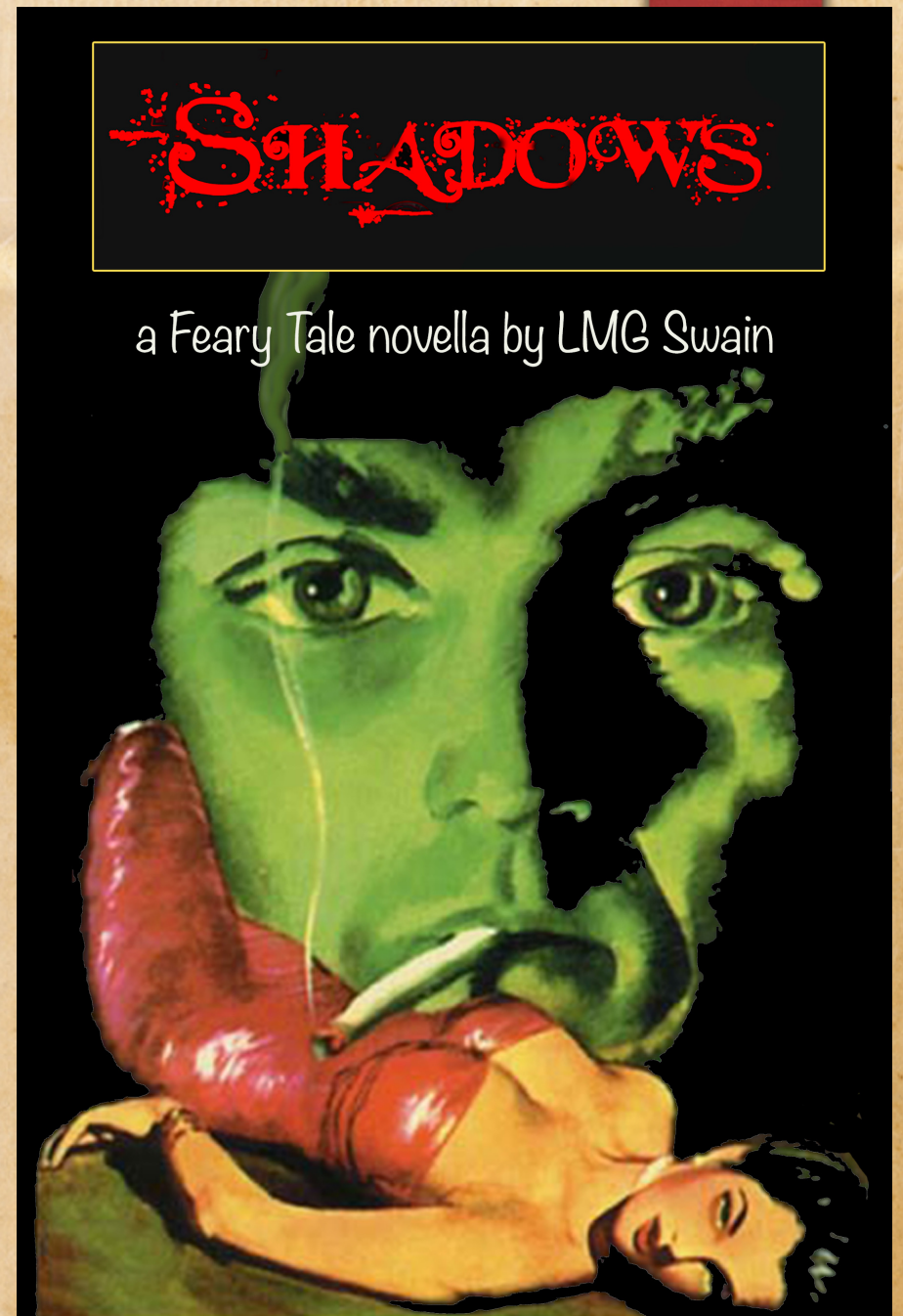
Her Faction was too real for me.

I wanted back in the Cave of Shadows.

To paraphrase Robert Morley

When you write a book for someone to buy, you're not selling the reader twelve ounces of paper and ink and glue—you're selling the reader a whole new way to look at life.

In my novella
SHADOWS,
Geoffrey
Lindmann is
in a daily
battle with his
SHADOW



Literally

Geoff's shadow is not merely "a dark area or shape produced by an object or body coming between rays of light and a surface" (Dictionary.com) . . .



Literally

Geoff's Shadow is a living entity that detaches itself from Geoff, throws things at Geoff, punches Geoff, mocks Geoff, and makes love to Geoff's wife while Geoff peeks through the door to watch in envy.



The Shadow is more Real
than Geoff.

Geoff fears he's becoming
shadow, and his Shadow
is becoming him.



This is what
happens when the
dark distorted
Shadows of
Reality enshroud
your Character—
and your Reader.



We are in the midst of the Battle
between Belief (Shadows of Reality) and
Knowledge (Factual Reality)



Do you dare turn the chair around
(walk out of the Cave)?



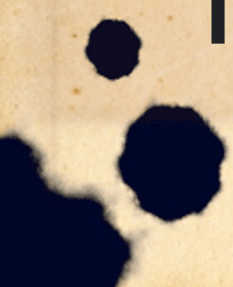
What will your Reader see when the
curtain is drawn back in the
Reality of Light?





CAKE—the great 21st Century
Indie Rock Philosophers

Adjectives on the typewriter
He moves his words like a
prize fighter
The frenzied pace of the
mind inside the cell (cave)



The Cave in works of Literature



How did
George kill
that Dragon
with such a
small sword?

Fahrenheit 451



Perception (Belief) and Reality
To define Truth, they ban words/books



Unabashed Political Commentary



One of my Goals as a Writer . . .

to write a book that Govs.

DeSantis and Abbott, and congress people Josh Hawley, Marjory Taylor Green, some Okla. legislators, and several state legislatures want to ban.

I'll be in great company: *Black Beauty*, *F451*, *Charlotte's Web*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Great Gatsby*, *To Kill a Mockingbird et al.*

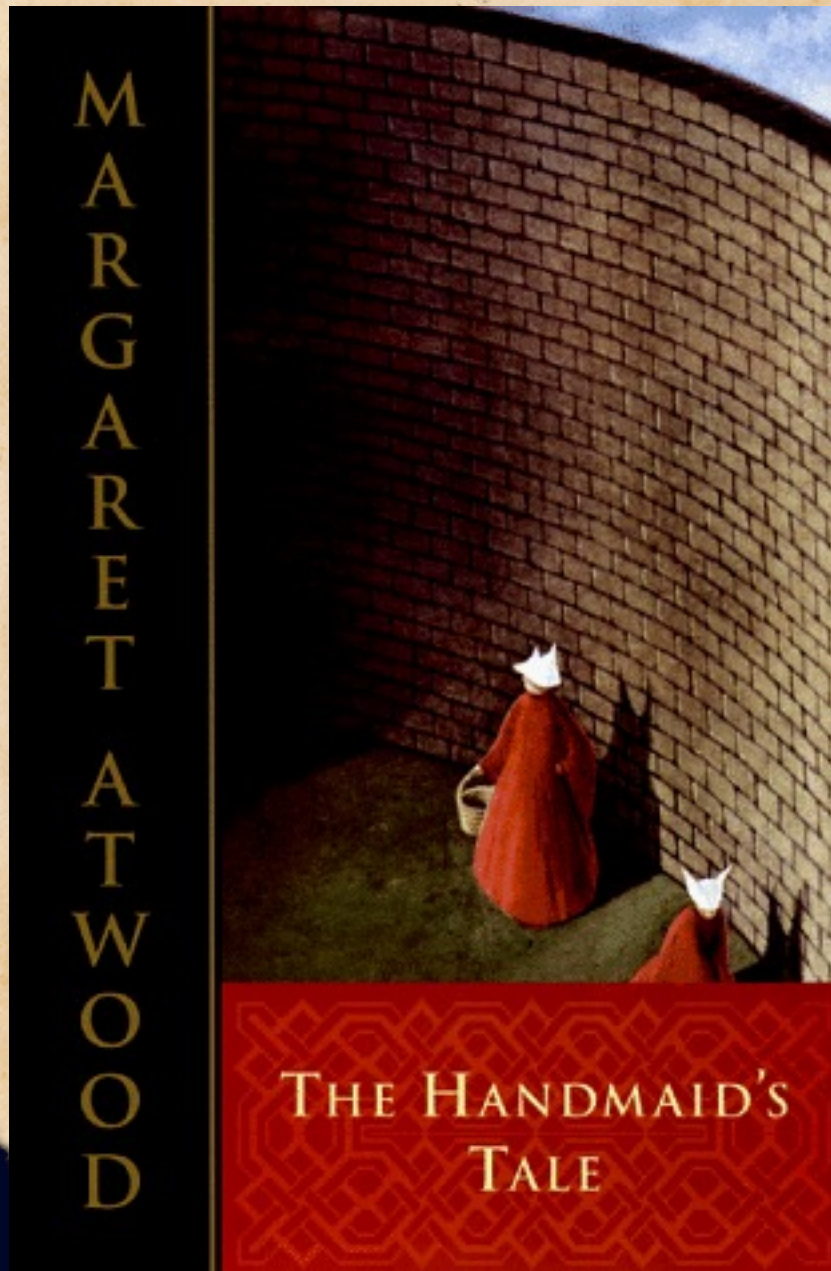


Irony, anyone?

Why isn't
Mein Kampf
on that list?



The Handmaid's Tale 1985



Non-whites are sub-humans.

Jews caused the world's problems.

A lower-class woman has no right to her body.

Reality is defined by the Republic of Gideon—all WASP males.

The Chronicles of Narnia

The Witch dismisses the idea of a greater reality outside the bounds of her Underworld.

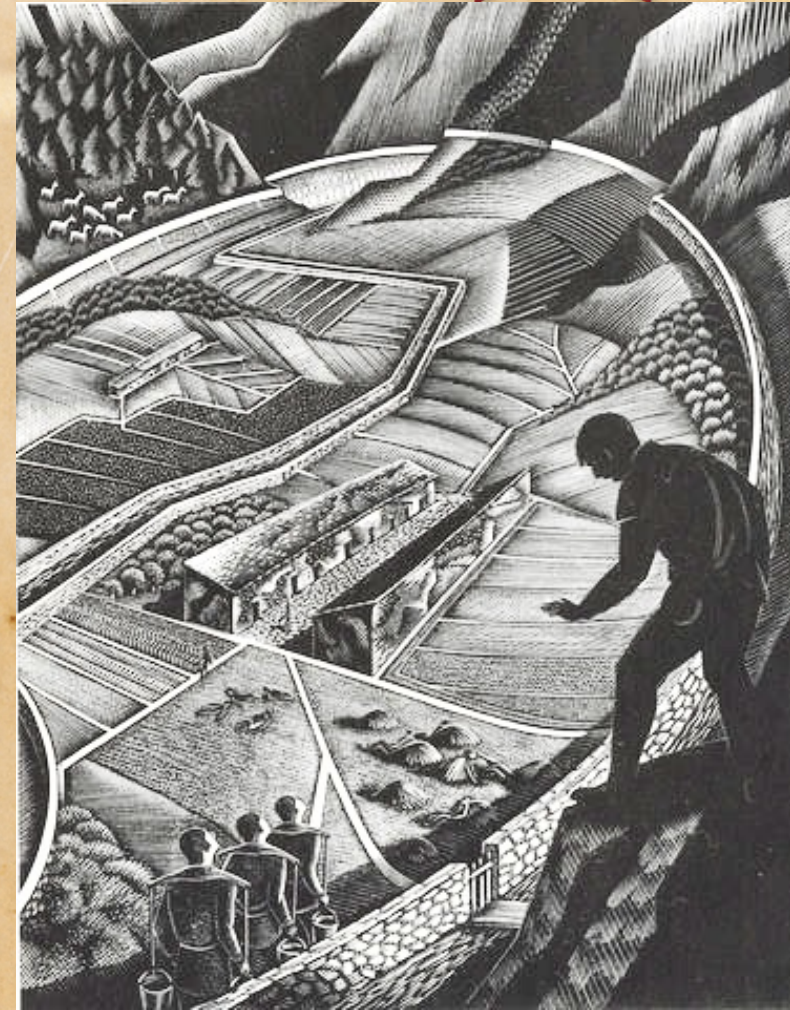
Most characters learn that the Narnia they have known is but a "shadow" of the true Narnia.

Lord Digory says, "It's all in Plato, all in Plato".



H.G. Wells *The Country of the Blind*

A man accidentally discovers a community where everyone is born with no eyes—no eye sockets—their faces where the eyes would be are flat.



H.G. Wells *The Country of the Blind*



They have no idea what “blindness” is.

A person born blind only knows “blindness” as defined and described by someone with sight.

Describe a rainbow to someone who has never seen colors, an arc, the sky.

Hmmm.....something wrong with this picture.

H.G. Wells *The Country of the Blind*



The man is ridiculed by the villagers when he tries to describe “sight”.


They have no experience of sight; so how can they “know” what sight is?

The man must be insane.

H.G. Wells *The Country of the Blind*



They decide the bumps on the man's face is a deformity, and they cure him by cutting out the bumps in his skull.



In the land of the
blind the one eyed
man is king



No: The One-Eyed Man is blinded to make him 'normal', so he is the same as everyone else in this kingdom.

Perception vs Knowledge vs Reality

What are these children doing?

What Era do they live in?

What country do they live in?



Perception vs Knowledge vs Reality

Un-American actions
by “Americans” at
the Olympic Games.

How dare they
disgrace our
Country Tis of
Thee!





American elementary children saluting and saying the Pledge of Allegiance, 1930s

This salute lasted until the late 1930s when the similar Nazi salute was equated with murder, the holocaust, and terror.

Perception vs Knowledge vs Reality

Before the 1890s, we had no Pledge of Allegiance or Flag Salute.
The first Flag Salute was the Bellamy Salute.

Award-winning African-American athletes saluting the American flag at Nazi Germany's 1936 Olympics. This angered Hitler more than Jesse Owens.



Perception vs Knowledge vs Reality

1968 Olympics in Mexico.

African-Americans protested racism, discrimination, lynching, lack of opportunities in jobs and colleges, and housing segregation.

What's more American than standing up for the Inalienable Rights of all of us?




The Cave is Ubiquitous

Movies *The Conformist*, *The Matrix*, *Cube*, *Dark City*, *The Truman Show*, *Us*, and *City of Ember* model Plato's allegory of the cave, as does the TV series *1899*.

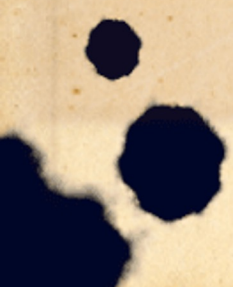



Your Genre Doesn't Matter



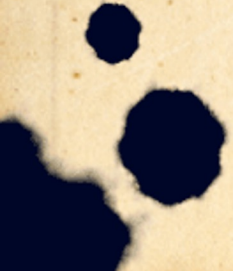



The only sin a writer can
commit is to waste the
reader's time with a
cliché/stereotype story
written in a mundane,
mediocre voice.





Entertain the Reader





The first rule of the published
writer (author) is


**FINISH THE
FIRST DRAFT!**





The two secrets to finishing
your First Draft?





1. Butt on chair.

2. Fingers beating the keys.





"I don't know what I'm looking for."

"Why not?"

"Because...because...I think it might be because if I knew I wouldn't be able to look for them."

— Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*



Someone asked me once, “Where you going with this story?”

“I don’t know, but I’ll know when I get there.”



Everything that we see is
a shadow cast by that
which we do not see.”

– Martin Luther King, Jr.



My Reader . . .

. . . doesn't have to see me casting Shadows
on the Cave Wall.

In fact, I'm content stoking the Flame unseen.

It's okay if I cast a Shadow and no one sees
me doing so—



After all . . .

. . . they're sitting against the wall
watching the parade I cast before
them.

Thank you


“Writing is not necessarily something to be ashamed of, but do it in private and wash your hands afterwards.”

~Robert A. Heinlein



May I borrow your hand sanitizer?





<https://www.openculture.com/2014/02/two-animations-of-platos-allegory-of-the-cave.html>

