A Panenmentalist Philosophy of Literature, or How Does Actual Reality Imitate Pure Possibilities?

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In memory of my dearest love, Ruthie, my late wife
(1942–2018)

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While I was preparing the manuscript, my dear wife, Ruthie, to whom I was married for thirty-six most happy years, suddenly passed away. I have no words to express my deep love, gratitude, longing, and admiration for her sublime personality and wise and honest way of life.

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INTRODUCTION

In this book, I attempt to show how a philosophical discussion of the metaphysics of individual pure possibilities called panenmentalism throws a clear light upon some major philosophical issues concerning the philosophy of literature. Among these issues are: the ontology and epistemology of fiction, necessity that is exempt from any concept of possible worlds, mathematical necessity in comparison with literary necessity, imitation and actualization, psychical reality and states, and human singularity.

Panenmentalism is the name of a systematic, comprehensive metaphysics that I introduced in 1999 and have elaborated on since then in various books and papers. This metaphysics is based upon an original possibilist approach to individual pure possibilities, about which this metaphysics is entirely realistic. Possibilism is an approach that assumes that everything which exists comprises not only actual entities (namely, actualities, which are actual possibilities) but also non-actual, pure possibilities, which are as real as actualities are. That is, according to this metaphysics, individual pure possibilities, which are primary entities, are mind-independent (as opposed to the term "pure possibilities" in some phenomenological approaches, according to which all such possibilities are strictly mind-dependent).

All individual possibilities are *pure* as long as they are exempt of any spatiotemporal and causal condition. Like in the case of mathematics ("pure mathematics" as distinct from "applied mathematics"), there are individual pure possibilities, mathematical and otherwise.

Individual pure possibilities serve as the *identities* of relevant entities. Thus, the individual pure possibility of this text is, in fact, this text as not determined or confined by any spatiotemporal and causal condition and, thus, it does not depend on any circumstances and on any actualization. As the pure possibility of this text was discovered by its author (which is myself) before any actualization of it, such a possibility should be considered as the individual pure possibility of this text. Such a possibility thus serves as the *identity* of this text, namely, this possibility is not affected by any spatiotemporal and causal circumstances and, under any circumstances, it maintains the identity of the relevant entity (namely, this text in consideration). Or, to give another example, the Higgs boson should be considered as an individual pure possibility, as long as it was discovered as a theoretical possibility only (by Higgs and others), serving as the identity of this boson, long before its empirical discovery at CERN.

Hence, each actuality, as an individual, has an individual pure possibility of its own, serving as the identity of this actuality. Such an identity cannot be shared by other actualities. The general term "the Higgs boson" refers to the common trait or nature of all Higgs bosons (all of which belong to the same "set" or "class"), and not to the identity of each one of them, which distinguishes it from any other boson, Higgs or otherwise.

Under spatiotemporal and causal conditions, each individual pure possibility is rendered or becomes an *actuality*.

Individual pure possibilities are discoverable by our imagination and intellect, whereas actualities can be discovered only by empirical means (that is, only by observation or experiments). Individual pure possibilities, unless as fictional entities, cannot be invented, and, as such are not mind-dependent; they are rather discoverable. In this sense, panenmentalism (unlike phenomenology, for instance) is realistic about these possibilities.

Pure possibilities are *individuals*, as panenmentalism rejects the time-honored concept "possible worlds" and instead suggests "individual pure possibilities." From the viewpoint of panenmentalism, the term "possible world" is entirely redundant and useless (if not rather obscure). In what follows, I will suggest some major reasons for rejecting the concept of possible worlds especially in the matters discussed in this book.

On the basis of these metaphysical resources, I will now discuss literary texts and some principal philosophical issues to which they give rise.

CHAPTER ONE

HOW DOES ACTUAL REALITY IMITATE LITERARY PURE POSSIBILITIES?

1. Introduction

In a brilliant dialogue between Cyril and Vivian—*The Decay of Lying* by Oscar Wilde—a most surprising idea is introduced, examined, and challenged: "Nature, no less than Life, is an imitation of Art."[1] Since the time of Plato, a contrary time-honored idea had prevailed: It is art that imitates life or nature, not *vice versa*.[2] This realistic approach appears to be reasonable, and, yet, Wilde has suggested quite a different idea to enlighten us.

Having claimed that realism in art is a "complete failure" (Wilde, "The Decay of Lying," p. 23), Vivian exchanges "imitation" with "representation." For instance, referring to the European arts, he mentions the "struggle between Orientalism, with its frank rejection of imitation, its love of artistic convention, its dislike of the actual representation of any object in Nature, and our own imitative spirit" (ibid.).[3] In what follows, I will also use "imitation" and "representation" interchangeably.

Vivian's anti-realistic introduction links the idea that life or nature imitates art with evaluation, in the following words: "My own experience

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[1] Oscar Wilde, *The Decay of Lying*, in *The Complete Writings of Oscar Wilde*, Vol. 7 (New York: The Nottingham Society, 1909), p. 41. For a reading of the Wilde trials transcripts as "a text reflecting and enacting Wilde's vision what literature is," see Marco Wan, "A Matter of Style: On Reading the Oscar Wilde Trails as Literature," *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 31 (2011), p. 710. It is a fascinating demonstration of how Wilde's life actualized, represented, or imitated his aesthetic ideas and values instead of the other way round.

[2] For a profound elaboration on such a realistic approach concerning literary masterpieces since Homer to Marcel Proust and Virginia Woolf, consider Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, tran. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[3] Vivian is quite consistent through the dialogue in interchanging "representation" with "imitation." See, for instance, Wilde, "The Decay of Lying," p. 43.

is that the more we study Art, the less we care for Nature. What Art really reveals to us is Nature's lack of design, her curious crudities, her extraordinary monotony, her absolutely unfinished condition. Nature has good intentions, of course, but, as Aristotle once said, she cannot carry them out" (Wilde, "The Decay of Lying," p. 41).

The reference to Aristotle's *Poetics*[4] is vital to our discussion here. Unlike the historian, the poet does not relate to what *has* happened, but to what *may* happen, to what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity. Therefore, according to Aristotle, poetry is a more philosophical and higher achievement than history, for philosophy tends to express the universal-necessary, whereas history—the particular-contingent. According to Aristotle, the universal has to do with the necessary, with what should or ought to be the case, even though nature in fact fails sometimes, in particular cases, to achieve that.

To return to Vivian's idea, the genuine artist does not represent or describe what actually happened in life or in nature, which is contingent and imperfect. Unlike the historian who describes what happens in fact, the artist portrays what is possible and necessary—what could happened, meaningfully, significantly, and valuably, with a sort of necessity (on which I will elaborate below). The artist portrays what should be or ought to happen. Such a special combination of possibility, necessity, and value—of modality and axiology—is important for my understanding of the view that Wilde's Vivian expresses in "The Decay of Lying." Yet, this interpretation distances Vivian from Aristotle's view, especially from the combination of the necessary and the universal.

Vivian claims that what nature or life fails to carry out, art fulfils. Values, especially beauty, are what nature or life should carry out. Against these values, life and nature are measured and judged. We evaluate our life and nature as well according to these values. As for representation, Vivian claims: "Even those who hold that Art is representative of time and place and people cannot help admitting that the more imitative an art is, the less it represents to us the spirit of its age" ("The Decay of Lying," p. 43). Thus, furthermore, art does not adequately represent or imitate nature or life. Yet, art strongly refers to, deeply touches, life and nature. What art captures is the *spirit* of its age.

How can we make philosophical sense of these very unusual, though brilliant, ideas, studying the relations between life, nature, and art in light of the terms *representation, imitation,* and *evaluation*? What I try to do in

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[4] Aristotle, *Poetics*, tran. S. H. Butcher (New York: Dover, *1951), Poetics* 1451a37 1451b11, p. 35.

this chapter is to make use of a metaphysical platform on which such ideas make sense and become soundly clarified.[5]

Even though this platform is a novel one, it is under *some* old Pythagorean and Platonic influence and *somewhat* relates to the way in which mathematical Platonists in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have considered the relationship between actual reality and purely mathematical objects or entities, to begin with numbers. Notwithstanding, the platform is clearly modal, for it rests upon the ontology of individual pure or non-actual (and yet actualizable) possibilities, which is very far indeed from Pythagorean and Platonic ways of thinking. Note that "ought" or "should" is a modal term as much as "possibility," "necessity," and "existence" are. Values and evaluation thus rest upon modality, and modality pertains or relates to them, no less than they pertain to morality and ethics.

Obviously, in this chapter, I proceed far from Oscar Wilde and the intriguing ideas expressed in "The Decay of Lying." Yet while providing a metaphysical modal platform for some of these ideas, I attempt to remain loyal to their spirit in my own, different way.

[5] This metaphysical platform is named panenmentalism. I introduced and elaborated on panenmentalism in the following books: Amihud Gilead, *Saving Possibilities: An Essay in Philosophical Psychology* (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi Value Inquiry Book Series, Vol. 80, 1999); *Singularity and Other Possibilities: Panenmentalist Novelties* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi Value Inquiry Book Series, Vol. 139, 2003); *Necessity and Truthful Fictions: Panenmentalist Observations* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi Value Inquiry Book Series, Vol. 202, 2009); and *The Privacy of the Psychical* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi Value Inquiry Book Series, Vol. 233, 2011). I have devoted several papers to the implications of panenmentalism concerning some major issues in the philosophy of science. See the following papers: "Shechtman's Three Question Marks: Possibility, Impossibility, and Quasicrystals," *Foundations of Chemistry* 15 (2013), pp. 209 224; "Pure Possibilities and Some Striking Scientific Discoveries," *Foundations of Chemistry* 16 (2014), pp. 149 163; "Chain Reactions, 'Impossible' Reactions, and Panenmentalist Possibilities," *Foundations of Chemistry* 16 (2014), pp. 201 214; "Can Brain Imaging Breach Our Mental Privacy?" *The Review of Philosophy and Psychology* 6 (2015), pp. 275 291; "Neoteny and the Playground of Pure Possibilities," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 5 (2015), pp. 30 39; "Eka-Elements as Chemical Pure Possibilities," *Foundations of Chemistry* 28 (2016), pp. 183 194; and "The Philosophical Significance of Alan Mackay's Theoretical Discovery of Quasicrystals," *Structural Chemistry* 28 (2017), pp. 249 256.

2. *Pure Mathematics, Aesthetical Values, and Physical Actualities*

Any entity or object that is mathematically possible is a mathematical existent, which is subject to proof. The proof demonstrates that the possible existent under discussion is also necessary. Necessity is a kind of possibility, for everything that is necessary has to be possible first. Possibility is an antecedent or fundamental condition for the existence of anything, contingent or necessary. What is impossible cannot exist, contingently or necessarily.

Taking all these into consideration, the objects or entities of *pure* mathematics are mathematical *pure* possibilities.[6] "Pure" means exemption from any spatiotemporal and causal conditions or restrictions as well as an independence of anything actual or physical. Thus, pure possibilities (in this case, mathematical pure possibilities) are necessary existents that do not exist anywhere, that are not temporal, and that do not play any causal role. For instance, numbers as mathematical pure possibilities do not exist in time and in space and they are not causes or effects. In contrast, the actualities of these pure possibilities are physical entities or events, spatiotemporally existing, whose existence, as dependent on fortuitous circumstances, is contingent. Admitting the necessary existence of numbers and geometrical figures does not entail the existence of their physical actualities, an existence that inescapably depends also on contingent circumstances, which have no necessity about them. Mathematical entities or objects exist entirely independently of actual reality. Were no actual reality to exist, mathematical objects or entities would still, necessarily, exist.

Contrary to the prevalent manner in which philosophers of mathematics consider purely mathematical entities as abstract, I systematically refrain from this term. In my view, abstract entities depend upon actual reality, as they are abstracted from it, whereas individual pure possibilities, mathematical or otherwise, are entirely independent of actual or empirical reality. Second, abstract entities are general, whereas individual pure possibilities are specific. Purely mathematical entities are specific, whereas the relations between them are general or universal. Mathematical models rely upon these general or universal relations and not on the mathematical entities themselves.

[6] Henceforth, whenever I mention "pure possibility/ies," mathematical or otherwise, I intend to "individual pure possibility/ies," the reason for which will be discussed soon below.

Our acquaintance with and knowledge of purely mathematical objects or entities need neither experience nor any empirical knowledge. In contrast, actualities can be known or become acquainted with only by means of experience. Actualities are empirical entities or events. They are physical beings. All actualities are only physical, for the same spatiotemporal and causal conditions determine only the actual and the physical and in the same way.

Each actuality is of an individual pure possibility, pertaining only to this actuality and cannot be shared by other actualities. The reason for this is that the individual pure possibility of an actuality is the individual identity that distinguishes that actuality from any other actuality or, generally, any other possible being. No two pure possibilities can be identical. Allegedly "two" identical pure possibilities are one and the same pure possibility. In contrast, two actualities that appear to be identical are still two and not one because they exist at two different places at the same time or at the same place at different times. Nevertheless, such cannot be the case of pure possibilities, which do not spatiotemporally exist. Thus, what appears to be "two" identical or indiscernible pure possibilities are, in truth, one and the same pure possibility (thus the famous Leibnizian law of the identity of the indiscernibles is entirely valid for individual pure possibilities). Hence, each such possibility serves as the identity of an actuality, if this actuality exists in fact. If not, the pure possibility still exists, entirely independently of spatiotemporality, causality, or anything actual or physical. Such is precisely the case of mathematical pure possibilities, the objects, entities, or existents of pure mathematics.

The "*ought*" pertains to the realm of pure possibilities, whereas the actual "*is*" pertains to actual reality. Indeed, pure possibilities are not only existents, they are also norms and values, showing us what the case *should* or *ought* to be. Mathematical pure possibilities, closely related to logical pure possibilities, are not only existents; they are also norms and values of rational thinking, of intellectual orientation, concerning also the actual world. Even though actual reality is contingent, it contingently actualizes the necessity that pertains to the realm of pure possibilities and contingently meets its norms and values. Logic and mathematics share some aesthetic values and norms with art.

It is not a new idea that logic and mathematics are strongly akin to beauty. The Pythagoreans were the first to relate mathematics to art (especially music) and aesthetics. An eminent modern mathematician, Godfrey Harold Hardy, coined the famous claim about mathematics: "Beauty is the first test: there is no permanent place in the world for ugly mathematics."[7] This claim is compatible with the logical necessity of mathematics. This necessity takes an indispensable part in the beauty of mathematics, which is especially indicated by the elegance and economy of its proofs. The rationality that mathematical logic portrays has a clearly normative aspect. Mathematical beauty and necessity are also sound indications for the normative and axiological aspects of mathematical pure possibilities, which are exempt from the contingencies and ugliness that, according to Hardy, prevail in empirical reality. Irrationality, too, leaves its marks upon our life and reality.

Following Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (987b28 and 987b11), according to the Pythagorean, everything that exists is either a number or an "imitation" (*mimesis*) or "representation" of it. Besides pure numbers, there are imitated entities, states, or events of these numbers. Note that ancient mathematicians were quite capable of reducing geometrical figures entirely to numbers and numerical relations. Thus, it is a famous Pythagorean idea that numbers are the first principles (*archai*) of everything. The term "mimesis" is rather equivocal and it requires clarification. Plato's frequent use of this term, according to which all sensuous and mathematical entities as well are imitations of the Ideas of dialectics, does not clarify enough this time-honored term and, in fact, leaves it quite metaphorical. Physical and mathematical entities are not actors or performers who represent or imitate some acting and talking characters. Artistic performances, according to Plato, are imitations in the lowest grade of phenomenal reality of higher, intellectual (noumenal) realities. Such performances may be considered as a literal sense of the term "imitation." Nevertheless, to ascribe this term to entities or objects that are not actors or performers is, in fact, quite metaphorical.

My use of the term "actualization," according to which physical entities and events actualize individual pure possibilities, is meant to be exempt from any metaphorical aura. It is a precise, clear, and literal term that refers to the relations between actualities and their individual pure possibilities quite adequately.

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[7] *A Mathematician Apology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973). Hardy is known as a devoted supporter of pure mathematics, boasting that his work could never be used for practical purposes. See David Mumford, "Foreword: The Synergy of Pure and Applied Mathematics, of the Abstract and the Concrete," in Mircea Pitici (ed.), *The Best Writings in Mathematics 2012* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), p. x. It is interesting to compare this approach by Hardy to Vivian's idea that "art never expresses anything but itself" (Wilde, "The Decay of Lying," p. 42).

To be actual, an entity must be possible from the outset. Impossibilities do not exist. The possibility that is the fundamental condition for the existence of an entity is necessarily pure, because, antecedently to any spatiotemporal and causal conditions and circumstances, the possibility of this entity has to exist. Otherwise, such an entity could have not existed at all and from the outset. Regardless and independently of spatiotemporal and causal conditions, the question of the possibility of anything to exist at all has to be settled first. Any actuality could exist at different times and at different places, under different causal circumstances, and still be the same actuality. For it is its individual pure possibility that fixes the identity of the entity in question and this identity is not restricted by spatiotemporal, causal, or circumstantial conditions. The identity is necessary, whereas these conditions are contingent.

The identity of each entity distinguishes it from any other entity. Each entity has its own identity; and the identity of any entity is its individual pure possibility, distinguishing it from anything else, actual or purely possible. "To distinguish from" or "to discern from" entails "to relate to." As each individual pure possibility is discerned *from* any other individual pure possibility, it necessarily relates *to* any other individual possibility. Because each individual pure possibility necessarily relates to all the others, from which it is different, there are necessary, general or universal, relations between all individual pure possibilities. On the grounds of these relations, we can refer to universal or general models, properties, and the like. Yet the grounds for all these general or universal relations are individual pure possibilities, which are fundamental existents. The existence of actualities primarily depends on the existence of their individual pure possibilities. To be purely possible from the outset is a primary necessary condition for the existence of an entity, possible or actual.

To interpret the abovementioned ideas by Oscar Wilde in the light of a realistic metaphysics about individual pure possibilities may contribute significantly to the topics of the current chapter.

3. Why Not Possible Worlds but Individual Pure Possibilities Instead?

At least since the 1970s, philosophical modal analysis has become quite familiar to literary theoreticians. Many of them have endorsed the philosophical notion of possible worlds, which they have found quite fruitful for their projects.[8]

Indeed, the notion of possible worlds has become very popular among philosophers in various fields, and only few philosophers have voiced serious doubts about this notion and its uses.[9] It should be noted that there

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[8] See, for example, Thomas G. Pavel, "Possible Worlds in Literary Semantics," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 34 (1975/76), pp. 165 176; Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotic of Texts* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1979); Doreen Maître, *Literature and Possible Worlds* (London: Middlesex Polytechnic Press, 1983); Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fictions* (London and New York: Routledge, 1987); Uri Margolin, "Individuals in Narrative Worlds: An Ontological Perspectives," *Poetics Today* 11(1990), pp. 843 871; Marie-Laure Ryan, *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Theory*, (Bloominton, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1991); Ryan, "Possible Worlds in Recent Literary Theory," *Style* (1992) 26, pp. 528 553; Ryan, "The Text as World vs the Text as Game: Possible Worlds Semantics and Postmodern Theory," *Journal of Literary Semantics* 27 (1998), pp. 137 163; Ruth Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Lubomír Doležel, "Possible Worlds and Literary Fictions," in Allén, Sture (ed.) *Possible Worlds in Humanities, Arts and Sciences: Proceedings of Nobel Symposium 65* (Berlin and New York: Gruyter, 1989), pp. 221 242; Doležel, *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Doležel, *Possible Worlds of Fictions and History: The Postmodern Stage* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); Thomas L. Martin, *Poiesis and Possible Worlds: A Study in Modality and Literary Theory* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2004); Daniel Punday, "Creative Accounting: Role Playing Games, Possible-World Theory, and the Agency of Imagination," *Poetics Today* 26 (2005), pp. 113 139; Elizabeth Klaver, "Possible Worlds, Mathematics, and John Mightons's 'Possible Worlds'," *Narrative* (2006) 14, pp. 45 63; Davide Messina, "Qfwfq as Kafka? Possible-Worlds Interpretations," *Modern Language Review* 106 (2011), pp. 1001 1027; Daniel Candel Bormann, "Moving Possible World Theory from Logic to Value," *Poetics Today* 34 (2013), pp. 177 231; and Robert Vogt, "Combining Possible-Words Theory and Cognitive Theory," in Vera Nünning (ed.), *Unreliable Narration and Trustworthiness: Intermedial and Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), pp. 131 153. Of course, some of these approaches are quite different from one another, yet they all, following a philosophical mainstream, endorse the notion of possible worlds.

[9] See, for instance, E. J. Lowe, "Metaphysics as the Science of Essence," presented at the conference *The Metaphysics of E. J. Lowe* (2006) (http://ontology.buffalo.edu/06/Lowe/Lowe.pdf); Jonathan D. Jacobs, "A Power Theory of Modality: Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Reject Possible Worlds," *Philosophical Studies* 151 (2010), pp. 227 248; Barbara Vetter, "Recent Work: Modality without Possible Worlds," *Analysis* 71 (2011), pp. 742 754; Kit

are many disagreements and debates about this notion and there is no general consent among philosophers about it. Possible-world semantics is one of the fields in which this notion has proven to be useful, and one can hardly conceive modal logic without it. Nevertheless, considering ontology and metaphysics, there should be some serious doubts about this main-streamed notion. Even though quite a few philosophers, while discussing possible worlds, have picked up examples from literature or literary fiction (following David Lewis 1978, the character of Sherlock Holmes has become very popular among them),[10] the notion of possible worlds should be put to many more examinations and doubts also in the field of literary theory.

I, for one, find this notion quite problematic and doubtful and, hence, much prefer the notion of individual pure possibility to that of possible worlds.[11] I have several reasons for doing so.

If it is argued that modal logic cannot dispense with possible worlds as truth-makers, why should we not prefer individual pure possibilities instead? Instead of quantifying ("there is a *x*," "some *x*s are," "all x are . . ." etc.) over possible worlds, why should we not prefer modal quantifiers of individual pure possibilities? Individual pure possibilities can adequately serve as truth-makers, for such possibilities and their relationality, namely the general or universal ways in which they relate to each other, are the truth-makers of the propositions about them. Individual pure possibilities are simpler and clearer entities than possible worlds, which are much more

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Fine, "Counterfactuals Without Possible Worlds," *The Journal of Philosophy* 109 (2012), pp. 221 246; and Elijah Millgram, Chapter 7, "Lewis's Epicycles, Possible Worlds, and the Mysteries of Modality," in *The Great Endarkenment: Philosophy for an Age of Hyperspecialization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 155 187.

10 See David Lewis, "Truth in Fiction," *American Philosophical Quarterly*" (1978) 15, pp. 37 46

11 Considering the motivation for possible-world literary or fictional semantics, Doležel writes: "Fictional particulars are necessary and indispensable constituents of literary fictions. Literature deals with concrete fictional persons . . . A model frame which does not accommodate the concept of fictional particular cannot be an adequate theoretical base of fictional semantics. . . . This serious deficiency of the one-world model leads us to explore the potentials of a radically different theoretical foundation of fictional semantics, the model frame of multiple, possible worlds" (Doležel, *Possible Worlds in Humanities*, pp. 228 29). Precisely for this purpose, we do not need possible worlds; we need, much more, ***individual*** pure possibilities without which no literary or fictional particular can exist!

complicated entities that need many more assumptions.[12] Individual pure possibilities are thus preferable. Nevertheless, a challenger of such an idea may argue that the number of individual pure possibilities is so huge that the violence of the reasonable principle of Occam's razor is a vital consequence of relying upon them. However, this is not a sound argument, for the number of possible worlds can be no less huge than that of individual pure possibilities; in fact, it is much greater. According to the possible worlds tradition, any deviation from or change of actual reality for any individual entity requires reliance upon a possible world. This renders the number of possible worlds as much greater or infinite than the number of actual particulars, for the counterpart of each such particular may be different in each possible world. Thus the number of the individual pure possibilities of all actual entities, which is precisely the number of these actualities, is smaller than that of the possible worlds concerning these actualities and their "counterparts." Hence, the idea of individual pure possibilities is much more parsimonious than that of possible worlds.

Moreover, the notion of possible worlds raises at least four apparently unsolvable epistemic problems, the first of which is well known. First, how can we have an epistemic access to any world that is different from our actual world and entirely separate from it? Such possible worlds take no part in our actual world and have no connections with it, causal, spatiotemporal, or otherwise. If, on the contrary, they are parts of our actual world, they are not worlds at all but only non-actual parts of this world; as a result, there are no possible worlds but only one, actual world. And, alternatively, if the (purely) possible worlds and the actual one overlap, at least to some extent, the distinction between them must become

[12] Or are possible worlds not so complicated and demanding? Even an ardent follower of possible-world semantics, such as Lubomír Doležel, citing some philosophers, acknowledged: "Possible worlds of logical semantics are 'total' or 'maximally comprehensive' state of affairs, 'maximal cohesive sum(s) of possibilia" (Doležel, *Possible Worlds of Fictions*, p. 31). And, citing Adams, each possible world is "a complete world history" (ibid.). Who is the human being that is capable of comprehending such totalities? Is there a literary fiction that portrayals a maximally comprehensive state of affairs or a complete world history? The solutions that have been suggested for these problems, some of which Doležel mentioned (e.g., mini possible worlds), raise more problems than answers. Like Doležel, I, too, criticize (or reject) mimetic literary theory (see Doležel, *Possible Worlds in Humanities*, p. x; cf. Ryan, "Possible Worlds in Recent Literary Theory," p. 531), especially Auerbach's, but on quite different grounds. According to Doležel, authors make fictional possible worlds, whereas I think that authors create fictions that may discover mind-independent individual pure possibilities that actual reality may "imitate" (namely, actualize).

a serious problem. Second, if a necessary truth is true in (or valid for) all possible worlds, how can we be familiar with *all* of the possible worlds in order to decide whether a truth is necessary? Third, if possible worlds are total, how can we conceive such totalities which are not formal or mathematical but replete with concrete entities down to their last detail? Are not such totalities beyond our cognitive capability? Fourth, we do not discover possible worlds, we only can stipulate them, but, if such is the case, how can we get any solid *truth* about them? Are not all such truths simply stipulated and subject to our arbitrary decisions or whims? What is the value or significance of such truths? In contrast, individual pure possibilities are discoverable by means of our intellect and imagination. We can discover what are the individual pure possibilities of entities, whether these entities are actual or merely possible. We can make such discoveries simply by considering entities regardless or independently of any spatiotemporal or causal conditions or restrictions. In this way, we can discover the individual pure possibility of any entity we encounter or even imagine.

Let me explain or demonstrate this by an example. Suppose that on an island, completely isolated and far from the mainland, the inhabitants had never encountered bats, nor heard anything about them. Nevertheless, these people are educated, intelligent, and imaginative enough to surmise the pure (non-actual, "mere") possibilities of flying mammals. Without stipulating any possible world, they form quite a few *true* propositions about these merely possible creatures, each of which is an individual pure possibility. Forming these propositions, they use their cognitive capability of transcending actual, empirical data,[13] simply by relying upon their intellect and imagination (which are not confined to empirical or actual data as well as to any spatiotemporal and causal restrictions). Such propositions are: (1) "(purely possible) flying mammals are not birds;" (2) "they are not reptiles;" (3) "they may feed on fruits growing on tall trees;" (4) "some of them may feed on flying insects;" (5) "they have wings suitable for flying fairly fast and high;" (6) "their offspring feed on the milk of female flying mammals;" (7) "like other mammals, they are also intelligent creatures," and many more true propositions like these. Most of

[13] Note that this kind of transcendence, contrary to the case of the "transcendence" of possible worlds, does not entail any separation from the actual, for no actuality is separable from its individual pure possibility. As I will explain below, any actuality is a spatiotemporally and causally restricted part of its individual pure possibility. Similarly, actual reality is a spatiotemporal and causal conditioned and restricted part of the whole realm that consists of all the individual pure possibilities.

these truths are necessary (1, 2, 5, 6, and 7). None of these truths relies upon the notion of possible world. In our actual reality, we obviously encounter bats; and each bat has its sole individual pure possibility, distinguishing it from any other bat; otherwise, no such individual creature could exist at all.

4. Theories as Fictions Discovering Pure Possibilities that are Mind-Independent

The individual pure possibilities that are actualized and become actualities are mind-independent. Nevertheless, pure possibilities can be grasped by our intellect and imagination without relying upon empirical or physical reality. We can think about and imagine individual pure possibilities even if we never experience or hear of any actual indication of their existence. Pure mathematics refers in this way to mathematical pure possibilities. Our imagination and intellect are abundantly used to discover mind-independent pure possibilities that are indispensable for recognizing and identifying some actualities. Without grasping their pure possibilities first, we could not recognize and identify these actualities. For instance, a purely mathematical symmetry group served to predict and finally discover the actualities of sub-atomic particles, such as omega-minus. That group consists of mathematical pure possibilities, which had been discovered by means of a mathematical theory or fiction, whereas the relevant actualities were finally discovered, empirically, in the laboratory. There are many examples of theoretical discoveries (concerning pure possibilities) that predicted the existence of the relevant actualities and their actual, empirical discovery. The Higgs boson is a fine example. Another is the eka-elements in the periodic table of the chemical elements. Both are examples of theoretical discoveries of purely possible elements that later happened to be discovered as actualities.

Fictions are created by us and, thus, they are mind-dependent, whereas, by means of fictions or theories, we can discover mind-independent possibilities, which actual reality may actualize and which exist quite independently of their discovery by us. Scientific theories, like art and mathematics, employ various fictions or conjectures to capture the individual pure possibilities without which we cannot know and understand nature and ourselves. All thought-experiments rest strongly upon such fictions in order to discover the mind-independent pure possibilities of the relevant actualities. For instance, the geocentric conjecture is a fiction of a thought-experiment that helped Copernicus,[14] and many other scientists after him, to discover the pure possibility of the actual fact that the earth travels around the sun and not vice versa. Empirical observations have confirmed this fact, and the theory, discovering its pure possibility by means of a fiction of a thought-experiment, adequately explains and clarifies it. Insights need first the discovery of the relevant pure possibilities, which are the identities of the entities that we attempt at understanding. Thus, understanding or insights rest upon our knowledge of individual pure possibilities as the identities of the relevant actualities. Art, no less than insightful scientific theories, uses fictions to discover mind-independent individual possibilities and their universal relations, in order to recognize, know, and understand ourselves and the reality around us as well.

It is an aim of thought-experiments to discover new pure possibilities that had not been considered as possible, and thus were denied or ignored. It is the possibility as pure that sets out the first challenge for a theoretical discovery. Not all discoveries are of actualities; there are no less important discoveries—theoretical ones, those of pure possibilities. Thought-experiments, relying not upon empirical knowledge but upon our imagination and intellect, are fruitful methods to discover and study new pure possibilities.

5. Representation, Actualization, and Evaluation

Does art, especially literature, attempt to represent reality? Such is the view that has been shared by many, to begin with Plato. In this book, I follow another way. Relying upon free imagination, art does not necessarily follow actual reality; rather the contrary—it captures individual pure possibilities that actual reality realizes and represents. Otherwise, what makes imagination free, if not its independence of anything actual? If not its capability of relating to and capturing pure possibilities? The objects of perception are actualities, whereas the objects of free imagination are individual pure possibilities and their general or universal relations. As for our intellect, our capability of making implications and inferences transcends beyond the empirical, perceptual, and actual. This is very typical of our intellect. What are the objects that transcend the limitations of actual reality? They are individual pure possibilities and their relations.

[14] This famous example is taken from Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* B (1787), p. xxii.

Thus, literature, at its best, may not represent reality but may relate to and capture the individual pure possibilities that empirical reality may actualize. Actualities partly represent ("imitate") pure possibilities under spatiotemporal and causal restrictions. These conditions or restrictions involve partial actualization, for actualities are the conditioned or restricted *parts* of their pure possibilities. Actual possibilities, namely, actualities, are thus the conditioned or restricted parts of their pure, more comprehensive, possibilities. Actualities are not the images of their pure possibilities. Images are mind-dependent pure possibilities by means of which we may relate or refer to actualities with which we are familiar.

The reason for which Wilde thought that nature imitates or represents art should be revised and completed in the light of the above concerning individual pure possibilities and their actualities. Strictly speaking, it is not art that nature represents or imitates but art is one of the best ways to discover and study the individual pure possibilities (including their universal or general relations) that nature and human lives actualize. Art reveals these possibilities and renders us insightful as regards their actualities. Art helps us greatly in identifying some meaningful actualities, especially about us. Without art, we would have been blind to these actualities, regarding their identity, meaning, and, especially, their values. Meaning and significance rest upon individual pure possibilities and their relations. The meaning and significance of actualities pertain to the individual pure possibilities of these actualities. And so are their values on which their evaluation relies. We evaluate actualities against their individual pure possibilities.

Each individual pure possibility is complete, whereas any actuality is only a partial actualization of its pure possibility, for this actuality could have existed under quite different circumstances and still remained this actuality and not another. As long as it is the actuality of that individual pure possibility, its identity is kept under all circumstances. Each individual pure possibility comprises all the possibilities (including circumstantial ones) that pertain to this possibility, which is an identity of an individual actuality. Grasping an individual pure possibility, we can realize also how could it exist, act, and relate and not only the actual possibilities that its actual existence, action, and relations have exhausted.

On the grounds of individual pure possibilities and their actualities, we can clarify the Aristotelian-Wildean claims that genuine art reveals the "must," "ought," or "should" according to which actualities could be. Remember that any individual pure possibility is necessary. The modality of possibility, necessity, existence, and the ought are thus well integrated. As closer actualities are to their pure possibilities, as much as they actualize their pure possibilities, they are closer to their perfection or completeness. The contingency about actualities is minimal, whenever their actualization is closer to meet the completeness of their pure possibilities, to meet or answer their own standards. An individual pure possibility is, thus, the norm of its actuality.

6. Realism about Individual Pure Possibilities is Incompatible with Idealism

The modal metaphysical platform for my arguments in this book is realistic about individual pure possibilities that are mind-independent and which we do not invent but discover. Thus, this platform is not compatible with any kind of idealism. In contrast, Vivian's view in Wilde's "The Decay of Lying" endorses a sort of idealism.[15] Only on the basis of such an idealism, is Vivian allowed to claim that Nature and Life imitate Art rather than *vice versa*. In contrast, my view argues that nature and life actualize the individual pure possibilities that art may reveal (the same holds true for science, but elaborating on this major issue is beyond the scope and aim of this chapter). This actualization is considered as a sort of imitation, somewhat close to that which Wilde's Vivian has in mind (with one major reservation). Moreover, like Vivian's approach, my approach rejects the realistic-mimetic or representative view of art, according to which art represents or imitates our actual reality (as life and nature are concerned). Free imagination liberates the genuine artist from the bonds of actual-empirical reality as well as from any attempt to represent or imitate it. Yet, genuine art maintains an intimate, strong, and deep contact with our actual reality, for such an art reveals most meaningful individual pure possibilities that our actual reality has actualized.

Following Vivian, one has some grounds to consider nature and life as if "creations" of our mind as the originator of science, from one hand, and

[15] As Vivian clearly puts it: "Consider the matter from a scientific or a metaphysical point of view, and you will find that I am right. For what is Nature? . . . She is our creation. It is in our brain [mind] that she quickens to life. Things are because we see them, and what we see, and how we see it, depend on the Arts that have influenced us. To look at a thing is very different from seeing a thing. One does not see anything until one sees its beauty. Then, and then only, does it come into existence. At present, people see fogs, not because there are fogs, but because poets and painters have taught them the mysterious loveliness of such effects. There may have been fogs for centuries in London. . . . But no one saw them, and so we do not know anything about them. They did not exist till Art had invented them" (Wilde, "The Decay of Lying," p. 39).

art, from another. For, according to Vivian, science and art are necessary for our *seeing* (to be distinguished from just *looking at*) nature and life. Recognizing, identifying, and understanding what we see necessarily depends upon our mind as the originator of art and science. At this point, Wilde's Vivian is closer to a sort of Kantian idealism. Nevertheless, the trouble with such a view, one to which Wilde's Vivian subscribes, is the one with any kind of idealism—Berkelean, Leibnizean, or Kantian transcendental idealism, namely, no idealism can explain how reality that is independent of our mind, that is without our mind, has to yield to the models, ideals, or patterns that either science or art create.

In contrast, the metaphysical modal platform upon which my discussion in this book relies, does explain why independent reality, such as nature, has to yield to the individual pure possibilities and their relations that science or art *reveals* or *discovers*. Any actualization is of this or that individual pure possibility without which a particular actuality is not possible. Any actualization is of something that without this actualization still exists as an individual pure possibility, namely, as-yet a non-actual possibility. By means of our intellect and imagination, our mind can grasp such individual pure possibilities and their relations without relying upon experience, experiment, or observation concerning actual, empirical reality. The grasping of mind-independent individual pure possibilities is not achieved by means of perception or by any empirical means, which perceive the actual and does not grasp the purely possible.[16] Thus, our epistemic access to empirical, actual reality needs to be mediated by means of the access of our intellect and imagination to the individual pure possibilities that our life and nature actualize. Once we doubt the existence of an individual pure possibility, let alone exclude it, we cannot perceive or be aware of anything that could be considered as its actuality (even if this actuality does exist independently of our knowledge). Suppose that a scientist would exclude the very possibility of a particular sub-atomic particle. Had such a scientist encountered indications for the actual existence of such a particle, in experiments or observations performed in a modern collider, he could not identify them as indications for the existence of such an actuality but must misinterpret them or simply ignore them as meaningless or insignificance. Most of the time, we are not aware of the tacit acceptance in which we relate to the individual pure possibilities of

[16] Note again that abstractions are drawn from actual reality, and, thus, they necessarily depend on it, whereas individual pure possibilities are not abstractions, as these possibilities are entirely independent of actual reality. Hence, the empirical means (such as perception) in which we perceive actualities cannot serve us in grasping or conceiving individual pure possibilities.

the actualities that we observe and identify. However, whenever scientists exclude the individual pure possibility of, say, a particular virus, they would not have recognized its actuality while looking at its image through an electron microscope. They would not see, using Wilde's Vivian words, what they looking at.

Vivian assumes that what we see (to be distinguished from what we just look at) is because of its beauty, otherwise we would not pay any attention to it and simply ignore or overlook it. He thinks that things must have some value or significance in order to cause us to see them. In my terms, the meaning, significance, and value of any actuality stem from its individual pure possibility.[17] Without accepting or admitting this possibility, we would not pay any attention to the actuality in question and thus we would not see it. Nevertheless, this is quite different from Vivian's claim about this matter, for he refers to the beauty of things, whereas we in fact pay no less attention to ugly things that we cannot ignore.[18] Ugliness, like beauty and any other value, pertains to the individual pure possibility of an actuality. It pertains to the modal realm of values, significance, and meanings, which are embodied, namely, actualized, in empirical reality.

Just as there are pure possibilities that are mind-independent, so actual reality, actualizing some of these possibilities, is also mind-independent. Hence, idealism is groundless.

7. An Example: Life Actualizes or Imitates Kafkaesque or Pinteresque Individual Pure Possibilities

In our life, we encounter scenes whose most appropriate adjectives are "Kafkaesque" (after Franz Kafka) or Pinteresque (after Harold Pinter).

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[17] This entails a realism about meanings or that meanings can be mind-independent. Of course, not all meanings are mind-independent. There are also mind-dependent meanings, which are subjective or intersubjective. The combination "mind-independent meanings" is not common, yet it was accepted by Frege, Gödel, and other realists about meanings (for instance, structuralists). For Frege's use of it, see Barry Smith, "Frege and Chomsky: Sense and Psychologism," in: John Biro and Petr Kotatko (eds.) *Frege: Sense and Reference One Hundred Years Later* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), pp. 31 32. For Gödel's use of it, consult Richard Tieszen, "Mathematical Realism and Gödel's Incompleteness Theorems," *Philosophia Mathematica* 2 (1994), pp. 177 201.

[18] Interestingly enough, the word "ugly" is mentioned only once in *The Decay of Lying*, when realism is discussed. Vivian says about realism that it "inevitably makes people ugly" (Wilde, "The Decay of Lying, p. 31).

We may have a strong feeling that such scenes are performances, better, actualizations, of what is presented in scripts depicted by Kafka or Pinter. In this sense, these scripts appear as though staged in daily reality. The atmosphere of complete absurdity, distortion, meaningless existence, and stalemate, ambiguity, confusion, and puzzlement or that of dread and heavy discomfort, distress, embarrassment, perplexity, anxiety, or horror with which their writings are replete, such atmospheres are not representations of reality. These writings reveal the pure possibilities of such atmospheres and, moreover, of the Kafkaesque or Pinteresque characters that we may recognize in the daily reality in which we live. This, amongst other artistic merits, is what makes Kafka's writings or those by Pinter so overwhelming, so powerful, and inescapable. We may find ourselves trapped in the pure possibilities that Kafka's fiction or that by Pinter relates to. Their fiction captures the purely possible scripts according to which some scenes of the reality in which we live are performed. Pinteresque pauses, the atmosphere of menace, absurd dread, suffocation, horror, and other Pinteresque traits can be detected as hidden in the most mundane conversations, phrased in an entirely colloquial language. In this way, Pinter hints at fear, dread, menace, and the like hidden among the common details of daily life, with which each of us is acquainted. Kafkaesque situations emerge out of the most mundane bureaucratic reality or the political one.

Kafka wrote his masterpieces years before Hitler and Stalin appeared on the stage of history. Kafka was not a prophet. Yet, he revealed the very possibilities of such lives, in which terror, dread, psychical suffocation, and inescapability prevail. His pure imagination captured the purely possible grounds on which lives under the regime of Hitler or Stalin had become actual.

Kafkaesque and Pinteresque pure possibilities, like other individual pure possibilities, are exempt from spatiotemporal and causal conditions or restrictions, and this exemption makes it possible for them to be actualized much longer after the creation of the fictions by Kafka or Pinter. Thus, such possibilities can be actualized even in our current era and all over the world. There are no geographical, political, social, and otherwise restrictions on them.

Yet, we have a problem to face. The problem is that within Kafka's fictions or those by Pinter, the pure possibilities of characters, events, actions, behavior, and manners of speaking, are obviously individual. There is always some particularity about them; literary scenes are never abstract. They are thus not general or universal. In what way, then, are these individual pure possibilities, whose realm of existence is discovered by the fiction either by Kafka or by Pinter, valid for actualities existing in our lives and reality?

The *validity* of these individual pure possibilities is general and universal. What actual reality has actualized have not been the individual pure possibilities that appear in the relevant fictions, but many other individual pure possibilities that could not have been recognized and discerned without those that the fictions by Kafka or Pinter have presented to us. For instance, the figure of Josef K. in Kafka's *The Trial*, including his actions, thoughts, relations, and the like, all pertain to an individual pure possibility of a person, Josef K, who does not exist outside of Kafka's masterpiece. The same holds for the situation in which Josef K. becomes a suspect, even one convicted in advance, simply because of an anonymous informer. Nevertheless, the individual pure possibility in *The Trial* is necessarily relevant to or valid for a huge number of related individual pure possibilities of similar acts of informing and of similar victims in states under despotic regimes and sometimes even in some democratic or liberal states, in which a ruthless bureaucracy actualizes Kafkaesque possibilities to trap innocent victims. The pure possibilities existing in the fiction are individual, yet their relevancy or validity is universal or general. Each person or situation has an individual pure possibility that cannot be shared with other persons or with other situations. Yet, the individual pure possibilities of great art enlighten actual reality generally or universally in the way that I have just described.

Such is the case because, unlike the individual pure possibilities themselves, their general or universal relations are shareable by manifold individual pure possibilities, sharing common relevancy or validity as if they belong to the same family of individual pure possibilities. Such is the case of the individual pure possibilities in Kafka's fictions and of all Kafkaesque individual pure possibilities as well, which have been actualized in daily life. All these possibilities belong to the same family of individual pure possibilities and all take part in the same family resemblance. The same holds true for the individual pure possibilities in Pinter's writings and all the Pinteresque pure possibilities that have been actualized in daily life. Unlike the individual pure possibilities, their properties are general, and these properties rest upon the general relation and the general relevancy or validity of the involved individual pure possibilities. In this way, models are produced.

Kafkaesque or Pinteresque individual pure possibilities have been actualized in our daily life. Thus, these individual pure possibilities are mind-independent and they are distinct from the individual pure possibilities that Kafka's fictions or those by Pinter created and which thus depend on the mind of their author respectively. Kafkaesque or Pinteresque individual pure possibilities have been revealed for us thanks to the individual pure possibilities that were created in those fictions.

In this way, life actualizes similar,[19] Kafkaesque or Pinteresque, individual pure possibilities and, in this way, life imitates or represents them. Without the individual pure possibilities that Kafka's fictions and those by Pinter created, we could not recognize the Kafkaesque or Pinteresque ones that their writings revealed to us and that daily lives actualize. This recognition opens our eyes to identify and understand these lives and the reality in which they actually exist. Kafkaesque or Pinteresque possibilities thus endow us with indispensable insights about our lives and reality. Moreover, they provide us with major values by which we can profoundly evaluate these lives and reality.

8. Challenging Erich Auerbach's View Concerning the Representation of Reality in Western Literature

Auerbach's *Mimesis*[20] is a fine example of an approach that brilliantly subscribes to the view that Western literature, beginning with Homer's *Odyssey* and ending with Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*,[21] imitates or represents actual reality, most of all everyday, mundane, reality. In Auerbach's view, great masterpieces, such as Homer's *Odyssey*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Joyce's *Ulysses*, Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, and Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* represent or imitate reality, inner-psychical or external-objective. In fact, my view in the current chapter challenges Auerbach's approach, for as I see them, each of these masterpieces demonstrates that literature or myths reveal pure possibilities that reality, psychical or external, actualizes.

Let me challenge, rather briefly, some examples that Auerbach analyzes. Chapter One, "Odysseus's Scar," in *Mimesis* is devoted to an analysis of a wonderful digression focusing on a boyhood reminiscence of Odysseus when, as a young boy, he paid a visit to his grandfather Autolycus, during which the young Odysseus courageously hunted a mighty boar that wounded him and left a scar on his thigh. Many years

[19] Remember that no two individual pure possibilities can be identical, and thus even similar individual pure possibilities are different from each other.

[20] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, tran. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[21] Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin Books, 1964 [1927]).

later, washing the stranger's legs and noticing the scar, Euryclea, the old housekeeper and Odysseus's wet-nurse, immediately recognizes him as someone who has already seemed to her as resembling her lost master. He silences her, and the goddess Athene helps him to distract Penelope's attention in order to prevent her from recognizing him as her husband. These incidents took place before Odysseus overcame his wife's suitors with *the same kind of weapon with which he had overcame the boar, and this weapon was strengthened with the same courage and determination.* This is the point at which I attempt to refute Auerbach's analysis of this scene. The reality in which Odysseus overcomes the suitors is a re-enacting or actualizing of the pure possibilities—the prospect and capability—that the remembered story of hunting the boar reveals. His victory over the suitors is an imitation and actualization of the boyhood reminiscence as revealing the psychical capability of his courage and determination. This capability is a psychical pure possibility.

Moreover, Odysseus's constant wish and determination is to return to his home and family. A Homeric legend that was not included in the *Iliad* narrates how Odysseus, who did not want to depart from his new-born son, Telemachus, nor from his dear wife, pretended to become mad and so he ploughed the sea as if it were his field. One of the kings who came to draft him to the army preparing for the war on Troy, put the little Telemachus in the path of the plough, and Odysseus continued to plough but circumvented Telemachus in a semicircle. This was clear evidence of Odysseus's sanity; as a result, he was drafted and doomed to exile from his home and beloved family for a very long time. This legend throws a clear light on his constant behavior in the *Odyssey* as a whole, as actualizing the prospects (which are psychical pure possibilities) of longing for and dearly loving his home and family. Odysseus turns his back on all heroic myths about kings and gods. He much prefers the mundane life at home with his beloved family and is ready to fight heroically to return to his wife and to overcome all the suitors. The myths about heroic kings and gods, in contrast, do not express the values and the prospects (as pure possibilities) that he appreciates and chooses to actualize in his everyday life. In contrast, the story of his boyhood reminiscence reveals the pure possibility that he values and succeeds in actualizing, which ends in removing all the obstacles that have prevented him from his most desired home coming. This reminiscence enlightens us how to read the whole plot of the *Odyssey* with insight. The pure possibilities that this digression in the narration of the plot reveals are the source from which the reader can draw the right conclusions required for understanding and enjoying the *Odyssey*.

Turning to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, in Chapter Eight, Auerbach attempts to show how much the fantastic *Divine Comedy* is actually an imitation or representation of the mundane reality with which the author was very familiar. Auerbach reminds us of "Dante's assertion that in the *Commedia* he presented true reality" (Auerbach, *Mimesis*, p. 554) and he is amazed by "the astounding paradox of what is called Dante's realism" (op. cit., p. 191). Nevertheless, I interpret this masterpiece in a different way—all the mundane details taken from Dante's everyday life and time or from the relevant history pertain to the actualization of the Inferno and the Paradise whose *pure, non-actual possibilities* this masterpiece reveals. In the midst of our everyday, actual life, we reveal the deepest *meanings* according to which this life is formed. In this way, we render as temporal the eternal or atemporal pure possibilities constituting the Inferno and the Paradise portrayed in the *Divine Comedy*. Our mundane and actual lives are thus actualities of the *Divine Comedy* on a human scale. Hence, the mundane, everyday, and human details in this masterpiece do not pertain to an imitation or representation of the actual reality in Dante's time. On the contrary, all these details are concrete actualities of specific pure possibilities that Dante's imagination revealed or discovered. As opposed to Auerbach's description—"We have left the earthly sphere behind; we are in an eternal place, and yet we encounter concrete appearance and concrete occurrence there. This differs from what appears and occurs on earth, yet is evidently connected with it in a necessary and strictly determined relation" (ibid.)—I think that the "eternal place" should be the realm of individual pure possibilities that are partly realized in the actualities that are concrete appearances and occurrences, and this should be the nature of the "necessary and strictly determined relation" between these possibilities and such actualities.

Auerbach reminds us of the detailed depiction, in fact an imitation, of everyday events, situations, and many details, some of which appear to be quite minor, not only in the *Odyssey* but even more in Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. In my view, the contrary is the case—according to each of these masterpieces, it is not literature that imitates everyday reality, it is rather the everyday, domestic reality that actualizes pure possibilities that myths, legends, or literary masterpieces reveal.

Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* is an excellent example demonstrating this. The case appears to be, at least to Auerbach, that tasting the petite Madeleine, an apparently minor detail taken from everyday life, arouses a clear and vivid memory in Marcel's mind of past, actual reality (Marcel is both the narrator and the main character of this novel). This memory appears to be about actual details of his childhood vacations at Combray. Is this in fact a "recovery of lost [actual] realities in remembrance" (Auerbach, *Mimesis*, p. 541)? This focal scene in the whole great masterpiece should not mislead us. Literature or artistic writing becomes for Marcel a way of life, a destiny according to which artistic writing about life is much more valuable, significant, and important than simply mundane "real" life. For Marcel, the sublimity of life can be achieved only by means of the literary depiction of life. The scene depicting the petite Madeleine leads him to the most significant lost memory of a very special night that will remain with him for his whole life, as well as to this revelation concerning the literary depiction of life. For what was the most exciting event in this miraculous evening, when Marcel's mother, thanks to the generous consent of his father, was able to spend the night with her miserable, lonely son? This night did not lead to a realization of an Oedipal dream of both son and mother but only to the reading (by her to him) of a charming Oedipal *novel—François le Champi* by George Sand.[22] Thus, reading and hearing an Oedipal piece of art lies at the heart of this childhood scene, and all the concrete details involved in it are actualities of individual pure possibilities that only literature can reveal.

Similarly, a tiny detail in Vermeer's *The Sight of Delft* causes the dying writer, Bergotte, one of the significant characters of this novel, to see again that artistic masterpiece, only because this tiny detail is much more important in Bergotte's eyes than his very life (op. cit., vol. I, pp. 184–186). Marcel, his aunt (who used to give him the petite Madeleines), and Bergotte, each of them, in its own way, prefers tales about life or artistic depictions and portrayals of life to life itself. Bergotte and Proust himself were entirely ready to sacrifice mundane life for the sake of the joy of art. Like Marcel's aunt, Proust himself spent many years of his life in his bed. The aunt did so for she preferred to watch life from her window and to hear descriptions about all the activities taking part in the everyday

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[22]"…this book which my mother had read aloud to me at Combray until the early hours of the morning had kept for me all the charm of that night" (Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*. Trans. by C. K. Scott Moncrieff, Terence Kilmartin, and Andreas Mayor [London: Chatto and Windus, 1981], vol. I, pp. 44–46; cf. vol. III, pp. 919–920). All this excellently fits Marcel's idea that art is "the most real of all things" (op. cit., vol. III, p. 914) or "Real life, life at last laid bare and illuminated—the only life in consequence which can be said to be really lived—is literature. . . . art, if it means awareness of our own life, means also awareness of the lives of other people—for style for the writer . . . is a question not of technique but of vision; it is the revelation . . ." (op. cit., vol. III, p. 931).

life of the village of Combray; and Proust spent many years in bed in his closed room just for the end of writing literature about his life. The non-actual, pure possibilities that literary art or fiction discovers were more important for him than his actual life. For Marcel, as much as for Proust himself, life without literary writing was not worth living. For them, literary writing was the revealer of the meaning and value of life.

Proust's literary writing is an excellent example of the fact that life may imitate or actualize literary possibilities. Thus, the village of Illiers, in which Proust stayed in the summer vacations of his childhood, is nowadays called Illiers-*Combray*; and Cabour, on the shore of Normandy, has been identified as Balbec in his novel. Thousands of admiring Proust-"pilgrims" visit these two "Proustian" sites each year, experiencing them through the prism of Proust's novel. Again, it is not literature that must imitate or represent life; life may imitate or represent literature, at least in the mind of those who experience it in this way.

According to Auerbach, both James Joyce and Virginia Woolf were the prominent modern writers who, in their literary works, imitated the reality of daily life and of streams of consciousness. Indeed, reading Joyce's *Ulysses* may convince many readers that the imitation and representation of everyday life, entirely mundane life, is what Joyce has achieved: Leopold Bloom's preparing breakfast, reading a newspaper in the toilet (with many sensual details concerning this scene[23]), Molly Bloom's detailed interior monologue (extremely colloquial) and stream of consciousness (op. cit.: 871–933), all concrete details in Bloom's day, and, finally, his return to his wife's bed—all these are strictly mundane. Nevertheless, all these details are actualities of literary pure, non-actual possibilities taken ironically, even distortedly, from Homer's *Odyssey*, for Bloom's day is an Odyssey in Dublin, and Ulysses is the Latin name of Odysseus. Unlike Penelope, Molly Bloom is not faithful to her husband, and her stream of consciousness focuses on some carnal characteristics of her lover's body and sexuality, and yet she is a modern Penelope in her own way, choosing again her Leopold to be his wife, answering wholeheartedly "Yes" (the final word of *Ulysses*, op. cit.: 933) to his wish to be her husband. The irony, the humor, and the down-to-earth reality pertain to actualities *of Odysseyan literary possibilities*. Literature, literary various styles and—above all—words are the core of *Ulysses* rather than the imitation of everyday reality. Like Dante, according to Auerbach's brilliant analysis of the *Divine Comedy*, Joyce succeeds in combining the everyday and mundane with the artistic sublimity of his writing. Molly's

[23] James Joyce, *Ulysses* (London: Penguin Books 1992 [1922]), pp. 83–84.

interior monologue is one of the most *beautiful* pieces of literary art. It is not an imitation of actual psychical life, for no one has access to the psychical, inner reality of another person. Such access can be achieved only in fiction, and by no means in everyday life. In any case, literature does not necessarily imitate life; it is life that imitates or actualizes pure possibilities that only great literature can discover or reveal.

Similarly, such is the case of *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf. In the opening chapter of this novel, we are informed that little James Ramsay "belonged, even at the age of six, to the great clan which . . . must let future prospects . . . cloud what is actually at hand" (Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, p. 5). As future prospects are, in fact, pure possibilities (contrary to "what is actually at hand"), for this great clan such possibilities outweigh actualities. This certainly catches the spirit of *To the Lighthouse* as a whole.

Only a really great literary masterpiece such as this can demonstrate how horrible was the impact of the so-called "Great War" (the First World War) on a life of a family and its acquaintances. A frustrated childhood prospect (which was a pure possibility) to make a one-day journey to the nearby lighthouse and its actualization after the war, without making any sense or value, depicts the great disaster. All the everyday details, beginning with the brown stocking in Mrs. Ramsey's hands, lost their meanings while remaining in the deserted house, of which no meaning was left after the "Great War." Full of furniture and everyday belongings but empty of inhabitants, the house lost all the meanings it once had.

Analyzing *To the Lighthouse*, Auerbach rightly mentions "Lily Briscoe's concluding vision which enables her to finish her painting with one stroke of the brush" (Auerbach 2003, p. 552). Yet, this is an artistic scene in which artistic possibilities are actualized because of a vision. Is this vision an everyday event? Is there not something in it transcending actual, everyday events? In *To the Lighthouse*, too, artistic life gains the upper hand over everyday life, and Lily Briscoe's artistic achievement is an actualization of a vision---of a pure possibility or prospect—not of copying or representing what her eyes see in actual reality. It is art that reveals to the reader the meaning of the lives of the novel's characters and of the reader as well, and this great art is not a representation or imitation of reality. Rather, it serves as a vision for the reader, too. It reveals valuable and meaningful pure possibilities that life may actualize.

Hence, what Auerbach calls the entrance of the realism of daily life into the sublime and tragic (Auerbach, *Mimesis*, p. 22)[24] I would prefer to consider as the unity of individual pure possibilities with their concrete actualities (which are the spatiotemporally and causally restricted parts of these possibilities, as I have explained above). These actualities thus imitate—better, actualize—the pure possibilities that literary masterpieces reveal for the reader.

[24] Cf.: "any aesthetic separation of the realms of the sublime and tragic on the one hand and of the everyday and real on the other is of course out of the question" (Auerbach, *Mimesis*, p. 92); "It situates the sublime event within their everyday lives" (op. cit.: 156); "there is no basis for a separation of the sublime from the low and everyday" (op. cit.: 158); "a complete embedding of the sublime and sacred event in a reality which is simultaneously contemporary Italian and omnitemporal" (op.cit.: 172); "Many important critics and indeed whole epochs of classicistic taste have felt ill at ease with Dante's closeness to the actual in the realm of the sublime is monstrous" (op. cit.: 185); "Shakespeare's mixing of styles in the portrayal of his characters is very pronounced. In most of the plays which have a generally tragic tenor there is an extremely close interweaving of the tragic and the comic, the sublime and the low" (op. cit.: 315).

CHAPTER TWO

HOW IS GREGOR SAMSA POSSIBLE?

Literary fictions deal with possibilities, otherwise we would not pay attention to the literary works that depict them. Usually, we dismiss impossibilities from the outset. The impossible, unless questioning it as allegedly impossible, does not serve as an object for our thinking, imagining, referring, relating, and identifying. Although our imagination transcends actual reality to refer to and entertain pure ("mere," non-actual) possibilities, it does not and cannot transcend the realm of pure possibilities. Regardless or independent of anything actual and actual conditions (namely, spatiotemporal and causal conditions), any possibility is pure. Thus, the actual does not determine the realm of pure possibilities, which inescapably transcends the actual.[25] Hamlet, Madame Bovary, Prince Andrey, Raskolnikov, Josef K., or Gregor Samsa are purely possible characters, none of which is impossible or, else, actual. As possible, they are referable or relatable and thus suitable for serving as characters in literary fictions. It is impossible to refer or to relate directly to the impossible.

As possible, such protagonists can be taken seriously by the reader. Using this argument, I do not relate to them as probable, for probability necessarily depends on actual reality and on actualities, which is not the case of these protagonists as purely possible characters. As such, some actualities may imitate them, and not the other way round.

Yet this may raise some difficulties. First, it appears that it is the impossible, or the absurd, rather than the possible that usually plays a

[25] As I have argued above, panenmentalism has nothing to do with idealism or with phenomenology. Thus, the pure possibilities referred in this chapter are not those mentioned by Edward Casey, "Imagination and Repetition in Literature: A Re assessment," *Yale French Studies* 52 (1975), pp. 249 267, and Donald Pease, "Black, Crane, Whitehead, and Modernism: A Poetics of Pure Possibility," *PMLA* 96:1 (1981), pp. 64 85, following Husserlian phenomenology. Panenmentalism deals with individual pure possibilities independently and regardless of possible-worlds conception, actualities, and our mind. Although our imagination discovers such possibilities, they are independent of it, too.

crucial role in Kafka's art and letters. According to Kafka's letters, it is impossible to actualize love, to be married, even to live together in the same city (according to one of his letters to Milena); in his literary writings, it is impossible to pass an imperial message to a remote citizen (*An Imperial Message*), to enter the gate of the law that should be accessible to everyone (*Before the Law*), and to reach the next village even in the entire span of an ordinary lifetime (*The Next Village*). Nevertheless, this phenomenon may be settled upon the basis that such is the paradoxical nature of Kafka's writings, in which things are possible and impossible in the same place and at the same time. Everything has at least two contradictory faces. Thus, impossible characters are also possible in the reality as depicted in his writings. Second, as we have in mind some examples of allegedly impossible or absurd characters in some great literary pieces of art, why is one entitled to say that such characters may eventually turn out to be possible? Gregor Samsa, the protagonist of Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, appears to be an absurd, impossible creature, for the metamorphosis in this case is impossible in a commonsensical sense as well as biologically impossible. The case certainly appears to be that no human being can turn into such a creature. Yet this absurd story and this absurd character are powerfully fascinating, disturbing, or appealing to the reader. There is no doubt that absurd characters and stories, if well written, affect us in this way. And, sometimes, they may affect us even more than actual events or characters.

In truth, this is but an alleged impossibility, for whenever we assume that the case of such events and characters is impossible indeed, we inescapably miss the whole point about the nature of literary fiction and about the ontological status of its possibilities as well.[26] We miss even more, then, the nature of our psychical reality in which sheer fantasies and illusions are possibly considered or taken as real possibilities. As far as our

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[26] Quite interestingly, the Russian word *skazka* refers also to "a fantastic, impossible tale or fable." See James M. Holquist, "The Devil in Mufti: The *Märchenwelt* in Gogol's Short Stories," *Modern Language Association* 82: 5 (October 1967), p. 352 (citing D. S. Mirsky, *Pushkin*). Nevertheless, as Holquist rightly states, this sense of *skazka* is not "particularly helpful in coming to grips with Gogol in any sustained way" (ibid.). Furthermore, "the all-pervasive deceptiveness of the *Märchenwelt* indicates another of those tendencies which will loom large in Gogol the mutability of things, the ever-present possibility of metamorphosis, comic or sinister as the case might be" (p. 354). Gogol, in fact, groped "toward a more individualized realization of the *Kunstmärchen*'s possibilities" (p. 356). This holds true even more for Kafka's art of writing.

psychical reality is concerned, pure, non-actual possibilities may be as real as actualities, let alone as "real" possibilities in some sense.

Indeed, Gregor Samsa "tried to imagine to himself whether anything similar to what was happening to him today could also have happened at some point to his manager. At least, one had to concede the possibility of such a thing [*die Möglichkeit dessen mußte man doch eigentlich zugeben*]."[27] To concede, to acknowledge, or to admit the possibility of such an absurd metamorphosis, of such a monstrous change or transformation, is a necessary condition for our reading and enjoying this novella as a work of art. If we exclude such a possibility, there is no point in reading the text at all. In the novella, mental or psychical possibilities are contrasted with actual performances or actual reality. For instance, the narrator contrasts possibility (*Möglichkeit*) with actual reality (*Wirklichkeit*) in describing the way in which Gregor intends to flee from his father to his room, but he fails to perform that as a matter of actual reality or truth ("he began . . . to turn himself around as quickly as possible, although in truth this was only done very slowly"). Intentions are psychical possibilities, whereas performances are actualities.

Subjective, private possibilities, pertaining to psychical reality, have intersubjective or interpersonal meanings and significance, which are mental. By "psychical reality," I mean what pertains to the singularity and subjectivity of a person as a psychical subject, a reality that is epistemically inaccessible to other persons though it is privately accessible to the person under discussion. By "mental reality," I mean an intersubjective or interpersonal reality, which *reflects* the meanings and significance of the psychical. Mental reality is accessible to all the relevant persons taking part in it. As no language is private, any language pertains to a mental, intersubjective reality. Like the psychical, the mental is not subject to anything actual or to any spatiotemporal and causal conditions. As for the actual, objective reality, it consists only of the physical (i.e., merely physical, chemical, biochemical, or biological) and is publicly

[27] Franz Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*, trans. Ian Johnston (http://records.viu.ca./~johnstoi/stories/kafka-e.htm) (2009). I prefer this translation to the others because of its accuracy and capability to offer the reader as many translational alternatives as possible. Furthermore, thanks to its free accessibility in the public domain, every reader who has access to the internet can reach it. For an attempt to make sense of the story as a possibility, not in a "fictional world where such things are possible" but as such that "it could indeed be ours," see Andrew Feldherr, "Metamorphosis in the *Metamorphoses*," *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, ed. Philip Hardie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 163 79.

accessible by empirical means.[28] The actual and the physical are identical, for they are subject to the same actual conditions from which the psychical and the mental are exempt. Thus everything mental or psychical consists of pure, non-actual possibilities, whereas the physical consists of actual possibilities—actualities—actualizing their pure possibilities.

One of the main reasons why my view exempts the psychical and the mental from spatiotemporal and causal conditions and assumes the identity of the actual to the physical relies on my psychophysical view. According to this view, there is a difference of ontic categories between mind and body, a difference that maintains the psychophysical unity or inseparability while precluding a psychophysical identity or reduction. Were the psychical or the mental actual, a dualistic psychophysical view would be the result, which would challenge the psychophysical unity or inseparability; otherwise, such a view would render a psychophysical reduction or identity possible. In contrast, ascribing the actual only to the physical maintains both psychophysical unity and psychophysical distinction and precludes psychophysical identity or reducibility, whether material-physical or idealistic. The reader who would like to consider my elaborations on these psychophysical topics is advised to consult my panenmentalist works cited above.

As an actuality, Gregor Samsa is impossible, all the more so from the viewpoint of any commonsensical logic that follows actual reality. In actual reality, such a *biological-physical* metamorphosis is impossible. Nevertheless, as a pure possibility, revealed by means of a literary fiction, Gregor Samsa is undoubtedly possible, very much so owing to Kafka's genius as a writer, as we shall see below. As such a writer, Kafka persuades the reader that there is an inescapable necessity about the absurd plot and characters in his writing. He reveals an absurd reality that is as real and frightening as may be the actual reality in which we live. As we shall realize, the question is not whether Gregor Samsa is possible but, instead, *how* he is possible, or in *what sense of reality* he is possible.

[28] For the topic of different kinds of reality with regard to Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, consult the enlightening remarks of Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Literature*, ed. Fredson Bowers (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), pp. 252–55. According to Nabokov, objective reality is the mixture of all those kinds of reality. Hence he writes: "Gregor is a human being in an insect's disguise; his family are insects disguised as people. With Gregor's death their insect souls are suddenly aware that they are free to enjoy themselves" (p. 280–1). Nabokov attempts to show the reader that "in so-called real life we find sometimes a great resemblance to the situation in Kafka's fantastic story" (p. 267).

Does the mental reality, which Gregor Samsa and his family share, require that the metamorphosis must take place? This is the precise way in which both he and his family really consider his character. It is the story of his life, a story in which each detail is necessary; nothing is missing and nothing is superfluous. Kafka's fiction discovers a possible reality whose literary necessity is flawless. For such is the way of great art—each detail is in its place and it appears in a necessary order. Every piece of art has its own logic. According to the logic of *The Metamorphosis,* absurd as it is, Samsa's metamorphosis is necessary. It is the necessity of a pure possibility that a literary masterpiece reveals. Though such a metamorphosis is impossible in actual reality, it is possible through the lens of literature, and, furthermore, it is necessary in light of this novella.

All the attempts to define biologically this metamorphosed insect are simply misconceptions. Instead of treating this creature as a pure possibility, those who have attempted to categorize it biologically, considered it or him as if it were an actuality. Has it wings? If so, as an actual creature, it should be a big beetle, not a dung beetle. So what? As a pure possibility of a *human* insect he could be both a dung beetle and a big one; as an actual insect he could not be both. Nevertheless, this novella opens up various possibilities of defining this creature, all of which take part in the ideal complete interpretation of this novella as a whole. If it had wings, why could Gregor Samsa not fly away from this nightmare? Maybe it was possible for him, just as it was possible for the man from the country, in *Before the Law,* to enter the gate of the Law despite the gatekeeper's warnings? Yet in the mind of this miserable man, this was simply impossible—and, indeed, he was the one who chose to follow the gatekeeper's advice and to exclude the possibility of accessing the Law that was, in fact, open for him only. The gatekeeper never forced him not to enter the gate; he only advised him not to do so. Analogously, Gregor Samsa had the capability of flying out of the nightmare, of his daily boredom, of his nasty job, and of his family. Yet he chose not to use his wings, metaphorical or literal, but to remain at his home, in his hell. On the other hand, if he were a dung beetle, why did he choose to live on the floor but never, according the story, beneath it? Or, perhaps, the story does not distinguish between these two different possibilities of an insect's habitat of Gregor Samsa's life? In any case, he could fly, as flying is possible for a dung beetle. The conclusion is that this absurd insect has various features that, combined together, could not characterize any actual insect or creature, and yet their combination is a necessary possibility in the light of this novella.

How is such a creature possible? The novella opens the reader's eyes to realize that all his adult life, Gregor Samsa has lived in a mental dung hill, and the impression that, in reality, he traveled and lived above the ground, not under it, was simply an illusion. He never used his wings; he never tried to fly, to escape from his miserable life, from his everlasting boredom. And the real nightmare of his life is not the one into which he wakes at the beginning of the novella, but his everyday life before that morning. That morning he becomes aware of the *meaning* of his life so far. The insect has been always there, though Gregor Samsa was never aware of this horrible *mental* fact. His life had always been a life of a dung beetle, which had never spread its wings to fly away.

Consider, for instance, the following detail:

> It was no dream. His room, a proper room for a human being, only somewhat too small, lay quietly between the four well-known walls. Above the table, on which an unpacked collection of sample cloth goods was spread out Samsa was a travelling salesman hung the picture which he had cut out of an illustrated magazine a little while ago and set in a pretty gilt frame. It was a picture of a woman with a fur hat and a fur boa. She sat erect there, lifting up in the direction of the viewer a solid fur muff into which her entire forearm had disappeared.

Gregor becomes aware of the fact that his room, proper as it may have been for a human being, is a sort of a prison cell. The seductive picture on the wall is not of a lover who could be meant for him personally, but one taken from an illustrated magazine. The painted golden frame exposes the loneliness and wretchedness of his life even before the metamorphosis—in the absence of any real romantic love to a woman, he had to appreciate even such a vulgar picture of temptation. Under the cover of a fur boa and fur hat and set in a gilt frame, she aims an impersonal temptation toward any possible impersonal viewer or voyeur. It appears that this has been the only erotic experience left for him. His work, supporting the entire family, consumed most, if not all, of his time, and the only picture of a possible erotic object he could hang on his wall is this picture, which has nothing personal in it. Compare this picture of a body wearing furs to the nude body of Gregor, which has no clothing on (let alone a fur), though he was a salesman of cloth goods. The loneliness and wretchedness of his life so far, though masked by the traveling salesman's cloth and appearance, are exposed now to Gregor's awareness at the moment of his metamorphosis. From this moment on, the samples of cloth goods on his table become quite useless. Furthermore, from now on, Gregor cannot even imagine a possibility that such a woman would be attracted by him, he who is such a disgusting creature, or, rather, one who is now revealed as such a creature (which he had always been though under false disguises or covers). Could he have attracted her before the metamorphosis? Possibly only in his imagination. After all, even before this disaster he had had no picture of any woman to hang on the wall of his room-prison. The story reveals that he has had no romantic love in his life. To the extent that such love takes part in the meaning of one's life, Gregor's life has been always meaningless.

Meanings are not actualities; like anything mental, they are rather pure possibilities. Gregor Samsa could remain a common, simple human being awaking each early morning to his dull, monotonous work but the meaning of his life consists of the pure possibility of the life of a disgusting, grotesque creature. He woke up to the awareness of this meaning of his life. The metamorphosis is all about this awareness, which is a psychical state.

The death of Gregor Samsa changes the life of his family completely, not because a death of an insect can change the life of these three persons, but because they become aware of the meaning of Gregor's life and death for them. There is no difference between his life and his death, except for the awareness that the family can live much better off without him than with him.

The main point is that the appearance of Gregor Samsa as an insect or a beetle is a discovery of a profound aspect of his identity—the captivity that is the leitmotiv of almost the whole of his life. This aspect pertains to the pure identity-possibility of him in all of its appearances, before the metamorphosis and after it. The personal identity of Gregor Samsa is the same in each of these phases of his life.[29] The metamorphosis is not a change in Samsa's personal identity; it is the profound revelation of it as a state of mind of captivity. Again, his metamorphosis is a change of awareness, not of any actual fact. One of the insights of this novella is that it is a state of mind that really matters as far as the metamorphosis is concerned. For instance, as the narrator comments, the "main thing holding the family back from a change in living quarters was far more their complete hopelessness and the idea that they had been struck by a misfortune like no one else in their entire circle of relatives and acquaintances" instead of the *fact* that Gregor had been metamorphosed.

Samsa's life before the metamorphosis reflects a symptom of his life as an insect after the metamorphosis. Again, the insect under discussion is

[29] Compare with Wesley Cooper, "An Eldritch Tale: Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and the Self," *Philo* 11 (2008), pp. 133–44.

not a biological actuality; instead, it is a state of mind, and quite a human state of mind. This is the profound unconscious state of mind of Gregor Samsa before the metamorphosis, a state of mind that the rest of the family finally adopts. They want to get rid of the bug, which is a deviation, an error, or a mistake. For Samsa and for the rest of his family he is a nasty fault or mistake. The fault under discussion is human and it does not involve dehumanization. It is too human. It is a human awareness.

Like the man from the country in *Before the Law*, Samsa ignores the real possibility to liberate himself. He accepts his captivity. Like the man from the country, he does not enter the gate of his destination or liberation; he stays before it, at a far distance from it. To pass through the gate, to change completely one's undesirable life, is to change one's state of mind about one's identity and to transform it into the state of mind of a liberated person. The fault is to remain before the gate. Thus, Samsa's personal identity as an insect is his faulty personal identity, not the genuine, liberated one, which he missed completely.

In these two stories, the protagonists fail to stand on their feet, except for a short period and with a great effort. Near the end of the novella, Gregor can no longer move; after all it was a real wonder how he could stand at all on his thin little legs. The man from the country is entirely dependent on the gatekeeper, and the metamorphosed Gregor depends on his family. Each of the two fails to be an independent individual. The one is simply the "man from the country," the other—an absurd creature. Similarly, Josef K. is really an accused person, a defendant, who completely fails to liberate himself from the absurd court of law, and who detects everywhere the symptoms or traces of this court, as if the court were the entire universe or all-invasive. Samsa's universe is even more confined, for it consists of only his room, which is "a proper room for a human being, only somewhat too small [*ein richtiges, nur etwas zu kleines Menschenzimmer*]," and the apartment of the entire family (including the tenants) as seen from the eyes of the human insect. The universe of the man from the country is confined to the gate before the Law. These three protagonists are prisoners in their own hands. None of them is endowed with a broad view; not one of them has a wide and open horizon to watch; each of their worlds is quite narrow, small, and suffocating, like a prison. Gregor's captivity is, in fact, explicitly named "imprisonment" (*Gefangenschaft*). As a verminous creature or insect, Samsa's personality is that of a captive, whereas as a traveling salesman, as a self-captive, he used to lock the three doors of his too little room every night. Similarly, Josef K. and the man from the country are captives. Each of them fully accepts his captivity as a state of mind. This captivity is in the protagonist's hands and choice. Kafka's protagonists do not revolt against their captivity; they accept it as a part of their nature.

The life of Samsa before the metamorphosis and his life as an insect after it are two faces of the same captivity. Though as an insect he cannot serve as a traveling salesman and is incapable of leaving his home any more, he is mentally enslaved as much as he was before the metamorphosis. He was entirely in the service of other persons, especially while supporting his family.

Possibilities, especially pure possibilities, play a significant role in this novella. Both the sister and the father of Gregor assume that it is impossible for the monstrous creature to understand any of their words, although, in fact, he understands them quite well. What they assume to be impossible is actually real, but if this assumption is wrong, a paradox arises immediately. Assuming that this creature and Gregor are not one and the same, the sister argues: "If it were Gregor, he would have long ago realized that a communal life among human beings is not possible [*nicht möglich ist*] with such a creature [an animal—*Tier*] and would have gone away voluntarily. Then we would not have a brother, but we could go on living and honor his memory." This is the main paradox of the novella—one and the same creature is human and inhuman. It is a possibility of something "impossible." The memory of the brother and his voluntary leaving as an animal is incompatible. But it is incompatible only because the sister wrongly assumes that Gregor and the animal are not one and the same creature. His family has to recognize the reverse truth, for, crawling back to his room because he does not want to bother them, Gregor's "good intentions seemed to have been recognized." These good intentions must contradict their assumption that the "animal" is not "their" Gregor, let alone a human being. Most of all, Gregor's state of mind contradicts this assumption but in a paradoxical way, for he entirely agrees with his sister that he should leave the family alone: "He remembered his family with deep feelings of love. In this business, his own thought that he had to disappear was, if possible, even more decisive than his sister's." Although the cleaning lady ascribes to the metamorphosed Gregor a human intelligence, she considers and treats him, discovering the fact that he is dead already, as a "thing" (*das Zeug*). The dead Gregor is, for her as well as for his family, simply trash that should be thrown away, and the anticipation of this final metamorphosis is the function of his room as containing trash of any "useless or shoddy stuff" shortly before his death. This is not the manner in which any human being, let alone an intelligent one, should be treated. The paradox lies in the nature of Gregor Samsa, which from the beginning of the novella until its end is entirely and exclusively human.

In the beginning, we are acquainted with Gregor Samsa as an *ungeheuren Ungeziefer*, which is an enormous verminous creature, "bug," "pest," or "wild animal," whereas he ends his life as a *Zeug*. But, paradoxically enough, this makes him even more human; this is a metamorphosis or change in a human state of mind. "*Wie Ungeziefer behandeln*" means "to treat someone like vermin." *Ungeziefer* is also "*nicht zum Opfer geeignetes Tier*," which means "an animal which is not suitable to be served as an offering." This word has the connotation of an "unclean" or "abominable" creature and the dirt that, near the end of the novella, is described as being attached to his body, is contrasted with "the spotless floor of the living room." Nevertheless, in this novella all such phrases refer to states of mind, that of Gregor and those of each member of his family, for whom he served only as a means of financial support as they were unemployed ("Gregor later earned so much money that he was in a position to bear the expenses of the entire family, costs which he, in fact, did bear"). When his sister, father, and mother finally realize that he has become useless and hopeless, they consider him as a worthless thing, at most as an abominable insect, beetle, or verminious creature (though in the first two weeks of his metamorphosis the mother related to him as "my unfortunate son").

Note that before taking care of Gregor as vermin, the mother and the father deemed the sister as useless, too ("he often heard how they fully acknowledged his sister's present work; whereas, earlier they had often got annoyed at his sister because she had seemed to them a somewhat useless young woman [*als ein etwas nutzloses Mädchen erschienen war*]"). In addition to the three letters—g, r, and e—which the names of the brother and sister share, they also share, in the eyes of their parents, though at different times, the property of uselessness. This casts a sardonic light on the contrast between them at the end of the novella—the abominable corpse of a useless creature in contrast to the beautiful and voluptuous body of a young woman. Sardonically indeed, scarifying Gregor—the allegedly unsuitable offering (*Ungeziefer*)—redeems and liberates the entire Samsa family.

If the metamorphosis of Gregor Samsa is merely a state of mind, what was the physical, factual, actual event that changed the whole life of this family? As this metamorphosis is of the state of mind only, of awareness, the real factual change that took place was that one morning Gregor Samsa could not leave his room or his apartment and could no longer continue to serve as a travelling salesman; he had also lost any capability of communicating with other people. The meaning of this change for him as well as for the family and the tenants in his apartment is that he had become a huge *Ungeziefer*, a useless abominable creature, whose voice is *heard* like that of an animal. The way he is heard or seen is a state of mind, not a physical, actual phenomenon. He, his family, and the tenants saw and heard him as if he were an animal, and this change took place in a mental reality (namely, intersubjective reality), not in a physical, actual one.

In this sense, Gregor Samsa's metamorphosis is certainly possible and it has a literary and mental meaning and significance. This metamorphosis is not a metaphor, it is a *real* state of mind, in which people consider other people, including themselves, as abominable creatures, good for nothing, even as trash. Such a state of mind is a human psychical (individual and subjective) or mental (intersubjective) possibility. Thus, the reader may feel that he or she can identify with the metamorphosed Gregor Samsa, namely, with such a state of mind. This, therefore, makes him very real to the reader. He touches some of our profound anxieties, especially the fear of losing our worth, to become much less than human, to be metamorphosed into abominable, useless creatures.

This was not the first metamorphosis in Gregor's life, for, entirely humiliated when first appearing as an insect to the manager and the family, he became aware of the photograph of himself from the time of his military service, a photograph that hung on the wall of his room. What is important about this picture is, again, Gregor's state of mind: "It was a picture of him as a lieutenant, as he, smiling and worry free, with his hand on his sword, demanded respect for his bearing and uniform." Now, Gregor's nudity, devoid of any respectable human clothing or appearance, makes a dramatic contrast with this picture. Before he became a traveling salesman, he had been a proud lieutenant. The state of mind of self-humiliation clearly contrasted the state of mind of self-pride or self-confidence. Yet these three appearances—monstrous insect, army officer, and traveling salesman—are one and the same person in quite different states of mind; they are three metamorphoses of the same person.

As an alleged insect, Gregor Samsa may be diagnosed as being sick. Indeed, this possibility crossed his mind: "What if he reported in sick? But that would be extremely embarrassing and suspicious, because during his five years' service Gregor had not been sick even once." Yes, for sure, as much as during all these years he had never before been turned into an insect. To explain the change in his voice, he had a simple reason: It "was nothing other than the onset of a real chill, an occupational illness of commercial travelers [*einer Berufskrankheit der Reisenden*], of that he had not the slightest doubt." Certainly, as his mother and father told the manager, he was not well. Gregor tried to persuade the manager that his sickness should not prevent him from doing his job: "But people always think that they'll get over sickness without having to stay at home," though his mother thought that, as severely sick, he needed a doctor immediately. Note that the mother is quite sick herself, as she suffered from a chronic asthma. Sickness was naturally the first possibility that crossed her mind to explain this drastic change in her son. Entering his room, his sister treated him "as if she were in the presence of a serious invalid [*schwer krank*—seriously ill] or a total stranger." Later, having been seriously wounded, Gregor's mobility is compared to that of "an aged invalid." Hence, Gregor's third, insectival metamorphosis can be considered as a sickness or disability, bodily and psychical as well; but primarily it is a state of mind.

A huge, train-like hospital is the view that can be seen from Gregor's room: "Standing out clearly from the other side of the street was a section of the endless gray-black house situated opposite—-it was a hospital—with its severe regular windows breaking up the facade." Later, as he could see nothing clearly, this view had been changed: "The hospital across the street, the all-too-frequent sight of which he had previously cursed, was not visible at all any more, and if he had not been very well aware that he lived in the quiet but completely urban Charlotte Street, he could have believed that from his window he was peering out at a featureless wasteland, in which the gray heaven and the gray earth had merged and were indistinguishable." Thus Gregor's state of mind or perception is of a huge hospital that turned to be a gray featureless wasteland. Gregor's state of mind or perception turned a huge, endless grey-black hospital into a merger of gray heaven and gray earth, and he was left only "with some memory or other of the liberating sense [*Befreiende*] which looking out the window used to bring him in earlier times." It is in the nature of sickness as a state of mind to confine the patient's mind and existence to a very small fraction of reality, even to the patient's bed or room. Gregor's world had become so small that outside of it there was nothing but a featureless wasteland. In this way, Gregor's state of mind turned to be a world, the world of his sickness.[30]

Kafka found a way to transform actual space and time into states of mind or mental possibilities. In the very short story, *The Next Village*, the narrator's grandfather says that, given that human life is so short, he

[30] Such a world is not the traditional possible world, a concept that I reject; instead, it means a universal significance. See below, a footnote of the next chapter.

cannot understand how the entire life of a young man suffices to reach the next village. Thus the short way to the next village turns to be very long. The spatial distance is translated into a temporal one, which is in fact a mental or psychical state: The way that one experiences the temporality and temporariness of one's life. The same attitude also transforms distance into time in *The Metamorphosis*: Gregor "was astonished at the great distance which separated him from his room and did not understand in the least how in his weakness he had covered the same distance a short time before, almost without noticing it." This is quite typical of Kafka's style of writing: It renders actualities into pure possibilities. Time and space condition and restrict actualities, but transforming them into states of mind or into psychical possibilities transforms the actualities under discussion into pure possibilities. In this way, Gregor's mind renders his room or apartment into a huge prison spreading itself all over the world. For him, time and space are mental or psychical possibilities, not conditions of actualities. In sickness, one's mind grasps one's space as the entire world.

The possibility that a sickness-to-death can change the entire world for someone as well as for the patient's family is a familiar, very real state of mind. It is the existential possibility of many miserable people all over the world. Yet sickness is primarily a state of mind, for very ill persons may not feel or consider themselves as ill; instead, they may consider themselves as persons who have some illness or sickness. Moreover, Gregor's sickness, his state of mind, is a psychical possibility with a universal mental significance: Each human being, first of all the manager, can be metamorphosed like Samsa, as each of us is subject to a sickness state of mind that can change the entire world for the person involved. Is there redemption from such a state of mind? For the manager, the redemption or release (*Erlösung*) is to get out of the nightmare haunting Samsa's apartment, and this redemption would be seen as *überirdische*, namely, supernatural. The only redemption waiting for the rest of Samsa family is Gregor's insectival death. Like the manager, for them salvation entails getting out of the apartment, which was impossible for the metamorphosed Gergor and for the entire family as long as Gregor was alive. Yet any redemption in this novella is quite natural. The supernatural is simply impossible. Mentioning the name of God does not provide Gregor and his family with a divine answer. Supernatural redemption is out of the question in Kafka's world. For Gregor, the outside is either the huge hospital or a featureless wasteland. There is no redemption, let alone by God. For Gregor, nothing distinguishes gray heaven from gray earth. For him, there is no redemption either in heaven or on earth. Ironically enough, his only "salvation" is his father's "strong liberating push" (*erlösenden starken Stoß*) which made it possible for Gregor to return to his room.

Gregor's state of mind is also the psychical possibility of loneliness and alienation. While the manager described Gregor's voice as an "animal voice," his mother ascribed this vocal change to a severe illness. She urged her daughter to call the doctor and the locksmith, and this calmed Gregor down and changed his mood for the better, since he "felt himself included once again in the circle of humanity [*Er fühlte sich wieder einbezogen in den menschlichen Kreis*] and was expecting [hoping] for both the doctor and the locksmith, without differentiating between them with any real precision, splendid and surprising results." Is it not a universal mental phenomenon in which people feel themselves either excluded from the circle of humanity or included in it? Is it not the experience of loneliness with no hope for help from other human beings or otherwise? Undoubtedly, Gregor felt himself insignificant, obnoxious, and disgusting like vermin or an insect, as excluded from humanity as a whole (including his family). Again, the main point about this is a state of mind rather than any actual-physical state. The same holds for sickness—when the patients feel lonely, as prisoners of their state, losing any hope in doctors and other people, it is the state of their mind that is crucial, the state that really matters. After all, pain and suffering are psychical states, and with no consciousness or awareness, there is no pain or suffering.

As mentioned above, Gregor's state of mind is also comparable with that of old age. Describing the elderly guests in the party at Prince de Guermantes's house, Marcel, the narrator, almost does not recognize all those persons so familiar to him since his childhood, as the time has changed them almost beyond recognition, as if they were wearing party masks and hiding themselves behind some theatrical disguise.[31] This made him think that "it must be possible for human personality to undergo metamorphoses as total as those of certain insects" (*Time Regained*, p. 962). Though what Marcel observed was the physical state of those people, it is still a state that, according to his insight, first and foremost has a mental aspect, as he is convinced "of the purely mental character of reality" (*Time Regained*, p. 953). After all, "the creation of the work of art" is to extract the spiritual meanings from the material impressions that enter us through the senses and to convert them into their spiritual equations" (*Time Regained*, p. 912). These typically Proustian ideas

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[31] Marcel Proust, *Time Regained* in *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff, Terence Kilmartin, and Andreas Mayor (London: Chatto and Windus, 1981), pp. 957 ff. Hereafter abbreviated to *Time Regained*.

culminate in the conclusion: "Real life, life at least laid bare and illuminated—the only life in consequence which can be said to be really lived—is literature" (*Time Regained*, p. 931). This conclusion should occupy our mind not only in the context of this discussion of Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* but no less so in the panenmentalist context and in that of Oscar Wilde's idea that it is life that imitates art, not vice versa.[32] It is quite interesting to compare the metamorphosis, in which old age distorted the appearance and the mental state of the persona in the Prince de Guermantes's party, with the metamorphosis with which the portrait of Dorian Gray was inflicted. In any case, the psychical or mental state of old age is another most significant example of the possibility of the metamorphosis depicted in Kafka's novella.

Having succeeded in opening the lock of his door with his mouth, Gregor said to himself "So I didn't need the locksmith." Did he still need the doctor? Or if, in his mind, there was no difference between the two, did he not also need the doctor? If so, again, he was not actually, physically sick. His sickness was *only* a state of mind, which is an experience of loneliness, alienation, losing the sense of humanity, and, especially, human dignity. Undoubtedly, such is a real possibility and the grotesque tragedy of Gregor Samsa is a real state of mind, psychical (subjective) or mental (intersubjective).

Both his mother and sister assumed that since they could not understand any of his words, he could not understand theirs. The alienation, a well-known mental possibility and quite a common one, is perfectly portrayed thus:

> As he heard his mother's words, Gregor realized that the lack of all immediate human contact together with the monotonous life surrounded by the family over the course of these two months, must have confused his understanding, because otherwise he could not explain to himself how he, in all seriousness, could have been so keen to have his room emptied. Was he really eager to let the warm room, comfortably furnished with pieces he had inherited, be turned into a cavern in which he would, of course, then be able to crawl about in all directions without disturbance, but at the same time with a quick and complete forgetting of his human past as well?

As human beings, we cannot absolutely avoid such a horrible threat of dehumanization. It is a common existential dread. In many situations, human beings find themselves completely alienated, beyond the reach of human knowledge and communication. Gregor remained human until his

[32] See Oscar Wilde, "The Decay of Lying," pp. 29–30.

last breath and he understood each word of anybody in the apartment, but no human being could understand any of his words. Such a situation may be defined as madness, but Gregor was not mad, his metamorphosis kept him still human and sane as well. He had been Gregor Samsa from the beginning of the novella until its end. Taking the furniture out of Gregor's room, both sister and mother paradoxically treated him as Gregor, as a human being, and not as some metamorphosed vermin or an insect: The mother "caught sight of the enormous brown splotch on the flowered wallpaper, and, before she became truly aware that what she was looking at was Gregor …;" and the sister, completely forgetting her assumption that he understood nothing, addressed him by "'Gregor, you …'" which "since his transformation these were the first words which she had directed right at him." And in quite different direct words, the old cleaning lady who got rid of Gregor's corpse as a *Zeug*, had used to address him thus: "She also called him to her with words which she probably thought were friendly, like 'Come here for a bit, old dung beetle [*alter Mistkäfer*]!' or 'Hey, look at the old dung beetle!'" Even the father, who had apparently entirely distanced himself from Gregor from the beginning, must have been aware of the fact that "in spite of Gregor's present unhappy and hateful appearance [*trotz seiner gegenwärtigen traurigen und ekelhaften Gestalt*], he was a member of the family [*ein Familienglied war*] and should not be treated as an enemy but that it was, on the contrary, a requirement of family duty to suppress one's aversion and to endure—nothing else, just endure." Alienating Gregor, they, too, could not ignore his personal identity as Gregor Samsa, as a human person who had undergone a horrible transformation.

This reaches a shocking climax in the following passage:

> Was he an animal that music so captivated him? For him it was as if the way to the unknown nourishment he craved was revealing itself. He was determined to press forward right up to his sister, to tug at her dress, and to indicate to her in this way that she might still come with her violin into his room, because here no one valued the recital as he wanted to value it. He did not wish to let her go from his room any more, at least not so long as he lived.

At that point, Gregor was starving, but the real nourishment he aspired for was this charming music, which the tenants and his family regarded quite differently. His physical hunger means almost nothing for him, whereas his aspiration for human love and beauty is a genuine matter of life and death for him. Again, his state of mind and not his physical state is the center of this novella. This passage is a dedication to human love and beauty, to one of the most important matters for human beings. The ugliness of the reaction of the three pedantically clean tenants to the sister's playing is contrasted with the sensitivity of Gregor, covered with physical dirt, to the beauty of her playing. The entire passage conveys a mental reality, and all the rest has a mental significance, not a physical one. At that point, Gregor's horrible appearance served, in his imagination, as a frightful dragon guarding his sister from any offence. It is Kafka's unique version of the legend of Beauty and the Beast: "His sister would break out in tears of emotion, and Gregor would lift himself up to her armpit and kiss her throat, which she, from the time she had been going to work, had left exposed without a band or a collar." Again, the transformations under discussion are mental, not physical.

As expected, Gregor was frustrated this time, too. His sister's reaction was quite contrary to his expectation-fantasy. This time, she refused to consider him as her brother: "I will not utter my brother's name in front of this monster [*Untier*], and thus I say only that we must try to get rid of it. We have tried what is humanly possible to take care of it and to be patient." *Untier* is an evil creature in a legend, a monster, and in this way the sister destroyed the legend that Gregor imagined by means of an opposing legend. One state of mind clashed with the other. Yet the two legends are both figments of human imagination, which is the means to expose real psychical or mental possibilities.

Gregor's transformation entailed the transformation of his father, which was a real, even actual, possibility that Gregor's transformation logically, reasonably implied:

> … was that still his father? Was that the same man who had lain exhausted and buried in bed in earlier days when Gregor was setting out on a business trip, who had received him on the evenings of his return in a sleeping gown and arm chair, totally incapable of standing up, . . . and who in their rare strolls together a few Sundays a year and on the most important holidays made his way slowly . . . bundled up in his old coat, working hard to move forwards and always setting down his walking stick carefully, and who, when he had wanted to say something, almost always stood still and gathered his entourage around him? But now he was standing up really straight, dressed in a tight-fitting blue uniform with gold buttons, . . . Above the high stiff collar of his jacket his firm double chin stuck out prominently, beneath his bushy eyebrows the glance of his black eyes was fresh and alert, and his usually disheveled white hair was combed down into a shining and carefully exact parting.

At this point, too, the novella challenges the reader with the problem of personal identity. Is the father the same person despite this drastic metamorphosis that he had undergone? Just as Gregor is the same person, whether in his lieutenant's uniform or metamorphosed as an insect, the father is the same person, whether as an invalid or in his blue uniform with gold buttons. People can be drastically metamorphosed and still maintain their personal identity. Such metamorphoses are certainly possible, and what holds true for Greger holds no less for the father. Having been metamorphosed, Gregor "had known even from the first day of his new life [*seines neuen Lebens*] that, as far as he was concerned, his father considered the only appropriate response to be the greatest force." Gregor's "new life" entails the "new life" of his father, and both kinds of new life are within the scope of human real possibilities.

The transformation of the father, so typical of Kafka's way of portraying a scene, can be seen from a different viewpoint that complicates the problem of his personal identity even further. Having been wounded by the apple, which his father had thrown at him, Gregor now appeared as an old invalid, and something changed in the way that the family treated him. Following this change, there was another one—the change in the appearance of the father: "His uniform, which even at the start was not new, grew dirty, and Gregor looked, often for the entire evening, at this clothing, with stains all over it and with its gold buttons always polished." This ambivalence in the father's look is in itself another kind of metamorphosis, in which the former master became a servant. Indeed, the father is a servant (*Diener*), getting some sleep at home still in his uniform, "as if he was always ready for his responsibility and even here was waiting for the voice of his superior." Gregor's father, as a fearful master, had turned out to be a servant, always ready to follow the orders of his superior. The father is the gatekeeper who had always obstructed Gregor's way to some freedom. Is this old, feeble, and incompetent father the one who used to be so authoritative and terrifying in Gregor's eyes just some weeks earlier? In the long, above-cited passage, a reverse transformation takes place—the father with the clean and bright uniform has been retransformed into a master, quite parallel to the picture of Gregor as a proud lieutenant. Both father and son have two opposing personal features—that of the master and that of the servant. Nevertheless, such a dual personality still maintains its identity.

All the metamorphoses depicted in this novella, especially that of Gregor as a huge verminous creature or insect, are possible. "Possible" in this context is *not vraisemblable*, namely, probable or plausible, for probability or plausibility inescapably depends on actual reality and actualities, whereas, as a pure possibility, Gregor Samsa is entirely independent on any actuality and actual reality as a whole. Actual reality may imitate such a pure possibility and its metamorphosis, not the other way round. As pure possibilities, Gregor Samsa and his metamorphosis are credible. Though they are not actual or probable, they are no less real or credible for the reader than actual persons and events. They open the reader's eyes to consider reality, including actual reality, and the reader himself or herself in a different, novel light. Analogously, through the lens of art, ●scar Wilde's protagonist, Dorian Grey, perceives reality differently, and for him reality imitates art and not the other way round.

Kafka's fiction reveals pure real possibilities for us. Referring to these possibilities enables us to see and understand our actual reality and our actual self quite differently; to see what we otherwise could not see or understand. Kafka's liberty from actual reality and his relating to the realm of pure possibilities, discovered by his imagination, reveal some novel meanings and senses of our actual reality. Having read this novella, we can detect such metamorphoses in our everyday life. Without it, we could not do so. A fine example is the experience of aging for the old person and his or her family as well. Such an experience can dawn on one very suddenly, getting up one morning and realizing that life has changed entirely, that the body and mind are definitely not as they used to be, and that his or her appearance has entirely changed, too. Gregor's metamorphosis may represent, even depict, such experiences perfectly. The change, the transformation, of the aged person can be so drastic, for instance, after a stroke, that it is no less world-shattering than Gregor's metamorphosis, together with the drastic change of attitude of the entire family to such an aged invalid.

In light of the above, Gregor Samsa and his metamorphosis are certainly possible. This possibility has a universal human significance.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERARY NECESSITY

In any great literary work, every detail is necessary, nothing is missing, and nothing is superfluous. This holds true also for realistic fiction, for even the so-called "contingent," arbitrary, or mundane detail must be strongly intertwined with the rest of the text, which renders such "contingency" necessary. Each detail, realistic or otherwise, is located in the right, necessary order. Nothing is contingent or arbitrary. To demonstrate this most clearly, some very short stories are quite useful.[33]

Of the best shortest story, we have only tales. According to one of them, Ernest Hemingway was proud of being the author of a story written in merely six words: "For sale: baby shoes, never worn." He considered this as his best story.[34] Interviewing Gary Paulsen, Lori Atkins Goodson heard another version: "For sale: Baby shoes. Never used." … Isn't that great? That's all there is. Six words. There's a book, there's a movie, there's a short story, there's a poem—anything you want to do with those six words, you can do it. It's just amazing what you can do with your words.[35]

I greatly prefer the first version to the second despite its musicality or semi-rhythm. The minor colon is better than the major full stop and the capital letters, for the whole story is genuinely minor in tone, and its great

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[33] Most of this chapter was previously published as: "How Few Words Can the Shortest Story Have?" *Philosophy and Literature* 32 (2008), pp. 119 129, by Johns Hopkins University Press (2008 copyrighted).

[34] "Hemingway once wrote a story in just six words ('For sale: baby shoes, never worn.') and is said to have called it his best work." See *Wired Magazine* 14.11 (November 2006), p. 1.

[35] "Single-handing: An Interview with Gary Paulsen," *The ALAN Review* 31:2 (Winter 2004), p. 58. In the same vein, the Australian writer Robert Drewe "offers a reference to what is regarded as the shortest fiction in the world, Hemingway's, 'For sale. Baby shoes. Never used.' A story Hemingway wrote when he bet his friends 10 dollars he could write a story in less than 10 words." See Jane Munro, "Polished Gems: The Joy of the Short Story," *ABC: North Coast NSW* (August 7, 2006).

power rests upon this tone. "Used" is much less evocative and more commercially practical than "worn." "Used" draws the attention to the shoes, whereas "worn" intimately relates to the dead baby. Indeed, these six words of the first version can initiate a book, a feature movie, and the like; yet, as you will see below, I prefer to think about a whole world centered around, or arising out of, Hemingway's six words.[36]

A very short story may comprise more than six words, say, seventeen, such as the following: "The last man on earth sat alone in a room. There was a knock on the door" ("Knock" by Fredric Brown).[37]

Which of these two stories is the better one? The shorter one, Hemingway's story in the first version. Why? Not only because there is not a single superfluous word or, even, a letter or punctuation mark; each word, each mark must be there, each is necessary for the story and in that order. Hemingway's six words create or initiate a whole story, actually a universe, of sorrow, bereavement, mourning, solitude, silence, untimely death, despair, loss, and tragedy.[38] Thus, each word in this story gets the utmost meaningfulness or significance that a word may have. Hemingway's story shows us a tragic world of bereavement and dread "in a handful of" six words, each of which is very simple. In contrast, although Brown's story bears a lot of tension and it is quite enigmatic (Who is knocking on the door? God, the Devil, an alien? Or is it simply a hallucination?), it conveys much less in seventeen words than do Hemingway's six. Brown's seventeen words do not create or reveal a world, let alone a universe. They create some tension, perhaps a thrill, possibly an enigma but not a world. There is certainly some puzzle that the reader may attempt to solve, but not much more.

Even in this respect, Hemingway's story is more enigmatic: What is the purpose of the sale of this baby's shoes? Is there some hope that what

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[36] Such a "whole world" is not the traditional possible world, a concept that I reject; instead, it means a universal significance (which especially characterizes any singular pure possibility and becomes noticeable in artistic depictions of individual pure possibilities).

[37] First published in *Thrilling Wonder Stories* 33:2 (December 1948).

[38] The universally tragic sense of Hemingway's six words has found deep echoes in lamenting hearts. For one, see Marlene Rankel's dedication to the memory of her late daughter, Allison Stewart: "Funeral yesterday: Donor lung expected tomorrow." See *2006 Dabrowski Congress Proceedings: The Seventh International Congress of the Institute for Positive Disintegration in Human Development* (August 2006, Calgary, Canada), p. 15. For another example consider: "Sign outside cemetery: 'No children allowed'" (Pamela Kennedy, a winner in LAAC/LRAC 6 Word Short Story's competition). See http://lrac4.charterinternet.com/docs/2007/websitepiece.pdf.

cannot be used for the lost baby will be useful for another, living baby? Or is it the stinginess of the dead baby's parents or relatives? Or is it their poverty that forces them to sell even these little shoes? Or is it their wish not to possess these shoes any longer despite their great significance? Regarding this last possibility, it is more suitable to sell them than to throw them away. In any of these possibilities, the shoes have some value. And the enigma under discussion is certainly tragic in any of these possibilities.

In contrast, Brown's story suggests merely a puzzle, not a tragic enigma. Such a puzzle may be found even in pulp fiction, not in fine writing, whereas Hemingway has told us a fine story comprising six indispensable words to create or reveal a whole tragic world encircled by silence. The silence under discussion is also stillness: As if nothing could be changed in the parents' world, as if the absolutely untimely death has frozen their world and rendered it unchangeable. In such a world, no knock on the door brings any comfort or can change anything. At best, someone who wants to buy the brand-new shoes at a cheap price may knock on this door, and this knock is possibly the only adequate response to these shocking six words. Finally, Hemingway's tragic story as well as its enigma has no comforting solution, whereas Brown's puzzle may have such a solution, even a salvation. No relief is possible in Hemingway's shortest story. The only consolation lies in its artistic beauty.

Hemingway's six words reveal a world in which countless human beings exist, whereas Brown's seventeen words create only a room in which the last man on earth remains alone. The knocking on the door cannot be human, for the last man is in the room and he does not knock on his own door. It is even possible that this man did not hear the knock, for the story tells that "there was a knock on the door" and not that "a knock on the door was heard." Of course, following Berkeley, one may interpret the existence of the knock to mean that someone (perhaps God alone) heard it. But one need not follow Berkeley's empiricist idealism to interpret Brown's story adequately. Much less than that is needed.

How many words should the best shortest story contain? Think of a story that consists of only one word: Died. Indeed, this one word creates an enigma—who was (or is) dead? Possibly, the narrator of the story feels himself or herself as a dead person; possibly, someone else died. Nevertheless, this single word does not create or reveal a world. Even if there is an implicit, a most abbreviated, story, there is no world and no one would consider this word to create a fine, let alone the best, story. "Died" elliptically stands for two words, one of which is the unknown or enigmatic subject, whereas Hemingway's six words stand for many more words, many more than only two.

The simpler the words are, the greater possibly is the world they reveal. Hemingway's six words are absolutely simple; they belong to the simplest, commonest words in the English language; they are mundane. They could serve as part of a brief notice or a short advertisement in the "Buy and Sell" columns of a daily newspaper. To choose the most common words, to use them with the possible greatest restraint, yet to reveal a huge world by means of them or to create one out of them is the gift of a great artist.

Hemingway's story lacks nothing. It does not matter who the baby was or who were the parents. It could be any lost, dead baby or any parents. Yet the story is certainly particular (because of the unworn shoes) and still extremely universal. In contrast, in Brown's story the whole point is: Who knocked on the door? The mystery in question is superficial or contrived, since the whole point about it is the identity of the one who knocked on the door. If the narrator told us that it was an alien, or the Devil, or God, the whole mystery would disappear immediately. In contrast, if Hemingway informed us about the baby's identity and that of his/her parents, this would not change the enigmatic nature of the story. Moreover, it would not change the drama or the tragedy that the story portrays.

How to do things with words is a task that literature, poetry, philosophy, or psychoanalysis attempts to perform. How to do the maximum with the minimal number of words, or how to do the best with the minimal or few words, is a key question. Hemingway's story focuses around a tragedy of a great loss, perhaps the greatest possible, the loss of the greatest hope or expectation. By limiting itself to this tragedy, these six words open a wide human world for the readers. In contrast, Brown's seventeen words restrict the world very much, reducing it to the room of one person. The loss *appears* to be so great: The loss of the human race as a whole except for one person. But such is merely a matter of appearance. The loss in Hemingway's story is much greater due to its genuine nature and reality. It leaves the impression of the loss on any sensitive reader. The effect thus becomes very real, even personally real. Not so in Brown's story. The loss is extremely fantastic or implausible. Because of its incredibility or inconceivability, the loss affects the reader, if at all, very little. Indeed, there is some suspense, some excitement is involved, and some readers may be alert to some extent. But this trick is available to any, however mediocre, writer of thrillers, detective stories, science fiction, pulp fiction, and the like. Great dramatists need much more than tricks.

One may compare Hemingway's six words to a line in a poem. But I do not think that such a comparison is quite in place. Think, for instance, of a line taken from "The Waste Land" by T. S. Eliot—"I will show you fear in a handful of dust"—and add to it only the date in which that poem was written. Indeed, such a line in the context of the time after the "Great War" (World War I) may make the reader tremble. Eliot made it possible to conceive of a whole world of dread within a handful of dust taken from one of the battlefields or cemeteries of this horrible war. The poetic restraint and conciseness open a world's horizons for the reader. Brown's seventeen words suggest a more confined reality than do Eliot's ten words or Hemingway's six that conjure up a world enough and time wide open for us. The grief and the mourning appear to confine or restrict the world but, in fact, they open it wider. A whole world has been changed because of the loss of one child or because of a handful of dust metonymically representing a huge number of dead in a world war. Nevertheless, the way in which Hemingway made his story is not the way of the poet. Hemingway's story could not be a poem. It is *as if* a notice or an advertisement appeared in a newspaper. It could be quite possibly such an advertisement but not a poem, even though the person who composed it could be only an artist, possibly a great one. Eliot's shivering line, in contrast, could never be an advertisement. To put such a line in an advertisement would definitely be a misuse, a quite inappropriate use, especially in the aesthetic sense.

Nevertheless, Hemingway's six words do not make an advertisement. To do so, some indispensable details are needed, such as the address or the means of communication by which the seller can be reached as well as something about the price of the item. The lack of such details makes these six words commercially useless or impractical yet leaves their artistic value intact. Were these details mentioned, the reader would think that the six words were still artistically put although for a commercial aim.

The tension between the practical aspect of an advertisement and its artistic significance opens an unbridgeable gap. It is the gap between mundane life and a great artistic achievement. This gap is a loss. It embodies the very loss, the unbridgeable gap between grief or misery and real beauty; between real beauty and the mundane world of commerce, advertisements, and innumerable petty things. The baby is dead; the shoes are for sale; what remains is Hemingway's best story. What remains is the beauty of genuine art.

Reconsider the two following advertisements:

(1) For sale: baby shoes, brand new.
(2) For sale: baby shoes, never worn.

Only two different words make the whole difference in the world. The commercial phrase, "brand new," brings no novelty with it, no genuine hope, but only an opportunity to buy the brand new baby shoes at a very reasonable price. In contrast, "never worn" refers to the never uttered but nevertheless presumed hope that, in the near future, the baby would start to walk. Alas, the baby died before taking its first steps in the world. Owing to these words—"never worn"—the entire span of time and even the open future (but not for the baby and the parents) are presented to the reader's attention. The great expectation, as to the baby's first steps in the world, has gone for ever. But the shoes remain, and are now for sale. There is nothing new about it. But the words "never worn" press home to us the great novelty of birth, of its cosmic, universal significance. An entire religion has been constructed on the birth of one baby who was destined to be the redeemer of the whole of humankind. The birth of any baby changes the entire world, even if its birth may be known only to a few persons. Such is also the significance of any person's death. What is left of this baby? The never-worn shoes whose echo resounds in a whole world of mourning and bereavement. Hemingway's never-worn baby shoes suggest a dialogue or counterpoint with Van Gogh's *Shoes*, which is a whole world surrounding two worn-out shoes (certainly not for sale!), a universe of long toil and old age. One great art meets another. A painting in six words meets a painting in a few outlines and colors.

Making a world, revealing a universe, in six words or in a few outlines and colors has to do with real beauty: The universe under discussion is a *cosmos*, in the ancient Greek sense of the word. The tragic sense of these six words ends with an aesthetic consolation: As much as the grief and dread are immense, they can be concisely, precisely, and meticulously expressed in six words. This certainly has a great aesthetic, even sublime, significance in literature, poetry, or philosophy.

Consider these six words: "For sale: Author's books, never opened." These words make or reveal a reality of frustration. However great it may be, still it is nothing to compare with a baby's death. These six words may sound even pathetic to some or many readers, whereas Hemingway's six words are not at all pathetic. The reality of frustration, however great, is much smaller and shallower than the world of grief and mourning that Hemingway's words reveal or create. The expression of the frustration of the author whose books have been never read does not create or reveal a world of grief. Even the significance of the sale of the baby's shoes is quite different from that of the author's unread books. The echo of the first sale is must more resounding than that of the second. Frustration, however great and deep, is not enough to make a world. The frustration that is involved in Hemingway's story becomes even greater because baby's shoes popularly signify a token or a talisman for good luck. Yet the death of innocence can create a world of dread, such a world in which babies die, whereas no amount of frustration can make such a world. The reality of frustration may take part in a world of dread or grief, but not the other way round. Following Hume, one may compare an unread or ignored book to a dead-born baby.[39] But this is a metaphor; by no means is it such a tragic loss. Thus, a world of grief or dread is much greater than a reality of frustration, however great.

The closer that words approach silence, the greater the effect that they can convey. Such is the case of Hemingway's six words. Much remains in silence, and yet this kind of silence is full of reality, thoughts, emotions, and feelings. It is pregnant with innumerable unspoken words. Nothing in Hemmingway's six words says too much, whereas in any of the other less-artistic examples that I have discussed above, the words say too much. There is much more silence in Kafka's works, in those of Joyce (see below), or in Hemingway's six words than in any of the other examples I refer to in this chapter (except for the sublime line by Eliot). And this silence speaks; this silence echoes each word to the utmost.[40]

Some wrongly believe that Augusto Monterroso, the Guatemalan author who died in 2003, wrote the best shortest story in the history of literature. Unlike Hemingway's story, which needs no title, Monterroso's story is entitled *The Dinosaur*. Except for the title, it is composed of the

[39] "Never literary attempt was more unfortunate than my *Treatise of Human Nature*. It fell ***dead-born from the press***, without reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots." See David Hume, "My Own Life," in *The Philosophical Works of David Hume* (Boston,: Little, Brown and Company, 1854), p. xv. This piece should also be considered as a fine shortest story.

[40] As Marion Lupu suggested to me, much of the dramatic effect of Harold Pinter's works lies in what is not said, and the term "Pinteresque" suggests "threat couched and lurking in the ambush of the unspoken." As Pinter mentions, "The speech we hear is an indication of that which we don't hear. . . . When true silence falls we are still left with echo but are nearer nakedness. One way of looking at speech is to say that it is a constant stratagem to cover nakedness. . . . I think that we communicate only too well, in our silence, in what is unsaid . . . ." See his "Writing for the Theatre," An Introduction to *Complete Works*, vol. 1 (New York: Grove Press, 1978), pp. 14 15.

following words: "When he woke up, the dinosaur was still there."[41] Seven words in Spanish, nine or seven in English. I prefer it to Brown's shortest story, but I appreciate Hemingway's story much more. Brown's story and that by Monterroso, unlike Hemmingway's, have something in common. It is the element that appeals mainly to the reader's imagination and, to some extent, the intellect. The possibility that one man remains after a world catastrophe and that someone knocks on his door is sheer fantasy; likewise, the witty micro-story about the dinosaur. Both stories are much less complicated or ample then Hemmingway's. They can be much more easily paraphrased or interpreted. For instance, Monterroso's story can be adequately paraphrased or interpreted as follows: "When he woke up, the Obsolete was still there." Similarly, Brown's story can be easily interpreted as God, the Devil, or an alien knocking on the door.

Both these stories have no need to appeal to cognitive capabilities other than the reader's imagination and intellect. What makes a whole world, even a universe, of a few artistic words, has to do with our psychical integration; they should relate to a complete psychical entity consisting of emotions, feelings, thoughts, wishes, hopes, intellect, imagination, and analysis; and they are all integrated into one story to make a whole of a mental (intersubjective) world. Brown and Monterroso pose a challenge to our imagination and intellect alone. All our other psychical capabilities need not be involved, let alone take part in an act of integration. Science fiction, pulp fiction, and the like need only one's imagination and intellect; and that is all. They offer us a game: A puzzle to be solved, something to entertain the reader and not much more. Hemingway's shortest story does not entertain us. It demands much more. It demands the reader's commitment and it does so from the reader as a whole person, not only as an imaginative person or one capable of solving or dissolving puzzles. Without deep emotions, the reader could not get the point in Hemingway's story.[42] In contrast, not much of the reader's emotions or experience is involved in the other two "shortest" stories. There are mainly entertaining puzzles.

Another example of a tricky shortest story is John Barth's "Frame-Tale" consisting of the following ten words: "Once upon a time there / was

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[41] "Cuando despertó, el dinosaurio todavía estaba allí." It can be translated "When it/he/she awoke…" or "Upon waking, …" and so long. For an English translation, see Augusto Monterroso, *Complete Works and Other Stories*, trans. Edith Grossman (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996).

[42] It is typical of reading Hemingway's writings that it is the reader who provides the emotions and feelings, not the author who consistently keeps silent about them.

a story that began"[43] The author instructs the reader to fold a Möbius strip out of the first five words printed on the long edge of one side of the page and of the last five words printed on the long edge of the other side of the same page. The result is that the reader makes a loop repeating these words infinitely. What is the merit of such a trick in comparison with James Joyce's use of one word only, one of the most common words in the English language—"the"—to end and to begin his masterpiece *Finnegans Wake*? No tricky loop is needed to create or reveal an endless, infinite world constructed of a most musical language. In this respect, in a paradoxical way, Joyce's masterpiece contains many *fewer* words than Barth's "Frame Tale," for Joyce makes much more of his words, whatever their number, than Barth's frame-tale. This tale produces an "eternal or infinite return," but this return, though infinite, does not reveal or create a world or cosmos. Moreover, contrary to the Joycean return, Barth's return consists of redundancy and of a mechanically-contrived endless loop. Following an aesthetic necessity, Joyce's masterpiece contains nothing redundant, superfluous, or mechanical. Reading it again and again can reveal something new, even something entirely new, to the reader.

Hence, the best shortest story may contain some thousands of words or more, provided that not even one single word in it is superfluous; rather, each word is indispensable for creating or revealing a whole world. Moreover, the story lacks nothing. As long as such is the case, it does not matter how many words the story contains. Everything that the reader needs is there, waiting for him or her to uncover it.

To demonstrate this, I suggest two examples, both are by Franz Kafka:

> "The Next Village"
> My grandfather used to say: "Life is astoundingly short. To me, looking back over it, life seems so foreshortened that I scarcely understand, for instance, how a young man can decide to ride over to the next village without being afraid that not to mention accidents even the span of a normal happy life may fall far short of the time needed for such a journey."

> "The Trees"
> For we are like tree trunks in the snow. In appearance they lie sleekly and a little push should be enough to set them rolling. No, it can't be done, for they are firmly wedded to the ground. But see, even that is only appearance.[44]

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[43] John Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse* (New York: Bantam, 1969), pp. 1 2.
[44] *Franz Kafka: The Complete Stories*, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir and ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1971).

Of course, no translation can do justice to Kafka's most exact and concise language, and yet, even by means of these translations, the reader can realize that not one word is missing just as not one word in them is superfluous. Each of these stories ("The Trees" is probably the shortest story that Kafka wrote) makes a world enough and time. The distance between the next village and the grandfather's one takes more than a lifetime to be travel. The picture of us as a line of tree trunks in the snow is a wide world (and time) enough of human lives as mere appearances.

Note that both of Kafka's short stories have titles, whereas Hemingway's needs none. This, of course, does not diminish Kafka's masterpieces even slightly. It simply draws one's attention to another merit of Hemingway's achievement. In this case, the absence of a title is of great significance, for it opens the story wider and makes it even more universal. A title creates a focus or a spotlight. Hemingway's story needs no such focus or spotlight. It makes a stage-world of its own, which needs no further illumination. The limelight of these six words lies within themselves. Their focus lies in the tiny shoes, which, as under a limelight, draw much of the reader's attention. At the same time, this focus does not distract that attention away from the rest of its world of grief and dread. On the contrary, this limelight points out or exposes the darkness and silence that encircle these shoes. The dramatic sense, the sense of catastrophic tragedy, is thus maintained.

If each word in the best shortest story is not superfluous and not one word is missing then each word in it is not contingent but necessary. Necessity plays an essential role in the aesthetic value of literary achievements. Beauty pertains to some kinds of necessity, certainly to the necessity concerning each literary masterpiece. The same holds good for mathematical necessity. Even if mathematics has to satisfy logical necessity, an aesthetical necessity is no less indispensable. As G. H. Hardy reveals, "Beauty is the first test: There is no permanent place in the world for ugly mathematics."[45] For me, mathematics is first of all a great aesthetic achievement, more like music rather than logic. Mathematics and music have to meet two standards—necessity and beauty.

The examples of some very short literary masterpieces show us that literary necessity depends upon the author's ability to say the most by means of as few words as possible and in the right, necessary order. The same holds true for the mathematical elegance or beauty of the details and their order (though in mathematics, simplicity plays an indispensable role,

[45] G. H. Hardy, *A Mathematician's Apology* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 85.

as it plays in Hemingway's six, so simple, words, but such is not the case of numerous literary masterpieces, for instance, those of Joyce or Nabokov, whose words and style are not simple at all). Because literary masterpieces make the most by means of the fewest words possible: No word is superfluous and no word is missing, and each detail is in the right place and in the right order. Literary necessity rests upon these conditions.

Whenever a literary work has superfluous words or is lacking others, and whenever the order of the words or details can be changed without maintaining the meaning and significance of the work, there is some contingency in it and, if such contingency has a significant weight, we should not consider the work as a genuine piece of art.

Bearing in mind what I have said above, we must convert the question presented in the beginning of this chapter, into the following one: How many superfluous or missing words may the best shortest story have? My answer is: not one. Each word in such a story is entirely necessary or indispensable; not one is missing. Six words may be good enough to create or to reveal a whole world of beauty, a cosmos.

CHAPTER FOUR

CREATIVITY, FREE CHOICE, AND NECESSITY

Following chapter one, pure possibilities are fundamental, primary entities. Moreover, possibility is the most comprehensive modal concept, for other modal concepts—necessity and contingency—are, to begin with, possible. Necessity is one particular kind of possibility; another kind is contingency. Necessity and contingency both take part in the comprehensive concept of possibility. This is not the common understanding of these modal concepts, but the new panenmentalist ontology on which our discussion in this book rests, considers these terms under a novel lens, which throws a new light on the phenomenon of literary art.

On one hand, we believe that creativity must be free and, in many cases, spontaneous; on the other, as I argued in the former chapter, there is some necessity about any piece of art; in the finest artistic works, there is nothing contingent, and each detail takes its right and exact place in the temporal order of narration. No detail is arbitrary. Each detail is meaningful and significant, no word is missing, and no word is superfluous. The greater the literary work of art, the greater is the number of possible interpretations, some of which may be entirely different from the others. The greater the work, the more it is open to interpretative possibilities. Many readers find room enough for themselves in such a work. It is not rare to find many readers who believe that such a work has been written about themselves: It is as though the writer heard or knew about them while writing the work.

On the basis of the common understanding of those modal concepts or terms, we are inescapably facing an apparent contradiction: On one hand, we find a freedom in creating and interpreting; on the other, we see a strict necessity about each genuine work of art. On this understanding, necessity and possibility exclude one another, and so do necessity and freedom, especially freedom of choice. On the basis of my panenmentalist ontology, in contrast, necessity and possibility do not exclude one another; on the contrary, necessity is a special kind of possibility. On the common understanding of necessity, it means that things could not be different or otherwise; on my understanding of it, as much as a great piece of literary art is open to various, even countless possibilities of creation and interpretation, each of these possibilities reveals the necessity depicted in such a work. Given that the possibilities under discussion are pure and none of which is an actuality, the compatibility of literary necessity, free creativity, and the open possibilities of interpretation is guaranteed. In contrast, if the case were of actualities, each actual possibility of creating or interpreting would be limited or exclude other creative or interpretive possibilities. Creating fictions and interpreting them refers or relates to pure possibilities, not to actualities.

Tolstoy's great work of art, *Anna Karenina,* is certainly open to many diverse interpretations, and each of its readers may have his or her unique approach to it, as the readers are entirely different one from the other, and they are living in different times and places and under different circumstances. At the beginning, Tolstoy planned to write a different, moralistic novel. At that time, he judged Anna quite harshly, in a way that may clearly conjure up the moralistic, pious judgment of such a woman by the orthodox religious society of the time. But, working on the depiction of Anna's character, Tolstoy realized that he had to change his mind about her and regard her in a much deeper and more complex way.[46] He thus left judging her to God alone. The famous motto of the book—"Vengeance is mine, and I will repay"—has to be understood in this spirit.

From the very beginning, at least two different ways of narrating Anna's life were possible. Yet there was some necessity about her and about her story that Tolstoy could not resist but had to follow. This excludes any contingency or arbitrariness about her. And yet there were open possibilities for Tolstoy to create this work and, equally, there have been open possibilities of interpreting it. All these possibilities are subject to the author's free choice and to that of the interpreters. Although Tolstoy felt compelled to change his mind about Anna, it was indeed his choice; he could have chosen otherwise, and yet there was nothing arbitrary or contingent about such a choice. It was no less necessary, though otherwise or in a different way. As a matter of truth, the text with its two different endings, that in which Anna commits suicide and that, describing Levin and Kitty's family life, opens at least two different major possibilities for reading and understanding this work as a whole.

[46] Indeed, "as is well known, in his early drafts of *Anna Karenina* Tolstoy described his adulteress as unattractive, both physically and morally. As the novel evolved, he seems to have identified with her need for passionate love . . . , and her stature grew as his sympathy increased." See Priscilla Meyer, "*Anna Karenina*: Tolstoy's Polemic with *Madame Bovary*," *The Russian Review* 54 (1995), p. 249.

These two possible ways are strongly linked to the choice that Anna made—to kill herself. Yet, it was, as I will argue, a free choice; she could have chosen otherwise. Let me explain this, step by step.

The psychological reasons for Anna Karenina's suicide are not under discussion here. The question that I pose is strictly literary. As a literary character, Anna behaves according to literary, aesthetic reasons. She lives in a literary reality subject to a literary necessity. This kind of necessity persuaded Tolstoy to change his entire attitude toward her, as though she were leading a life of her own.

Anna's life is not actual but only possible, a possibility that, in the light of the fictional reality of literature, is real though not actual. Moreover, this possibility is also necessary, by no means contingent, otherwise *Anna Karenina* would not be considered a great piece of art. In the same vein, also necessary is Anna's suicide. Were it contingent, this would be considered a literary failure, a possibility that could not really affect the reader's mind and would be simply insignificant. Moreover, it would not be considered a tragedy at all, and her tragic death would have turned out to be simply senseless, or, aesthetically speaking, tasteless. What makes the end of Part Seven of *Anna Karenina* a sublime artistic achievement is that this tragic suicide is necessary, in the literary-artistic meaning of the term.

Let us examine the sentence that ends Part Seven:

> And the candle by which she had been reading the book filled with trouble and deceit, sorrow and evil, flared up with a brighter light, illuminating for her everything that before had been had been enshrouded in darkness, flickered, grew dim and went out for ever.[47]

I believe that this sentence should be deemed among the most precious, even sublime, achievements of literature of all time. Not one word is missing, not one is superfluous; the order of the words, the division of the sentence, and the punctuation are simply perfect. The "And," which begins the sentence creates an impression of continuing breath, which is broken only by the full stop at the end. Anna's life comes to an end. Anna's life is a book, a book within a book. The consciousness of this life is the light of the candle, which makes the reading of this book possible. The crucial question is this: How she should read that book? Is it really full of "trouble and deceit, sorrow and evil"? The sublime beauty, the sublimely poetical beauty, of this sentence is in a radical contrast to the ugliness with which

[47] L. N. Tolstoy, *Anna Karenin*, tr. Rosemary Edmonds (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1954), p. 802; hereafter abbreviated to *AK*.

Anna's book of life is contaminated. Ugly death and ugly life lie in contrast to the most beautiful expression in this sentence. Tolstoy read the same book, which is Anna's whole life, with different eyes, with the eyes of an artist.

My view is that because of the way in which Anna read her book of life, because of the light of the candle of her life, she had to commit suicide. The reason for her suicide lies not in her life in itself or the causes that governed her life. The reason lies in the way in which she reads this book, in the light in which she reads it. One could read this very same book with different eyes, in a different light. Anna could choose to read it quite differently but, alas, she chose to read it as a book "filled with trouble and deceit, sorrow and evil." It was, I argue, her free choice. To see that, the reader has to read again some sentences before the aforementioned one:

> A sensation similar to the feeling she always had when bathing, before she took the first plunge, seized her and she crossed herself. The familiar gesture brought back a whole series of memories of when she was a girl, and of her childhood, and suddenly the darkness that enveloped everything for her lifted, and for an instant life glowed before her with all its past joys. But she did not take her eyes off the wheels of the approaching second truck. (*AK*, p. 801)

This was the moment of her choice: To follow the light under which "life glowed before her with all its past joys" or to follow the other light under which the book of her life was "filled with trouble and deceit, sorrow and evil." *It is the very same book but under quite different lights.* Anna had a choice between two different readings of the book of her life. Both readings lift the darkness enveloping her consciousness, but the light in each reading is quite different from the other. In the very moment of her choice, the second reading outweighed the first one, and, *because of that*, Anna Karenina killed herself.

Indeed, after she had made her fatal decision, "she became horror-struck at what she was doing," and "she tried to get up, to throw herself back" (ibid., p. 802), but "feeling the impossibility of struggling," the second reading overcame and outweighed the first one. Her wish to punish Vronsky by means of her suicide and to "escape from them all and from myself" (*AK*, p. 801) are explicit psychological reasons for the suicide, but the literary, artistic reasons are quite different. Her wish to escape from herself and to punish her deceitful lover and the Russian society of that time are motives enough to the extent with which the psychology is concerned, but they still leave the suicide artistically contingent.

Psychological reasons or motives are not artistic reasons, without which *Anna Karenina* would not have been considered a genuine piece of art, let alone a sublime piece of art.

The striking difference between the two readings of the same book of life is the difference between the two choices: The choice of life despite much misery and the choice to commit suicide. The second choice was made in light of the reading according to which Anna's book of life contains nothing of "past joys." This reading is obviously incorrect and Anna chose to ignore all the past joys of her life, not only of her childhood, but also of her motherhood and her love affair with Vronsky when still in bloom. She chose to read the book of her life in this way, although just before her fatal jump she remembered some glimpses of joy from her past, some reminiscences of purity (as in taking a bathing), and even religious belief or piety. Such a reading is a reason to keep living; such a reading cannot end with suicide. Life in which some beauty exists is worth living instead of killing herself. In a radical contrast, life filled with trouble and deceit, sorrow and evil, necessarily led Anna to commit the fatal deed. All the beauty of such life remains only in its artistic depiction, which is the third reading with which Tolstoy endows us.

The distance between the third reading, the narrated one, and the second one, as well as between the first reading and the second one, is the deep, artistic reason for Anna's suicide. Anna was incapable of living her life artistically. She was incapable of expressing the beauty of her life artistically. Religious grace was not open to her partly because of the nature of the religious authorities but mainly because of her choice. Nevertheless, another form of grace was still open—that of literature and art, the grace of artistic reading of the very same life. She had to change nothing about her miserable life; she had only to change her reading of it or to choose the first reading.

Tolstoy sees art differently from Gustav Flaubert. Madame Bovary did not distinguish between actual life and life depicted in novels; she mistook the one for the other. There is no place for grace in her world, neither religious nor artistic. Life is life, that's all. Tolstoy believed in the grace of religious fraternity and in that of art. For him, life worth living has the significance of holiness or that of art. The meaning of goodness (which Levin reveals in the ending of *Anna Karenina*) can have two faces: That of religious grace and that of art or beauty.

It is quite exciting to realize that the temptation and the consideration of suicide play a significant role not only in Anna's life, but no less in that of Levin. And, as Amy Mandelker puts it, these two protagonists of *Anna Karenina* are self-portrayed, "both . . . are authors, although their books remain unfinished," and each is aware of her or his self-portrayal.[48] Moreover, *Anna Karenina* has two different parallel endings: That of an unhappy family (in which Anna's suicide brings about a climax) and that of a happy family, Levin's. But each of these endings could have been quite differently written: Levin could have chosen to portray his life by ruining it and committing suicide, while Anna could have chosen to portray her life quite differently. A similar choice appears to be in the author's life itself: Tolstoy himself was torn between these two poles, between a happy and an unhappy marriage, between a meaningful and a meaningless life. *Anna Karenina*, with both endings, is about these two possible lives as they were actualized in Tolstoy's actual life. In the end, he chose to end his life in a way that was actually a kind of suicide. And one should note: Leaving his home and estate in the harsh Russian winter, he ended his life in the *train* post near his estate. Tolstoy's life was full of acts of adulteries; and Anna, the adulteress, committed suicide under the wheels of a train. The end of Tolstoy's life was self-portrayed like that of Anna Karenina, and the executer was one and the same person, Lev Tolstoy!

Nevertheless, the real authority in this matter is not Tolstoy. He was led by the reading of a life's story, not the other way round. The reading or the portrayal is the authority, not the author. The fundamental choice lies how one portrays one's life, how one narrates or *reads* one's life. Once the author, whether Tolstoy himself or any of the protagonists in his novels, has chosen the reading or the portrayal, the reading or the portrayal has the authority from now on. What is the meaning of life is a crucial question in Tolstoy's life and in *Anna Karenina* as well. This meaning is truly the way in which one portrays or *reads* the story of his or her life. One's reading or portrayal determines one's choice to cherish life or to commit suicide. The meaning of life is the reading or portrayal of one's book of life.[49]

[48] Amy Mandelker, "A Painted Lady: *Ekphrasis* in *Anna Karenina*," *Comparative Literature* 43 (1991), p. 4. Citing Margaret Higonnet, she writes: "Anna's suicide belongs to the tradition of those heroines who 'chooses to die in order to shape their lives as a whole . . . .'" Moreover, "in addition to the three painted versions and the verbal portraits sketched by other characters, there are Anna's ekphrastically presented self-portraits, that is, her presentations of her self as an art object" (p. 10).

[49] Compare this with Mandelker's insight: In contrast to Levin, "unaware of her own hermeneutic action of framing and reading, Anna accepts her frame of mind as the objective truth and the candlelight by which she reads her 'book filled with troubles, falsehoods, sorrow, and evil' . . . as the ultimate and final illumination" (op. cit., p. 17).

Tolstoy wrote a most beautiful novel about Anna's ugly life. Such is the grace of art. This grace is not only in the hands of artists, the authors and creators of pieces of art, but also in the hands of the artists of life: Those among us who know how to write or read their life artistically. They know how to make their choices artistically necessary. The text of *Anna Karenina* does not commit suicide. Only Anna commits it. The text has remained alive with each of its readers. What maintains this life is a deep sense of beauty, a profound significance and meaning of beauty. Anna Karenina could have remained alive had she decided to read the story of her life otherwise. It was a matter of free choice.

Life "filled with trouble and deceit, sorrow and evil" is still worth living despite everything. It is worth living as long as it can be read, told, or grasped artistically, literary. Any life is worth living as long as one can see, tell, and read it in such a way.

Life ample with failures is still worth living. Success and blessings are not one and the same. Hence, Latin distinguishes between *felicitas* and *beatitude*, between happiness in which one's wishes are accomplished, and a life that is blessed. One may fail to accomplish many of one's wishes, even most of them, and yet he or she may consider this life as blessed. Anna's failure that led her to commit suicide was the failure to render her life blessed, blessed by the grace of art.

This was Anna's fatal failure. She had to change nothing in her life to keep living but only the reading (or enlightening) of it. The artistic redemption is no less powerful than Spinoza's intellectual love of God, according to which everything is conceived as real, necessary, and eternal. The artistic reading of Anna's book of life is also a possible way to render it real, necessary, and eternal. *Anna Karenina* has changed the life of innumerable readers and for the better. The reader is not the same before reading this novel and afterwards. Anna's suicide has not put an end to her book of life and to *Anna Karenina* as a whole. For a good artistic reason, Tolstoy did not end the novel with her death. As the protagonist of this great novel, she is alive, eternally alive. As such, she is under the necessity of beauty, the artistic necessity. Tolstoy had to create or reveal this character. It was an artistic necessity. And because of this artistic achievement, Anna still lives with us, with her readers who continue to follow her experiences, each of whom sees her with different eyes from those through which she read her own book of life. Otherwise, no reading of it would be possible for the reader's enjoyment, and her death would be simply contingent and of no interest for the reader.

The goodness in the hearts of Levin and Kitty has a religious significance. Yet, in Anna's first reading of her book of life, guided also by religious feeling, there is also a kind of goodness. This goodness is the opposite of ugliness and deceitfulness; this is the goodness and fraternity of art. Thus, in Tolstoy's world of creativity, religious grace and artistic grace are interchangeable. The blessing of Art may be equal to the blessing of God or to that of philosophy. Each of them may redeem one's life without changing anything about them.

Without the artistic depiction, Anna's death, like her life, would be consciously meaningless and insignificant. Paradoxically speaking, an artistic narration of a suicide, such as Tolstoy's art of writing, renders the suicide absurd, just as Anna's first reading of her book of life renders the suicide impossible. How beautiful this book really is! Only those blind to art and the denial of beauty could refuse such a reading. Tolstoy, the great artist, is thus persuaded to let Anna to die, as she refused to follow her own artistic life. Thus, they had to depart one from the other. Her suicide thus became necessary but only as artistically narrated.

Like Anna's choice, Tolstoy's choice of writing is free. Such a freedom is entirely compatible with literary necessity. The choice is between pure possibilities, not between actualities. Innumerable possible interpretations of *Anna Karenina* are open to the reader. If well made, each of these interpretations reveals the literary necessity of this great work of art. Literary possibilities are pure ones, and necessity is a kind of the purely possible. To the extent that pure possibilities are concerned, literary necessity and literary possibilities are entirely compatible. Literary choice, in writing or in reading and interpreting, does not exclude the alternative, not chosen possibility, for such a pure possibility is not an actuality. Choosing between actualities, the chosen one excludes the one not chosen. Quite different, then, is the choice between pure possibilities, while the alternative to the choice remains open. Freedom is the possibility of choice between real possibilities, and it leaves the alternative possible as much as the chosen possibility is, though in a different way.

CHAPTER FIVE

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MATHEMATICAL AND LITERARY NECESSITY?

Necessity pertains to pure possibilities and the way in which they relate to each other. Contingency pertains to actualities and actualization. Pure possibilities and their relationality are independent from any actuality and actualization and, thus, they are *a priori* cognizable. Purely mathematical systems or constructions consist of mathematical pure possibilities and their relationality on which mathematical necessity rests. Literary works are systems consisting of literary pure possibilities and their relationality. The necessity about them rests about these possibilities and their relationality. What is the difference, then, between these two kinds of necessity, the mathematical and the literary?

Mathematical necessity is subject to logical necessity and rests on proofs or demonstrations. Literary necessity is not necessarily or inescapably subject to logical necessity and appears to be exempt from proofs. Both literary and mathematical necessities have to fulfill aesthetic demands. Godfrey H. Hardy went as far as to argue about the beauty of mathematics: "Beauty is the first test: There is no permanent place in the world for ugly mathematics."[50] Yet, this does not exempt mathematics from logic and proofs; and mathematical beauty is especially valid for these two. In contrast, literary necessity and beauty are not dependent on any of these two.

Mathematical necessity is, first and foremost, formal. It is not the general formality of logics, but it is still formal, exempt from any content, for geometrical forms and numbers are not contents, they are forms. In contrast, literary necessity can never be formal; it is necessarily contentful.

No necessity is compatible with arbitrariness or with contingency. This holds true for logical, mathematical, and literary necessity equally. Logical and mathematical necessities rely heavily upon rules and laws, whereas literary necessity is exempt from any rules and laws. Furthermore, literary

[50] Godfrey H. Hardy, *A Mathematician's Apology*, p. 85.

necessity is quite different from logical or mathematical implication; literary necessity does not depend on implication. It rather depends on unity, in which each item leads to the others. The concluding note of the gatekeeper in *Before the Law* is a necessary one, not because it logically follows from the former stages of the story. This note is certainly not arbitrary; it necessarily follows from the rest of the story, in whose unity it takes part. But does the gatekeeper not follow a rule or a law while closing the gate, which has been intended from the very beginning to serve the man from the country? If this act is not arbitrary but necessary, literally necessary, how we are entitled to think that this final act is such even though it does not follow any rule or law?

Genuine art or literature does not follow any rule.[51] Still, one may argue that as any use of language, literature, too, employs language-games of a special kind, and any language-game follows rules. This employment is at most a necessary condition, by no means a sufficient one, for creating a literary work of art. Like any language, this kind, too, requires syntax and semantics. Nevertheless, the deviation from the received syntax and semantics is even more necessary for creating art. Literary art rests upon deviations from any rule and law. If a literary art employs conventions, it does so in an unexpected way; it creates novelties and surprises us with the unexpected. No "if" or "then" takes any part in literary necessity, which does not rely upon syllogism or inference of any kind. The gatekeeper's concluding note is not a conclusion following any premises. No literary piece of art begins with a definition, axiom, or postulate from which the rest of it follows logically. No opening sentence in any such piece of art can serve so. And, yet, in a genuine literary piece there is a strict necessity about this sentence—it is necessarily there and the rest necessarily follows it, but not like in inference or syllogism. Inference or syllogism follows logical rules; no literary necessity follows such a rule.

Equally, there is no literary calculus. Since there is no rule to follow, unless in the form of a novel deviation from it, there cannot be any

[51] I am not discussing here the sociology of literary art, which may be subject to rules and games in Wittgensteinian terms. Hence, Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996) is not valid for my arguments at this point. If there are "the rules of the genre" (op. cit., p. 322), it is *despite* them, not because of them, that literary art necessarily proceeds. Citing Emile Zola, Bourdieu rightly mentions: "Artistic activity is not governed my pre-existing rules and cannot be measured by any transcendent criterion" (op. cit., p. 369), but he is certainly wrong in arguing that "it produces its own rules" (ibid.), for in such a case, as if autonomous, art turns to be mannerist.

calculus, unlike in logic or mathematics. There is no mental machinery, by means of which an author can write a genuine novel or story. Calculus has to be exempt from arbitrariness and it necessarily follows rules, whereas literary necessity is necessarily exempt from arbitrariness but it does not follow any rule.

The literary art of writing begins with the first paragraph of the literary masterpiece. This paragraph, especially its first sentence, is the kernel from which the literary piece as a whole *evolves*. Instead of implication, literature employs a special kind of evolution from the initial origin, the literary *arché*, which is definitely different from any philosophical *arché*, namely, first cause or principle. The literary kernel is like a theme from which an ample range of variations, constructing a unity, evolves. In this marmer, the literary piece of art evolves like a musical symphony, for instance, Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*. This entire symphony evolves from a leitmotif, or theme, and the rest of it consists of a whole range of variations on this theme.

A fine example of the way in which a great literary masterpiece evolves from its first pages, even the first sentence, can be found in Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*.[52] The first sentence reads: "For a long time I used to go to bed early."[53] Only later, when the narrator remembers the formative night of his life, when he desperately waited for his mother to come to his room and to spend the night with him instead of with his father or her visitors (especially Swarm) at Combray, only then can the reader understand the crucial significance of that first sentence. Time, the past, remembrance versus forgetfulness, the desperate waiting for the great love (in the image of the narrator's mother and grandmother), reading, possession, and loneliness are the main variations of one great theme, which the seminal night with the mother *encapsulates* and which is implicit in the first pages of this masterpiece. The longing to be the singular one, the most beloved chosen one, and the inescapable frustration involved, is in the heart of the narrator's entire life. "Time Regained" is the final part of the *Remembrance*, whose end "touch[es] epochs that are immensely far apart, separated by the slow accretion of many, many days—in the dimension of Time."[54] But the former paragraph is even more significant:

[52] Translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (London: Chatto and Windus, 1981), hereafter *Remembrance*.
[53] *Remembrance*, vol. I, p. 3.
[54] *Remembrance*, vol. III, p. 1107.

> In this vast dimension which I had not known myself to possess, the date on which I had heard the noise of the garden bell at Combray that far-distant noise which nevertheless was within me was a point from which I might start to make measurements. And I felt, as I say, a sensation of wariness and almost of terror at the thought that all this length of Time had not only, without interruption, been lived, experienced, secreted by me, that it was my life, was in fact me, but also that I was compelled so long as I was alive to keep it attached to me, that it supported me and that, perched on its giddy summit, I could not myself make a movement without displacing it. A feeling of vertigo seized me as I looked down beneath me, yet within me, as though from a height, which was my own height, of many leagues, at the long series of years.[55]

When remembrance reaches its height, which has its beginning in the scene at Combray, the narrator's internal journey comes to end. The plot is an internal one, *within* the narrator, truly not without him, as from without him nothing has been left of this regained past. And the first sentence of the entire huge book encapsulates all this long and dramatic journey. That sleepless night at Comray begins it all, begins the long time, the vast dimension in which the *Remembrance*'s inner plot evolves. This closes the circle, and the lost time is regained.

Another fine example of an opening to a great literary masterpiece can be seen in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*:

> "Yes, of course, if it's fine tomorrow," said Mrs Ramsay. "But you'll have to be up with the lark," she added.
>
> To her son these words conveyed an extraordinary joy, as if it were settled the expedition were bound to take place, and the wonder to which he had looked forward, for years and years it seemed, was, after a night's darkness and a day's sail, within touch.[56]

Alas, James Ramsay, her son, had, in fact, to wait years to make that wonder real, for the long expected tomorrow was not fine at all, the Great War came forward, Mrs. Ramsay died within it, and what appeared to be within touch turned to reality after tragic years, full of unprecedented atrocities, which changed the human condition radically forever. A dream of an innocent child was crushed to pieces, while millions lost their lives and others—their hopes.

At the end of the novel, when the expedition to the lighthouse, in which James Ramsay, no longer a little boy, his father, and sister take part,

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[55] Op. cit., p. 1106.

[56] *To the Lighthouse* (Harrnondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 5.

the painter, Lily Briscoe, thinking about Mr. Ramsay, the father, actually realizes how a part of the little boy's dream comes finally true:

> "He must have reached it," said Lily Briscoe aloud, feeling suddenly completely tired out. For the Lighthouse had become almost invisible, had melted away into a blue haze, and the effort of looking at it and the effort of thinking of him landing there, which both seemed to be one and the same effort, had stretched her body and mind to the utmost. Ah, but she was relieved whatever she had wanted to give him, when he left her that morning, she had given him at last.[57]

In this novel, too, time plays a central role, and the chapter before the penultimate one is called "Time Passes." Like in Proust's masterpiece, it is particularly the time of remembrance, in which the beginning and the end meet and are reconciled. The leitmotif of *To the Lighthouse* is quite clear—it is the *expedition* to the lighthouse, and the word "expedition" is repeated many times in the novel. Yet, the real journey, the real expedition, as in Proust's *Remembrance,* is not an external one, seen from outside, it is not the voyage out; it is rather an internal journey, taking place in the minds of the characters, each one of them, to whose thoughts the reader is listening. The internal journey, the journey within, begins and ends at the same point. This is the case of both these masterpieces: The whole narration or plot is encapsulated in the beginning of each work, in a literary kernel, from which it evolves to reach the beginning in the end.

In contrast, logical or mathematical necessity relies upon implication, inference, or deduction, which begins with some definitions, axioms, and postulates, none of which needs proofs or is capable of being proven. Logical or mathematical necessity depends heavily on consistency and coherence and it follows rules inescapably. In contrast, literary necessity need not follow any rule or being consistent. Literary necessity, like psychical necessity, tolerates contradictions, absurdities, and irrationality to some extent. Unlike literary kernels, logic or mathematics has no such kernels, in which the end meets the beginning.

Certainly, there is a logical or mathematical explication, which is valid for the analytical judgments or truths in mathematics or logic. Such is not the case of literature: What evolves from the literary kernel is not performed by explication or analysis. Unlike explication or analysis, this evolvement or unfolding reveals novelties, discovers something new, unexpected, or unusual. The way in which Marcel regained the lost time and memories and the way in which James Ramsay's expedition to the

[57] Op. cit., p. 236.

lighthouse was actualized are both unexpected; they reveal something new and novel to the reader. Not in vain, do novels and novelties go hand-in-hand and, unlike logical or mathematical necessity, no novel or literary piece of art can follow any rule. Of course, to rely upon a Kantian distinction, mathematics does have synthetic judgments or truths, which expand our knowledge and thus provide us with novelties, but this involves following rules, which is not the case with literary novelties.

CHAPTER SIX

LITERARY ARGUMENTS

An excellent example of a literary argument, challenging philosophical and theological ways of thinking, is that of Ivan Karamazov against the existence of God.

In his dialogue with his brother Alyosha, Ivan argues thus:

> I simply wanted to show you my point of view. I meant to speak of the suffering of mankind generally, but we had better confine ourselves to the sufferings of the children. That reduces the scope of my argument to a tenth of what it would be. Still we'd better keep to the children, though it does weaken my case. But, in the first place, children can be loved even at close quarters, even when they are dirty, even when they are ugly (I fancy, though, children never are ugly). The second reason why I won't speak of grown-up people is that, besides being disgusting and unworthy of love, they have a compensation they've eaten the apple and know good and evil, and they have become "like gods." They go on eating it still. But the children haven't eaten anything, and are so far innocent. Are you fond of children, Alyosha? I know you are, and you will understand why I prefer to speak of them. If they, too, suffer horribly on earth, they must suffer for their fathers' sins, they must be punished for their fathers, who have eaten the apple; but that reasoning is of the other world and is incomprehensible for the heart of man here on earth. The innocent must not suffer for another's sins, and especially such innocents![58]

Moreover,

> With my pitiful, earthly, Euclidian understanding, all I know is that there is suffering and that there are none guilty; that cause follows effect, simply and directly; that everything flows and finds its level but that's only Euclidian nonsense, I know that, and I can't consent to live by it! What comfort is it to me that there are none guilty and that cause follows effect simply and directly, and that I know it? I must have justice, or I will

[58] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2004), p. 220.

destroy myself. And not justice in some remote infinite time and space, but here on earth, and that I could see myself.[59]

And, finally,

> . . . Tell me yourself, I challenge your answer. Imagine that you are creating a fabric of human destiny with the object of making men happy in the end, giving them peace and rest at last, but that it was essential and inevitable to torture to death only one tiny creature that baby beating its breast with its fist, for instance and to found that edifice on its unavenged tears, would you consent to be the architect on those conditions? Tell me, and tell the truth."
>
> "No, I wouldn't consent," said Alyosha softly.
>
> "And can you admit the idea that men for whom you are building it would agree to accept their happiness on the foundation of the unexpiated blood of a little victim? And accepting it would remain happy for ever?"
>
> "No, I can't admit it. Brother," said Alyosha suddenly, with flashing eyes, "you said just now, is there a being in the whole world who would have the right to forgive and could forgive? But there is a Being and He can forgive everything, all and for all, because He gave His innocent blood for all and everything. You have forgotten Him, and on Him is built the edifice, and it is to Him they cry aloud, 'Thou art just, O Lord, for Thy ways are revealed!'
>
> "Ah! the One without sin and His blood! No, I have not forgotten Him; on the contrary I've been wondering all the time how it was you did not bring Him in before, for usually all arguments on your side put Him in the foreground. ...[60]

This appears to be like a Platonic dialogue between Socrates and an interlocutor. Notwithstanding, it is not the case at all. The arguments are quite different from philosophical arguments. In addition to their logic, they actually require some emotional experiments, without which they are unintelligible. They are more like thought-experiments than arguments, except for the fact that philosophical arguments rely heavily on reasoning, whereas the experiments that Ivan wishes Alyosha to take part in are quite different—they actually test how far *emotionally* can Alyosha go in his profound belief in God. Ivan is extremely ready to use *examples* whenever he can find them, to demonstrate his view. Socrates would refuse to accept such examples, for he searches for some general truths, not for examples. Ivan's examples are meant to shock Alyosha, to force him (though not

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[59] Op. cit., pp. 225 226.
[60] Op. cit., pp. 227 228.

against his good will and emotional state) to admit the failure of his faith to answer Ivan's arguments or to refute them.

Ivan refers to being "fond of children" and to incomprehensibility as regards the human heart. To these he adds consent (twice!) and "justice on earth," which are subject to his interlocutor's, Alyosha's, volitions. However "overwhelming" philosophical arguments may be (for instance, those of Derek Parfit), Ivan cannot dispense with the emotional and volitional support of his arguments, or those of Alyosha. He opposes this support to our "Euclidean understanding," which is exempt from anything of the kind. Ivan has in mind Spinoza's proofs for the existence of God, though Spinoza's *ratio* and *scientia intuitiva* have emotional and volitional properties. Nevertheless, Spinoza's arguments for the existence of God do not rely upon such properties.

A major aspect of Ivan's arguments against the existence of God are thought-experiments that remind us of the way in which Kant tests a moral maxim, a way which is a kind of thought-experiment: Do we *want* such a maxim to be a universal law, which any person should follow in whatsoever circumstances? Likewise, Igor asks Alyosha, "Would you consent to be the architect?" of the aforementioned fabric in which the happiness of the entire humanity depends on the agony of one innocent baby. Alyosha cannot give his consent to such an unjustified state of affairs. This state of affairs, which the thought-experiment that Ivan portrays, cannot have the consent, neither that of Ivan nor that of Alyosha. Such a consent depends on both emotions and volitions, whereas the consent Kant has in mind has to do only with our will, by no means with our emotions (from which, according to Kant, our moral considerations should be entirely exempted or purified, except for one active emotion—respect for moral law).

Interestingly enough, instead of consenting, Aloysha relies upon divine unrestricted forgiveness. He himself cannot rely upon "Euclidean understanding" to rebuff Ivan's argument, for that kind of understanding is purged of anything volitional and emotional, whereas forgiveness is both volitional and emotional. Overwhelming arguments, if such really exist, do not take our emotions and volitions in consideration in whatsoever way. Such arguments enforce their inescapable conclusions upon us, regardless of our will and emotions. Some of these conclusions are greatly against our will and emotions but, once we accept the premises of the arguments, we are forced to accept the conclusions, whenever they are reached by flawless logical inference. Nevertheless, in the case in question, such logic, the Euclidean understanding, is incompatible with Ivan's as well as with Aloysha's will and emotions. Thus, they cannot give their consent to such conclusions.

Logic and calculations are never sufficient for unfolding a story. Equally, literary arguments cannot rest on logic or calculations alone. Literary persuasion is greatly different from logical or mathematical convincing, for the literary one also requires volitional and emotional support. In this manner, the literary one is closer to moral argument than to the logical, mathematical, or even philosophical one. Notwithstanding, unlike Kant's moral philosophy, unlike logicians, mathematicians, and philosophers, literary works of art do not follow any rule. Literary arguments are based on a singular individual (namely, a person) or a case depicted in the literary work, not upon any rule or law. The universal significance of such a person or a case endows the literary argument with its special power. Unlike a philosopher such as Socrates, Ivan relies upon individual examples (taken from the Russian chronicles). In literature, it is not generality, rules, and laws that provide the dominant factor, but the singular individual or case. The existential, emotional, and volitional involvement of the characters under discussion is greatly relevant to the literary arguments, and especially so is the singularity of the persons and situations in question. The universal significance of such arguments and works rests upon singularity, not upon common traits, rules, and laws.

Why is this so? Literary arguments, unlike logical, mathematical, or philosophical ones, should touch us personally, even intimately. Otherwise, they would be superfluous, and some philosophical arguments could or might replace them. The conclusions of the literary arguments are never general or common; they relate to each reader personally and intimately, as if they were written only and especially for him or her. The reason for this personal and intimate relationality is that literary characters and narrators who are the providers of the arguments are inescapably singular individuals; they are never general or abstract, unless the work in question is not a genuine work of art. The reader relates to these characters and narrators in a way similar to that in which he or she relates to real persons and their arguments.

To touch us, literary arguments have to touch the reader's emotions and volitions. These arguments should not only convince us, they should also please us; moreover, they should satisfy our emotions and our will. They demand our consent and, to do so, they have to affect our will as well as emotions; their style must satisfy our sense of beauty, too, not only our intellect. If the events and characters depicted in a literary work, are ugly, atrocious, and immoral, the literary presentation can still be beautiful, fascinating, affecting our will and emotions as well, feeding our intellect with satisfying insights, enriching our understanding and deepening it with awareness of our emotions, desires, and fantasies.

Literary arguments are embedded in our experience, especially emotional experiences. In contrast, logical, mathematical, and philosophical arguments need not rely upon such experiences. They may even contradict them. Philosophical or logical arguments may be against our emotional and volitional experience without losing their force. Rather the contrary! Hence, the logical or philosophical "should" or "must" is necessarily different from the literary "should" or "must."

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE REALITY OF FICTION

James Joyce's "The Dead" strikingly illustrates the reality of fictional characters. Furthemiore, this great short story shows how the dead can be real for us, no less, sometimes even more, than the living. Thus, fictional characters and the dead, though not actualities, can affect us as much as actualities do, sometimes even more so. Pure possibilities, fictional characters, and the dead are all not actual and yet can be real for the reader. They are real as possibilities, not as actualities, but this kind of reality may be effective no less than actualities.

In Joyce's story, Gabriel Conroy realizes how poor a part he has played in the life of his wife, Gretta, who for so many years had locked in her heart the memory of her dead love, Michael Furey. Joyce describes Gabriel's state of mind immediately after that painful revelation in these words:

> He had never felt like that himself towards any woman, but he knew that such a feeling must be love. . . . in the partial darkness he imagined he saw the form of a young man standing under a dripping tree. Other forms were near. His soul had approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead. He was conscious of, but could not apprehend, their wayward and flickering existence. His own identity was fading out into a grey impalpable world: the solid world itself, which these dead had one time reared and lived in, was dissolving and dwindling.[61]

Gretta and Gabriel Conroy are fictional characters, as is Michael Furey, who is a real memory for Gretta but "only" an image, albeit a critical one, for her husband. The memory of the beloved dead happens to be real for Gretta no less than the lengthy time spent with her husband, and this renders the image of the beloved dead real, almost actual, for the husband himself. Gretta's possible life (had the beloved Michael not died "because of her") is no less real for her than her actual life with Gabriel, and,

[61] James Joyce, "The Dead" in *Dubliners* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965 [1914]).

eventually, for both of them. The would-be solidity of Gabriel's past life dissolves and dwindles in his mind in the presence of Michael Furey's image. In a touching scene, Gabriel sees his wife as if she were momentarily a symbol of something. He imagines her as a figure in a painting he would like to paint named *Distant Music*. Thus, two characters in the story, one alive and the other conjured up from the dead, are seen as images, figures, or forms in the eyes of Gabriel, watching himself as a figure reflected in the mirror. Lying beside his wife, he imagines that all the characters mentioned in "The Dead," including himself, are becoming dead shades like Michael Furey. The story demonstrates how things that are not actual—pure possibilities, the dead, fictions, or images—are deemed real. The story as a whole draws our attention to the reality of the fiction and to the fiction of reality as well. For us, the readers, Joyce's art of writing renders fictional characters unique and real, but first—purely possible. To begin with, these characters are possible, otherwise the reader would not consider the story as one worth reading. The possibility under discussion is pure, for these characters are not actual possibilities.

Fictional characters may affect, deepen, and enrich our experience, understanding, awareness, and sensitivity, as much as actual persons may do, in some cases even more and better. They may also contribute to our most intimate, meaningful experiences, just as the awareness of the significance of the dead Michael Furey for the life of Gretta entirely changed Gabriel Conroy's state of mind. From the moment that this awareness arose, her husband saw their mutual life in a different light.

"The Dead" has affected many readers immensely. This short story demonstrates how fiction can be real for the reader. It was Shakespeare who fascinatingly used the insight that fiction can be deemed real, and indeed it is real for people under some circumstances. Moreover, fiction can be most useful in revealing the truth and the facts of the matter.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* conveys an instructive illustration of a fiction as an instrument to reveal the truth. Only by means of a play—"The Murder of Gonzago"—"a fiction, . . . a dream of passions" (Act II, Scene 2, p. 1144),[62] can Hamlet eventually "know his course." To reveal the truth, whether the ghost he has seen was a figment of his weak and melancholic mind (his "imaginations"), the devil, or the real spirit of his late father, Hamlet needs the fiction of a play. This is the play of "something like the murder of my father," "wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king" (ibid., p. 1144). The purpose of the play is "to hold, as it were, the mirror

[62] William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works* (London and Glasgow: Collins Clear-Type Press, n.d.).

up to nature; to show virtue her own feature" (Act III, Scene 2, p. 1147). It appears to represent actual reality, imitates and reflects it as a mirror does but, as a matter of truth, it entirely replaces it. Still, the prince declares it is "but jest, poison in jest; no offence in the world" (ibid., p. 1149), a fiction that does not touch "free souls" (ibid.). To let the play do its work, the King must be reassured that it is only a play, nothing but a fiction. When the frightened King eventually rises, Hamlet reacts: "What, frighted with false fire!" (ibid.). It is a "false fire," a mere fiction, because of which the offended and frightened King cannot conceal his crime any longer. The King unwillingly believes his own eyes and psychically or emotionally takes the fiction performed in his presence for the real crime he has attempted to forget, to hide even from himself, and to commit it to darkness, oblivion, and denial. To attempt this, he calls for light (ibid.). This is the "light" of denial and evasion, a light by which the King attempts to show that the play is just a shadow, an image, a fiction, of which nothing real remains under the light. Since the King is eager to suspend his and others' belief in the play, he demands a light, which, he hopes, will clearly draw the boundary between fiction and actual reality. Yet the scene is a theatrical performance within a play, which, despite its potentiality to evoke disbelief, exposes the truth in *Hamlet*. Taking fiction for actual reality becomes an indispensable vehicle to reveal the truth about the death of Hamlet's father. Literary fiction and various other kinds of fiction have the capability to reveal truth despite forgetfulness, denial, and repression. Owing to this capability, they are truthful.[63]

Very similar is the case of another kind of "deception"—the transference, which we owe to the discoveries made by Freud and his followers. According to them (other psychoanalysts may not agree), such an illusion or deception reveals the true reality hidden within the analysand's unconsciousness. Furthermore, this analytical tool is indispensable for revealing this truth. Without this revelation, no psychical cure is possible. The "objects" to which the analysands relate, are in fact individual pure possibilities, not actualities. Such precisely are the objects of the transference.

The reality of fiction is not merely a figment of our imagination. This reality does not entirely depend on our mind; our mind discovers its individual pure possibilities. The panenmentalist ontology on which the arguments in this book rest is not idealistic nor phenomenological. Pure possibilities exist independently of any mind. Some pure possibilities are

[63] Consult my *Necessity and Truthful Fictions* as to the nature of truthful fictions in general.

psychical and, as such, they depend on one's mind, but all the other pure possibilities, which are not psychical, do not depend on any mind. They are not inventions but discoveries. The mind discovers them (and many psychical pure possibilities are facts about the mind and not its figments or inventions). Thus, fictional characters are not figments of the authors' imagination; they are discoveries. The authors discover these individual pure possibilities, and they are exclusively discoverable. Hence, only Tolstoy could discover the pure possibility of Anna Karenina, only Flaubert could discover that of Madame Bovary, and only Kafka could discover that of Josef K. Literary and artistic discoveries rest on the basis of singularity—no two artists or authors can create the same work of art, though two mathematicians can discover the same calculus (Newton and Leibniz each discovered *independently* the infinitesimal calculus) or two physicists can discover the same theoretical particle (both Yuval Ne'eman and Murray Gell-Mann discovered *independently* the sub-atomic particle named omega-minus, as a physical pure possibility on a purely mathematical basis of a kind of a symmetry). Yet, this artistic singularity does not exclude the discovery of pure possibilities. What we commonly call "invention" or "creation" is, according to the ontology followed in this book, a singular discovery of pure possibilities.

Paradoxically, fictional characters, especially in a masterpiece, are no less real than actual characters. Odette, a fictional character in Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* (*A la recherche du temps perdu*), does not walk in fact beside Swann along the Champs-Elysées on 5 December 1899, yet such an event could have happened then and there, because it was a possibility that the other possibilities actualized at that place and time do not necessarily exclude. Swann and Odette are credible characters. It is possible to believe that they existed, that they were real, and the emotions and feelings they raise in us are no less real than the emotions and feelings evoked by actual people, even though we do not react or behave in the same or similar fashion toward fictional characters and actual people. Unless you are a behaviorist, you are entitled to think that despite the difference in your reactions and behavior, the emotions and feelings you have toward fictional or actual people may be almost the same for you. Such is the case because fictional, possible characters have a well-established footing in mental reality (in panenmentalist terms, intersubjective reality). When you come to the psychical, then pure possibilities may leave their impressions on you no less than people, events, and states of affairs, which are actual.

The issue of the reality of fiction draws our attention again to the relationship of philosophy and literature. This book makes a sincere attempt to discuss their intimate, strong connection (despite the differences). Take Proust, for example. I consider Proust not only a great writer but also one of the most important and interesting philosophers of the twentieth century. I strongly believe that in the last century the great literary masterpieces succeeded, continued, or replaced the tradition of past great philosophical systems. Moreover, panenmentalism shows that literature can serve as part and parcel of our life, as real as an actual piece of life, and does not necessarily take a counterfactual stance. Contrary to Proust's ideal, literature or art cannot replace, let alone be more real than, actual life. From the panenmentalist viewpoint, literature reflects, sometimes most adequately and accurately, the realm of possibilities, most of all of psychical possibilities, that may be actualized in life. Occasionally, life really actualizes some of these possibilities quite accurately. Literature is an indispensable vehicle for touring the land of pure, *a priori* possibilities, without which we cannot recognize, identify, understand, know, and value anything. Literature has thus a *metaphysical-transcendental significance*, to borrow this term from Immanuel Kant, for quite a different purpose.

For Proust, fantasy, memories, and psychical reality in general are as real as actual things, and literature is no less real and alive, in some cases even more so, than actual life. No actualist such as Spinoza, can accept this. According to Spinoza's philosophy, the possible and the actual are identical unless not under adequate knowledge (namely, everything is actual albeit it is perceived as possible only by an inadequate knowledge). For Spinoza, no pure possibility, fiction, fantasy, or any achievement of our imagination can adequately reflect or capture real, actual life.

Over this matter, Proust's philosophy and mine share an essential accord—psychical reality, imagination, and fantasy are as real as any actuality in the external reality. Yet contrary to Proust, I do not believe that literature can replace or supersede actual life. I firmly believe that literature and literary imagination can be no less real for us than our external, actual life, yet it must be an illusion to take literature as actual life. Proustian seclusion, like Marcel's in this great novel, is a kind of illusion, much more than real life.

CHAPTER EIGHT

HOW FAR CAN LITERARY IMAGINATION GO?

Many readers believe that any literary imagination, however liberated, cannot go very far from actual reality. There must be some chains that restrict the wildest literary imagination to actual reality. Any author's imagination, the argument goes, is not infinite or unrestricted; it must be confined, however minimally, to some actual possibilities. Is there no absolute liberty from actual matters, such as persons, events, times, and places? If such an argument were valid *and sound*, there must have been something of a *roman à clef* ("novel with a key")—a novel in which actual persons, events, times, and places are depicted under a form of disguise or mask—in *every* novel, however fictional, imaginary, or fantastic.

Is human imagination limited by actualities to some extent? Or, can it be absolutely free or liberated from any actuality and thus can rely upon pure possibilities alone? Can our fictions be completely free of any actuality?

Does Descartes answer such questions in the negative? He writes:

> … it must surely be admitted that the visions which come in sleep are like paintings, which must have been fashioned in the likeness of things that are real, and hence that at least these general kinds of things eyes, head, hands and the body as a whole are things which are not imaginary but are real and exist. For even when painters try to create sirens and satyrs with the most extraordinary bodies, they cannot give them natures which are new in all respects; they simply jumble up the limbs of different animals. Or if perhaps they manage to think up something so new that nothing remotely similar has ever been seen before something which is therefore completely fictitious and unreal at least the colors used in the composition must be real. By similar reasoning, although these general kinds of things eyes, head, hands and so on could be imaginary, it must at least be admitted that certain other even simpler and more universal things are real. These are as it were the real colors from which we form all the images of things, whether true or false, that occur in our thought.[64]

[64] *Meditations on First Philosophy,* "First Meditation," in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol II, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and

Thus, Descartes would have answered these questions in the negative only to the extent that literary fictions are like the entities of visual arts, or of physics, astronomy, and medicine,[65] which rely, to some extent, on actualities (in his terms, things that "really exist in nature"). Hence, the imagination involved in these cases is inescapably confined to some actualities. Nevertheless, the literary pure imagination, unlike that involved in the visual arts or in applied mathematical sciences (as Descartes conceives them), is like the purely mathematical intellect, which deals "only with the simplest and most general things, regardless of whether they really exist in nature or not."[66] Instead of "simplest and most general things," I refer to individual pure possibilities, which are the most fundamental entities or existents. This kind of possibilities is entirely independent of actualities.

To liberate mathematical thought from empirical or visual entities, Descartes developed analytical geometry, which is a kind of algebra in which no visual entities are involved. This kind of purely mathematical calculation appears to be entirely independent of actual reality and experience. Nevertheless, one is entitled to argue that the coordinates involved in analytical geometry are at least abstractions from actual reality, and so are numbers and all geometrical figures. Euclidean geometry, the argument goes, relies upon the conception of numbers as geometrical figures, which are abstractions taken from actual reality; to fix any point in Euclidean geometrical figure according to the analytically geometrical coordination does not liberate it from an inescapable dependence on actual reality, visualization, and experience. Even the coordinate system itself depends on actual reality, experience, and visualization. It simply employs a kind of translation of these data. It depicts a change in the mathematical language or depiction, not independence, let alone a revolutionary one, from actual reality and experience.

I disagree. Descartes was right regarding the following point: Pure mathematics is independent of actual reality and experience. Pure mathematics is a discovery (or invention, others argue) of our intellect and, I would add, imagination. Pure mathematics thus consists of individual pure possibilities, not of actualities, whereas applied mathematics requires actualities. Contrary to Descartes, I think that Euclidean geometry, as a pure mathematics, also consists of pure possibilities and not of actualities.

Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 13 14 (AT 20).

65 Op. cit., p. 14 (AT 20).

66 Ibid.

Thus, Euclidean geometry, too, as pure mathematics, is entirely independent of actual reality and experience.

This stance of mine is not rationalist. Indeed, without mentioning pure possibilities, Plato, Descartes, and Leibniz, taking rationalist stances, understand pure mathematics to be entirely independent of experiential reality. My point is that this independence is inseparable from a possibilist stance and that the pure possibilities involved are ontically and epistemically fundamental individuals. We need no experience to obtain these possibilities; we can rely, instead, only on our imagination and intellect. Hence, I argue, any geometrical figure of which we have some experience is an actuality of a geometrical individual pure possibility, which is entirely independent of actual reality and experience. We have access enough to individual pure possibilities independently of any empirical knowledge.

Individual pure possibilities have sense and meaningfulness independently of actual reality and empirical data. Thus, we can understand them even though no causal links connect or relate them to actual reality. They are sensible and meaningful for us even if nothing links them to actual reality. Of course, this approach is very much opposed to Kant's view on this issue concerning mathematics.

There is a time-honored controversy about the status of logic: Does formal logic precede any content or is it abstracted from concrete reality? Can its forms be meaningful and sensible independently of the contents? Or is the meaningfulness or sensibility of formal logic conditioned by the contents? Is formal logic an abstraction? And the very same controversy is about geometrical figures, numbers, and the like—are they abstractions or not? My panenmentalist stance allows me to adopt the latter alternative—formal logic, pure mathematics, and literary possibilities are not abstractions, as they are entirely independent of actual reality and experience. Ontologically and epistemologically, they precede any of their concrete actualizations (or what Oscar Wilde and his followers would call—"imitations").

Mathematicians have intellect and imagination enough to deal with individual pure possibilities independently of anything actual or empirical. Similarly, authors have imagination enough to write about purely possible characters and events, which have never been actual although they could be so. Literary imagination can go beyond actual reality and empirical data. It can be entirely free and absolutely independent of actual reality and experience. It can go as far as pure possibilities extend. The literary pure possibilities and their relationality, which the literary imagination *discovers*, are entirely independent of actual reality and experience, as much as mathematical individual pure possibilities are. If pure mathematics is possible, literary individual pure possibilities and their relationality are also possible. If literary individual pure possibilities and their relationality are possible and if our epistemic access to them is also possible, there are many novels that are not *romans à clef* at all.

To demonstrate how far our imagination in general and literary imagination in particular can go, let me elaborate on actualist fallacies, fax machines, and lunar journeys.[67]

On these grounds, we are entitled to argue that actualities "imitate" individual pure possibilities, some of which are discoverable by means of truthful fictions. The discoveries under discussion are imitated, namely, actualized, by actual discoveries or inventions. In this chapter, I thus strengthen my view presented earlier in chapter one.

What is the general lesson that we may learn from discussing actualist fallacies, fax machines, and lunar journeys? To argue that literary pure possibilities are somewhat confined to some actualities, as if any novel had something of the *roman à clef* in it, is to commit an actualist fallacy. In this chapter, I have thus demonstrated that literary individual pure possibilities are not confined to anything in actual reality or in empirical data. Human imagination, while inventing new technologies, creating fictions, discovering new individual pure possibilities, and the like, is not confined to or restricted by actual reality and empirical data. It may go as far as the realm of discoverable individual pure possibility extends. To argue to the contrary is to commit an actualist fallacy.

Already in 1863, Jules Verne knew about Caselli's "pantelegraphy," which was what he described as a "photographic telegraphy, invented during the last century by Professor Giovanni Caselli of Florence."[68] Following the mistaken belief that facsimile machines could not been invented until well *after* the nineteenth century, and wrongly assuming that Caselli was a fictional inventor, merely a figment of Verne's most productive fertile imagination (as such imaginative elements characterize his latter writings), some of Verne's readers mistakenly ascribed the novel discovery of the pure possibility of the fax to him. They thus committed what I will call soon "a reversed actualist fallacy."

[67] In what follows, until the last paragraph of this chapter, I make use of my previously published article "Actualist Fallacies, From Fax Machines to Lunar Journeys" *Philosophy and Literature* 34 (2010), pp. 173 187, by Johns Hopkins University Press (2010 copyright).

[68] Jules Verne, *Paris in the Twentieth Century*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Random House/Ballantine, 1997 [1994]) [*Paris*].

As for actual facsimile machines, most of us became familiar with a fax apparatus only in the early 1990s. The mistake to ascribe the novel invention of the fax to Verne was, and still is, quite a common one. Even today you can read the following description:

> Verne's first novel, *Paris au XXième siècle* (*Paris in the Twentieth Century*) written in 1863 but not published until 1994 is set in the distant 1960s and contains some of his most accurate prognostications: Elevated trains, automobiles, facsimile machines, and computer-like banking machines. Nevertheless, the book's depiction of a dark and bitter dystopian world without art was too radical for Jules Hetzel, Verne's publisher.[69]

Although actual fax apparatus and submarines existed at that time, there is a lot of Verne's pure imagination-prediction in this early book of his. As William Butcher mentions, submarines were built and tested between 1796 and 1801, and were actually used in the American Civil War (1861–1865); even the name "Nautilus" came from a prototype built at Le Havre and Brest by the American, Robert Fulton.[70] Fulton's Nautilus was completed in May 1801. As for the calculating "machines resemble enormous pianos," Verne explicitly mentioned their actual inventor by name—Thomas de Colmar.[71] Indeed, as early as July 1855, de Colmar's "gigantic arithmometre" was exhibited at the Paris Exposition at the Grand Palace.

Wrongly assuming that in Verne's time no submarine, fax apparatus, and "calculating machines" existed, some readers of his book actually committed an actualist fallacy in reverse: They wrongly assumed that such technological contrivances were simply *impossible* at that time, namely, around the middle of the nineteenth century. It is a reversed actualist fallacy, as while the "upright" one is to exclude pure possibilities on the ground that, confining all possibilities to the actual, pure possibilities must be excluded, whereas the actualist fallacy in reverse commits some actual possibilities to the impossible, on the grounds that such and such *could not be* the case at that time, place, and circumstances.

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69 *Encyclopaedia Britannica on Line*: The evolution of science fiction>The 19th and early 20th centuries Jules Verne. See: http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-235717/science-fiction

70 "Jules Verne: A Reappraisal," in http://home.netvigator.com/~wbutcher/ articles/ prophetorpoet.htm#N-19-#N-19-. Compare with William Butcher, *Jules Verne: The Definitive Biography* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2006), p. 201. Butcher mentioned Verne's acknowledgement that "the submarine existed before I wrote *Twenty Thousand Leagues*" (p. 301).

71 *Paris*, p. 51.

Certainly, the aforementioned readers did not exclude the pure possibilities of such devices, but to exclude their possible actualization was no less a fallacy that they committed at that time. It is a fact that human ingenuity could actualize these possibilities; it certainly could be the case. Since people had access, even then, to these pure possibilities, they could actually actualize them, as any actualization is contingent, and as such it could not be impossible, even at that time. As panenmentalism leaves actualities to empirical, *a posteriori* cognition, what can decide about actuality is only empirical evidence. Such was the case of the actual facsimile apparatus, calculating machines, and submarines in Verne's time. They must be subject only to historical research. As soon as I became doubtful of their ontic standing, I looked for additional historical evidence and documentation. Before long, I found further details about the history of these technologies. To my great surprise, I learned that they had actually existed well before the twentieth century and well before the publication of *Paris in the Twentieth Century*, too.

Now, can I still rely on Verne's prediction to gain some support for my possibilist view? Yes, and for two good reasons. The first one is the reversed actualist fallacy. Given that all actualities are contingent, as panenmentalism postulates, one should not assume that actual inventions or discoveries could not happen before a particular time. Both the relevant pure possibilities as well as their actualities were epistemically accessible at that time to their inventors or discoverers. Second, there are enough examples to demonstrate that Jules Verne discovered some most interesting pure possibilities well before their actualization and in great detail. Before their actualization, these possibilities were certainly accessible to him.

The best example is perhaps Verne's pure possibility of a moon rocket. Comparing Verne's fantasy of the landing on the moon with the actual landing in the twentieth century, William Burrow writes,

> *From the Earth to the Moon* was a brilliant scientific prophecy. . . . Verne's greatest and most self-fulfilling prophecy had to do with the use of rockets to break the projectile's descent to the lunar surface. Perhaps more than any of the other innovations that he used for the expedition to the Moon, the rocket engine itself inspired the fathers of the space age.[72]

[72] William E. Burrows, *This New Ocean: The Story of the First Space Age* (New York: Random House/Modern Library, 1999), p. 16. Compare with Aaron Parrett's view in Jules Verne, *From the Earth to the Moon,* trans. Edward Roth, ed. and intro. Aaron Parrett (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2005), p. xii. Although the cannon that fires Verne's rocket to the moon would not have worked in actual

Self-fulfilling or not, these magnificent pure possibilities concerning the moon rocket were accessible to Verne's imagination well before their actualization. This accessibility was entirely independent of any actualization. If the reader is skeptical about such access to such pure possibilities and would argue that by means of extrapolation, abstraction, calculation, and the like Verne got these possibilities from what he actually knew at that time, I would dismiss this. The pure possibilities concerning his imaginary moon rocket had nothing to do with actual achievements; nothing of the kind was actual at that time. All that was actually there were Verne's knowledge of Newton's physics and (actual) cannons and shells. Nothing of the rocket, devices for ascending, the means for landing, and everything needed for such an operation was actual then. All these were simply figments, or, much better, discoveries of individual pure possibilities by Verne's pure imagination.

Our discussing about the capability of Verne's imagination leads to far-reaching consequences. It raises the crucial question of human accessibility to pure possibilities. To what extent, if at all, are one's imagination and intellect independent of actual reality? Are human works of fiction, imaginations, discoveries, inventions, and the like merely outcomes of technological history (analogous to natural history), technological selection, and technological survival of the fittest (to borrow Darwin's phrase)? Such history, selection, and survival consist of actualities alone and have nothing to do with pure possibilities. Unlike such possibilities, all these relevant actualities are spatiotemporally and causally conditioned. In contrast, my possibilist, panenmentalist, idea is that Verne's imagination and ingenuity had access to the realm of the purely possible with no reliance upon actualities. The possibilities that were accessible to his revealing imagination were entirely independent of the actual technological achievements and knowledge at his time.

Note that potentiality and pure possibility are quite different one from the other. Potentiality depends upon actuality, whereas pure possibility is entirely independent of any actuality or actualization. Thus, my idea is that Jules Verne was not only capable of going beyond the technological potentiality of the actual achievements of his time, but that he went much further than that—his imagination had access to entirely novel pure possibilities. A moon rocket is a good example. There are some others.

The telegraph cable joining Europe and America was laid only in 1866. Three years before that, Verne's imagination discovered what would be

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practice, the general principle, drawn directly from Newtonian physics, is sound. Parrett writes that Walter James Miller reported in 1995 that NASA was considering a similar "space-gun."

the reality in which we lived at the end of the twentieth century: "The telegraph network now covered the entire surface of the earth's continents and the depths of the seas; America was not more than one second from Europe."[73] He described what much later became known as the Internet, except for one thing—the Internet does not depend on telegraph. But the entire system of calculating machines, world-wide net system, facsimile devices, and the like is fantastically portrayed in *Paris in the Twentieth Century,* well before the introduction of the Internet (and the first Internet fax machines were not introduced before 1997). Pascal and Leibniz not only predicted computers, they also attempted at constructing calculating machines. Describing "strangely shaped machines . . . looking rather like huge pianos,"[74] or "instruments which indeed did resemble huge pianos: By operating a sort of keyboard, sums were instantly…,"[75] Verne actually described calculating machines that were quite well-known at that time in Paris. This does not hold for electronic computers, whose first inventor was John Atanasoff (1941). Indeed, the whole of Chapters 2 and 5 of *Paris in the Twentieth Century* narrate in great detail about technological predictions that became reality as late as the twentieth century! These predictions hardly related to the actual at Verne's time, if at all. Undoubtedly, they were almost entirely independent of it. They truly referred to individual pure possibilities. Furthermore, there is no connection even between Verne's predictions and their actualization in the twentieth century, for not even one inventor of their actualities could know about Verne's predictions, as the text of *Paris in the Twentieth Century* was published only toward the end of the twentieth century. Until 1994, this text could not have been read by scientists or inventors to provide them with inspiration. These predictions, therefore, cannot be considered as a self-fulfilling prophecy. But first and foremost Verne's ingenuity lies in envisaging the temporal revolution that we are witnessing in using the Internet—it has shortened the world's temporal distance immensely. This spatiotemporal revolution is hard to follow even today.

The access of Verne's imagination to individual pure possibilities, independently of anything actual, was denied by another imaginative writer whose name was associated with Verne's—H. G. Wells. Verne's fantasy concerning flying to the moon is explicitly mentioned in Chapter 3 of Wells's *The First Men in the Moon.*[76] Nevertheless, Wells had some

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[73] *Paris*, p. 53.
[74] *Paris*, p. 50.
[75] *Paris*, p. 51.
[76] H. G. Wells, *The First Men in the Moon* (Fairfield, IA: 1st World Library, 2004 [1901]), p. 38.

reservation of Verne's imaginative capability. In the 1933 preface to a collection of his own early fiction, Wells argues:

> These tales have been compared with the work of Jules Verne and there was a disposition on the part of literary journalists at one time to call me the English Jules Verne. As a matter of fact there is no literary resemblance whatever between the anticipatory inventions of the great Frenchman and these fantasies. His work dealt almost always with actual possibilities of invention and discovery, and he made some remarkable forecasts. . . . Many of his inventions have "come true." But these stories of mine collected here . . . are exercises of the imagination in a quite different field. They belong to a class of writing which includes the *Golden Ass of Apuleius*, the *True Histories of Lucian*, *Peter Schlemil*, and the story of *Frankenstein*. . . . They are all fantasies; they do not aim to project a serious possibility; they aim indeed only at the same amount of conviction as one gets in a good gripping dream. They have to hold the reader to the end by art and illusion and not by proof and argument, and the moment he closes the cover and reflects he wakes up to their impossibility.[77]

In this text, Wells does not distinguish between pure and actual possibilities. For him, all real possibilities are actual, and Jules Verne and other similar authors relied upon their intellect, rather than upon their imagination, to deduce the right conclusions about actual reality and actual possibilities. According to Wells, Verne relied upon his deductive and argumentative capabilities, not upon his creative imagination. Unlike Wells or Lucian and their likes, Wells goes on, Verne did not deal with fantasies, but with actual possibilities or probabilities that were deduced from Newtonian premises. No wonder then that Verne's prediction became true. Wells does not regard himself as dealing with prediction but with mere fantasies.[78] Wells tacitly excludes the possibility that mere fantasies or sheer fictions can serve as adequate tools to "capture" possibilities that can be actualized, whether in the future or otherwise. Wells appears to believe that no imagination, especially that of a writer, could grasp scientific or technological possibilities unknown yet as actualities. He leaves such "discoveries" to scientific or logical reasoning. Moreover, for Wells, all real possibilities are actual, and from such an

[77] H. G. Wells, *The Scientific Romans* (London: Gollancz, 1933) [hereafter *Scientific Romans*], p. vii. Compare with H. G. Wells, "Off the Chain" (December 1910), in *An Englishman Looks at the World*. For an electronic version see: http://www.gutenberg.org/files/11502/11502-8.txt

[78] Notwithstanding, some readers rightly believe that Wells's fantasies do have a predictive power. Consider Ronald M. Green, "Last Word: Imagining the Future," *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 15 (2005), p. 103.

actualist point of view, he was quite blind to the accessibility of Verne's powerful imagination to pure possibilities. For Wells, fantasies have no predictive power whatsoever. Verne, unlike Wells, understood that he shared something with scientists—in order to invent or discover something novel, the discoverer or the inventor must first have access to pure possibilities. Because actualities actualize individual pure possibilities, such accessibility makes prediction possible. Both scientific imagination and that of the creators of fiction may have enough access to these pure possibilities, even to the very same possibilities.

According to Wells, imagination may refer to impossibilities and thus these may serve as legitimate objects for the author's creative imagination as well as for the reader, holding him or her "to the end by art and illusion and not by proof and argument, and the moment s/he closes the cover and reflects s/he wakes up to their impossibility."[79] At this point, too, Wells's actualism appears, and this actualism considers imaginary or illusionary objects as actually impossible (or as actual impossibilities), as if no pure possibility exists. He thus deemed pure possibilities simply as objects for the reader's dreams. As soon as the reader returns to real life and relinquishes the dreams he has read behind, s/he realizes that they are merely impossibilities. In this respect, Wells is an adherent actualist of a special kind. Nevertheless, such actualism cuts the ground from under the effectiveness and influence of fiction on the reader, without which there was no reason to read such fiction. If such writing referred to impossible objects, no reader could *really* be attracted to, or be influenced by, it. It would not catch his or her attention. Such writing was considered incredible *also* in the terms of fiction or fantasy. To attract the reader's attention, the fictional, imaginary, or fantastic objects must be at least purely possible to the extent that the reader is concerned. Otherwise, the fiction as an artistic achievement would be incredible, not worthy of the reader's attention or consideration. Entirely impossible objects have no literary or artistic appeal. The readers of Lucian, Kepler (see below), Verne, and Wells enjoyed the sheer *fantasy* of lunar journeys, though *technically* impossible for a long period, because they have deemed these fantasies *as possible* although only *purely* possible. Had the readers considered these fantasies as completely impossible, they would have avoided reading them from the very outset. In short, for the readers, the objects of the fantasy must be at least purely possible. Fantasies have to create or discover a mental *reality* (intersubjective reality, in panenmentalist terms) to attract the reader's attention and consideration. Lacking any

[79] *Scientific Romans*, p. vii.

reality, however purely possible, the reading experience, as a *real* experience, would not be possible. One of the unbearable consequences of such actualism is its incapability of explaining how mere fiction can affect the readers immensely and may even change their lives. Impossibilities cannot have any fascination over the readers and cannot serve as objects for their experience. Neither can impossibilities change anybody's life. However fantastic a fiction may be (think of Kafka's "Metamorphosis"), it should not be excluded as impossible. Pure possibilities are indispensable for human psychical life, imagination, creativity, art, and so on. Fantasies at least attempt to challenge what we habitually consider as if "impossible." Fantasies may this expand our awareness of the purely possible.

Wells points out the difference between his *The First Men in the Moon* and Verne's fantasy of a human landing on the moon:

> In *The First Men in the Moon* I tried an improvement on Jules Verne's shot, in order to look at mankind from a distance and burlesque the effects of specialization. Verne never landed on the moon because he never knew of radio and of the possibility of sending back a message. So it was his shot that came back. But equipped with radio, which had just come out then, I was able to land and even see something of the planet.[30]

In this clause, too, we can see to what extent Wells was an actualist. Despite his attempt to describe himself as an author of mere fantasies, now known as "science fiction," Verne had the upper hand in his accessibility to pure possibilities. For Wells, the possibility of sending back a message was actual owing to the recent invention of radio. In contrast, Verne had no need of an actual possibility to write his story.

Verne's predictions have come about to be actual and true. In contrast, some of Wells's other fantasies have happened not to be true or actual but have even been shown to be *im*possible or absurd, for instance:

> Now it seems to me that it is this illegitimate notion of movement through time or through space-time that is to be found in H. G. Wells's story. It will be remembered that Wells's time traveler is in a machine which remains always at approximately the same point on the Earth's surface, and he travels up and down the Earth's world line. This is certainly a conceptual impossibility. . . . There is an objection to calling such cases "time travel," since ordinarily by "travel" we mean change of space with respect to time, but if this objection is waived we can concede the conceptual possibility of

[30] *Scientific Romans*, p. ix.

> time travel. Nevertheless, there are concepts of time travel, such as that in H. G. Wells's story, which are demonstrably absurd.[81]

Sometimes, an author needs more access to pure possibilities in order to predict the future, as the future actualizes rather more and more of these possibilities. Moreover, if Verne really suggested that "anything a man can imagine, another man can create," the truth is that both men (or women) may have access to these pure possibilities, and the access of the one is independent of the access of the other. It is also possible that the same person could be the imagining one as well as the inventor.

Now, following Wells's way of thinking, Verne thought that flying to the moon and landing on it were possibilities that *could* be actual at that time, whereas Wells deemed them to be mere fantasies, which could not be actual there and then. But the truth is that we cannot refer or relate to the impossible; only possibilities are referable or relatable. Any object of our referability or relationality must be possible first. The possibilities under discussion are pure and real individuals. Now, flying or landing on the moon was considered impossible by many and for many years. One of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century wrote:

> Suppose some adult had told a child that he had been on the moon. The child tells me the story, and I say it was only a joke, the man hadn't been on the moon; no one has ever been on the moon; the moon is a long way off and it is impossible to climb up there or fly there. If not the child insists, saying perhaps there is a way of getting there which I don't know, etc., what reply could I make to him? What reply could I make to the adults of a tribe who believe that people sometimes go to the moon (perhaps that is how they interpret their dreams), and who indeed grant that there are no ordinary means of climbing up to it or flying there? But a child will not ordinarily stick to such a belief and will soon be convinced by what we tell him seriously.[82]

In this text, Wittgenstein is devoted to an actualist stance. He states that it is *impossible* to fly to the moon or to land on it: "We all believe that it

[81] J. J. C. Smart, "Is Time Travel Possible?" *Journal of Philosophy* 60 (1963), pp. 237 241. Note that absurdities may be considered possible, as logic should not confine the realm of the possible. This has been a mute point in the philosophical literature from Leibniz and Kant until today. In *Necessity and Truthful Fictions* (pp. 71 75 and 157 162), I consider the realm of the purely possible comprising alogical and nonlogical possibilities, *too*.

[82] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, trans. Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979) [hereafter *On Certainty*], §106, p. 16e.

isn't possible to get to the moon."[83] He does not leave it as an open possibility even for the future. Unlike Verne, he does not consider it as a conclusion deduced from Newtonian premises. Unlike Wells, he does not consider it even as a fantasy that could attract our attention as telling us something meaningful about human nature. It is simply a joke, a piece of ridiculous fantasy, not worth considering, an impossibility that should not be taken seriously in any circumstances. Wittgenstein's actualist stance is quite radical, as it leaves no room for taking fantastic pure possibilities seriously even as such. In contrast, even an actualist such as Wells realized the serious or meaningful side of his fantasies.

Undoubtedly, Wittgenstein was entitled to claim that he never was on the moon, and this is beyond any possible doubt, as it is an example of certainty,[84] but when he states "no one ever . . . *could* come there" (*On Certainty*, §171, p. 25e), he commits an actualist fallacy. He refuses to acknowledge that it could be done, although it did not happen in his or Verne's time. According to Wittgenstein, doubting such an impossibility or considering it as a possibility cannot be compatible with learning the language-game in which the sentence "I never had been on the moon" makes sense. This may make sense for there is a limitation for any doubt. There is no doubt that Ludwig Wittgenstein never was on the moon just as there is no doubt that he knew he was Ludwig Wittgenstein (following *On Certainty*, §328). Notwithstanding, there is no good, let alone compelling, reason to say that Ludwig Wittgenstein *could not* fly to or land on the moon. It was only a matter of contingent fact that the technology of his time could not render this possible. But, following Newtonian physics, it could have happened even there and then. Thus, following a language-game that rests on the grounds of this physics, this was a serious and even reasonable possibility unless one, like Wittgenstein, commits oneself to an actualist stance. Hence he excludes the possibility of believing that it is "possible to get to the moon."[85] In Wittgenstein's time such a possibility was purely, theoretically possible though technically impossible. Only an actualist bias on the part of Wittgenstein prevented him from acknowledging that.

Following *On Certainty* §338, suppose that people in Wittgenstein's time said: "Most probably, we never have been on the moon, yet this is not impossible at all." Can such people rely upon any certainty? No, if and only if we give an actualist interpretation to their statement. If our

[83] *On Certainty*, §286, p. 37e.
[84] Following *On Certainty*, §§111, 117, 269, 337, and 661 662, otherwise he would not have been serious or reasonable.
[85] *On Certainty*, §286, p. 37e.

interpretation were a possibilist one, we could surely rely upon a certainty and believe in it. Those people were certain enough that they had never actually been on the moon even though, following Newton's physics, this could have been *certainly* done. Leaving pure possibilities open does not lead to skepticism. Moreover, the difference between pure possibility and actuality is absolutely certain, unless madness, hallucinations, or other intellectual, psychical, or physical incapabilities are concerned. Probabilities have to do with actualities or actualization, not with pure possibilities. Following *On Certainty* §662, there is no possible mistake in one's knowledge that one has never been on the moon, as long as "been" is limited to actualities only. This is the right way to play the relevant language-game. But, contrary to Wittgenstein, one does not play the game wrongly, if one states that it is a mistake to say that it was impossible for one to be there. One could have been a moon astronaut. There are certainly possibilist language-games that are played correctly.

Another viewpoint when considering our problem is as follows:

> It appears impossible to fly to the moon. "How can we cover the huge distance?" But it is not in fact impossible once we have discovered the (operating) principle of the rocket.[86]

The operating principle of the rocket was accessible equally to Verne, Wells, and Wittgenstein. There must be a clear distinction between facility and possibility as they are not one and the same. Facility designates capability, which is related to potentiality and, thus, to actuality, whereas possibilities can be pure, and as such they are not related to potentiality, let alone to actuality. Furthermore, the principle of the rocket is compatible with Newtonian physics. Nothing in this physics could exclude it or the possibility of flying to or landing on the moon. It is an undeniable fact that Verne and Wells imagined these possibilities. On the grounds of an actualist stance, Wittgenstein deliberately and with open eyes *chose* to exclude these possibilities, although he could similarly have used the access to them on the grounds of quite a different view, a possibilist one. Nothing could prevent him from imagining a rocket and conceiving those possibilities (especially against the theoretical and practical background of his expertise as an aeronautical engineer). The only grounds for excluding them were actualist ones. Wittgenstein was not forced to adopt such an

[86] Tyrone Lai, "How We Make Discoveries," *Synthese* 79 (1989), p. 366.

actualist stance. I would even dare to say that such stance is philosophically prejudgmental.[87]

What can beautifully demonstrate the link between a creative imagination and the discovery of a scientific pure possibility is Johannes Kepler's idea with which he credited Lucian's *True Story*:

> I was helped by my enjoyment of the highly daring tale, which nevertheless offered some intimations concerning the nature of the entire universe, as Lucian himself announces in his introduction. He, too, sails out past the Pillars of Hercules into the ocean and carried aloft with his ship by whirlwinds, is transported to the moon. These were my first traces of a trip to the moon, which was my inspiration in later times.[88]

In *True Story* §§2, 4 Lucian emphasizes

> Nothing I say is true. Moreover I am writing about things which I have neither seen nor felt nor heard from others. Besides, they do not exist at all, nor can they even have come into being. Hence my readers must not in the least believe them.[89]

Nevertheless, as I see it, Kepler understood that a *real* possibility was captured by Lucian's fiction. By means of sheer fiction, laypersons, authors, artists, philosophers, or scientists can capture real possibilities, though absolutely pure. The fictions are invented, but the pure real possibilities are *discovered* (which means that pure possibilities are *a priori* cognizable). Kepler understood the scientific significance of such discovery, and he understood how *real* must be the discovered pure possibilities, as pure rather than actual. Indeed, in Kepler's lunar

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[87] Some interpreters of *On Certainty* have attempted to solve the puzzle of the Wittgensteinian impossibility of flying to the moon in light of the distinction between our unchangeable fundamental beliefs and our changeable ones. See W. D. Hudson, "Wittgenstein on Fundamental Propositions," in *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Critical Assessments Vol. IV*, ed. S. Shanker (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p. 124; and Carol Caraway, "Wittgenstein on the Structure of Justification: Breaking New Epistemological Ground," in *Papers of the 26th International Wittgenstein Symposium: Knowledge and Belief*, 2003, pp. 78 80, p. 79. I do not follow these interpretations, for Wittgenstein simply committed an actualist fallacy while excluding the possibility of landing on the moon.

[88] Johannes Kepler, *Kepler's Somnium: The Dream, or Posthumous work on Lunar Astronomy*, trans. with a commentary by Edward Rosen (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover, 2003 [1634]) [*Kepler's Somnium*], note 2, pp. 32 33.

[89] Cited in *Kepler's Somnium*, p. 33, note 13.

dissertation of 1593, Edward Rosen writes, "astronomical observers were already on the moon," though at that time

> Kepler had not yet conceived the idea of transporting an observer from the earth to the moon. That idea was the principal feature of the *Dream* framework, which Kepler built in 1609 around his student dissertation of 1593.[90]

Thus, a sheer fantasy helped Kepler to reveal a real possibility, considered only as a pure possibility at that time. And the interesting point is this: How could he reject an actualist view, such as Wittgenstein's? Why did he not follow Lucian's warning that all this is nothing but an invented fantasy with no connection with actual, true reality? The idea of gravity or attraction among bodies was clear to Kepler at that time,[91] and, as I see it, this idea was involved with an ample *theoretical* system of individual pure possibilities, systematically, necessarily relating one to the other. To understand deeply what lies in such a system is certainly compatible with the possibility of a lunar journey, flying to the moon, landing on it, and returning back to earth.[92] The relationality or reference to such a possible journey was actually common to Kepler, Verne, and Wells, whereas this possibility was excluded by Wittgenstein on actualist grounds constructing an actualist language-game. Such a game could be correctly played only if the possibility of a lunar journey is excluded. But the whole game has been entirely wrong. Its failure lies in being blind to some real possibilities, some meaningful pure possibilities. Kepler, Verne, and Wells did not follow actualities only; they were not blind to some most significant pure possibilities.

Fictions by means of which we can capture pure possibilities that may help us greatly in scientific discoveries and novelties, are truthful. Not all fictions are truthful, not even all scientific fictions are truthful. The history of science teaches us how untruthful or deceptive scientific fictions can be. Phlogiston, ether, and many other false fictions tempted scientists to believe that they were real, actual "facts." The pure possibilities involved in false fictions are limited to the subjects holding them or mistaking by means of them, whereas the pure possibilities involved in truthful fictions, which have a real scientific value, are not limited to the subjects holding

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[90] *Kepler's Somnium*, p. 33, note 13.

[91] *Kepler's Somnium*, note 66, p. 71; cf. note 202, p. 123.

[92] Describing the lunar journey, Kepler took into consideration the effect of the earth's gravity on the traveler's taking off (*Kepler's Somnium*, p. 16). Did this idea inspire Verne's lunar journey?

them; they are valid also independently of these subjects. These pure possibilities, which the truthful fictions capture, exist independently of their discoverers or the (truthful) fictional means of the discovery. Like microscopes and telescopes, truthful fictions are the means by which we may discover or detect not only pure possibilities but, no less, actualities that otherwise we would ignore or unaware of. The pure possibilities of lunar journeys, airplanes, or submarines were never limited to the minds that envisaged them. They ever hold also for the reality without these dreamers or inventers. This certainly holds for the dreams-fantasies of Lucian, Kepler, Verne, and Wells concerning the possibilities of lunar journeys.

Relating to individual pure possibilities as real and predicting that actualities may be found to actualize them, I do not rely upon any Kantian grounds. My view is entirely possibilist: Individual pure possibilities exist entirely independently or regardless of actual reality as well as of subjects. We discover these possibilities, not invent them. They exist to be revealed by us, but their existence does not depend on our minds.[93] Panenmentalism is a possibilism *de re*; it is not *de dicto*. Individual pure possibilities are not only conceptions; they are existents. Our conceptions, including truthful fictions, may help us discover these possible existents, as Kepler's fantasy helped him to do.

On these grounds, we are entitled to argue that actualities "imitate" individual pure possibilities, some of which are discoverable by means of truthful fictions. The discoveries under discussion are imitated, namely, actualized, by actual discoveries or inventions. In this chapter, I thus strengthen my view presented earlier in chapter one.

What is the general lesson that we may learn from discussing actualist fallacies, fax machines, and lunar journeys? To argue that literary pure possibilities are confined to some actualities, as if any novel had something of the *roman à clef* in it, is to commit an actualist fallacy. In this chapter, I have thus demonstrated that literary individual pure possibilities are not confined to anything in actual reality or in empirical data. Human imagination, while inventing new technologies, creating fictions, discovering new individual pure possibilities, and the like, is not confined to or restricted by actual reality and empirical data. It may go as far as the realm of discoverable individual pure possibilities extends. To argue to the contrary is to commit a major actualist fallacy.

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[93] Actual existence and possible existence have different existential quantifiers, namely, an actualist and a possibilist existential quantifier respectively. See my *Truthful Fictions*, pp. 23 47.

CHAPTER NINE

INTERIOR PORTRAITS IN *THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN* AND BRAIN IMAGING[94]

If there are pure possibilities, there are also pure impossibilities. One of these pure impossibilities is the accessibility to other minds. Because of the singularity of each human person as a psychical subject, namely as a pure possibility to which no other pure possibility can be even similar, such accessibility is purely impossible. Thus, the accessibility to one's mind is inescapably private and there is no psychical accessibility from without.[95]

Nevertheless, our era does not lack grandiose ambitions especially concerning science and technology. One of these prevalent ambitions is about the ability of brain imaging technology to allow us access to other minds. Consider, for instance, the following claim concerning such technology: "For the first time it may be possible to breach the privacy of the human mind, and judge people not only by their actions, but also by their thoughts and predilections."[96] Martha Farah is not the only one to entertain the idea of breaching the privacy of the human mind by means of brain imaging technologies, such as fMRI (Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging). There are neuroscientists and philosophers, especially in the new field of neuroethics,[97] who share such an idea. Farah exposes the materialist

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[94] A first version of this chapter was published as a paper by the same title in *Philosophy and Literature* 38:2 (October 2014), pp. 416 432.

[95] See Amihud Gilead, *Singularity and Other Possibilities* and *The Privacy of the Psychical* (Amsterdam and New York Value Inquiry Book Series, vol. 233, 2011).

[96] Martha J. Farah, "Neuroethics: The Practical and the Philosophical," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 9 (2005), p. 34, hereafter abbreviated "NPP." Cf. Martha J. Farah et al., "Brain Imaging and Brain Privacy: A Realistic Concern?" *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 21 (2009), pp. 119 27.

[97] See, for instance, Juha Räikkä, "Brain Imaging and Privacy," *Neuroethics* 3 (2010): 5 12; and Juha Räikkä and Saul Smilansky, "The Ethics of Alien Attitudes," *The Monist* 95 (2012), pp. 511 532.

or physicalist basis of her view: “Neuroscience is providing us with increasingly comprehensive explanations of human behavior in purely material terms” (“NPP,” p. 34); and “The idea that there is somehow more to a person than their physical instantiation runs deep in the human psyche. . . Neuroscience has begun to challenge this view” (“NPP,” p. 39). After all, only on such a basis one may think that because the mind supervenes on the brain and on its functioning, then by means of sophisticated brain imaging could we follow the physical traces of the states and the activity of the mind in such a way that we would be allowed enough access to the mind of other persons. Though some authors criticize and challenge this ambition,[98] it still appears to be widely acceptable, however controversial it may sound to some of us.

I, for one, consider this ambition as an illusion, for it is entirely blind to the categorial difference between a person as a singular subject and an object, including the human body, as of quite another kind of being. Objects can be entirely similar to other objects, as can objects to their images, and some objects can be replicated (the same especially holds true for their images), whereas no two persons can be entirely similar and no person is replicable. In a sense, persons are also beyond the reach of the images we have of them.

Though mind and body are united or inseparable, the difference between them is of ontological categories. We should not mistake the brain for the mind, however inseparable they are. We should be very careful not to mistake brain images for the brain itself[99] and, even more so, we should not mistake brain images for the mind and its various states. Materialists or physicalists often mistake the psychophysical unity for a psychophysical identity, and they are blind to the psychophysical difference, which excludes the possibility of reducing the mind to the brain.

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[98] Such as Melissa Littlefield, “Constructing the Organ of Deceit: The Rhetoric of fMRI and Brain Fingerprinting in Post-9/11 America,” *Science, Technology, and Human Values* 34 (2009), pp. 365 392. Cf. Silvia Casini, “Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) as Mirror and Portrait,” *Configurations* 19 (2011), pp. 73 99.

[99] For a philosophical oriented warning against the medical mistaking of X-ray images for real states, referring to the shadows in Plato’s cave, see: A. J. Harrold, “Only Images of the Shadows,” *The British Medical Journal* 2 (1979), p. 1575. At present, this warning certainly holds for brain imaging.

In this chapter, I will not defend my arguments against the aforementioned ambition concerning brain imaging.[100] Instead, I will show how a literary genius, such as Thomas Mann, suggested to the reader of *The Magic Mountain*, already in 1924, a fascinating philosophical insight according to which such ambition must be an illusion, which may lead to fatal consequences.

Hans Castrop, a guest who happened to be a patient in the Berghof sanatorium, is entirely infatuated with Clawdia Chauchat, another young patient there whose French name suggests "a hot cat." In a tantalizing chapter, "Humaniora," Hans pays a visit to the private residence of Director (*Hofrat*) Behrens, the chief physician of the sanatorium. Behrens is an ardent materialist, who has no doubt that human beings are nothing but their bodies, about which he appears to know all there is to know. Behrens is endowed with two skills concerning the depiction of human beings. Employing the latest X-ray machinery, he takes fine photographs of the interior of his patients. He keeps an impressive private gallery of such "interior portraits." Secondly, as an amateur painter, he has studied, most meticulously, a model, who means a great deal to Castrop---Clawdia. She has posed for Behrens about twenty occasions. Thus, Behrens knows her quite well—both as a patient and as a model. As for other patients, what holds true for the X-ray interior portraits of Hans Castrop and his cousin Joachim Ziemssen is clearly valid for them: "We shall see through you both. I expect, Castrop, you feel a little nervous about exposing your inner self to our gaze? Don't be alarmed, our procedures are quite aesthetic. Look here, have you seen my picture-gallery?" (*L-P*, p. 274; *W*, p. 255).[101]

Behrens is quite happy to see that Castrop recognizes Clawdia immediately from his painting of her, and, referring to "Frau Chauchat's person," he highlights "the very image of her!" (*L-P*, p. 326). To Behrens's question, Castrop answers that he knows her only superficially (*oberflächlich*). To which Behrens responds: "Well, I know her more internally, subcutaneously, if you get my drift" (*W*, p. 305). This insinuates that the Director has known her also carnally, the way in which Castrop

[100] For my extensive arguments against the aforementioned ambition, see: Amihud Gilead, "Can Brain Imaging Breach Our Mental Privacy?" *The Review of Philosophy and Psychology* 6 (2015), pp. 275 291.

[101] Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain*, trans. Helen T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1939), hereafter abbreviated *L-P*. Cf. John E. Woods's translation (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), hereafter abbreviated *W*. When the translation is mine, no pagination is mentioned. As for the original, I use *Der Zauberberg* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1956).

will know her on their "Walpurgis Night" (*Mardi Gras*). Behrens, mentioning her physical and behavioral trickiness and slinkiness [*Schleicherin*], assures Hans: "It's the superficies makes the difficulty" (*L-P*, p. 327).[102] He compares her to a puzzle, to something very hard to capture, strange, and entirely evasive, yet not beyond his skilful grasp. In Behrens's view, there is nothing about her that is not a feature of her body and behavior. He ignores her "mind" completely.

Clawdia's evasiveness is her second, if not her first, nature. All the medical and carnal knowledge which Director Behrens can muster will not suffice to capture even a bit of her elusive character. From his first sight of her, Castrop has projected onto her the image of young Pribislav Hippe, his classmate and youthful infatuation as well, the boy from whom he borrowed a pencil, just like the one he would borrow from her on that night.[103] These two persons become mingled into one confusing, hybrid, and elusive figure.

Having departed, after their amorous Walpurgis Night, Clawdia gives Hans a memento—her X-ray interior portrait (*Innenporträt*) which he will carry from that moment on in his breast pocket. In return, he gives her his X-ray interior portrait, to which Settembrini, quite ironically, refers as an identity card. Yet, as we will see, Clawdia's psychical interior—her mind or personality—remains shrouded in darkness, which no light—that of X-rays, or that of psychoanalysis, or that of Settembrini's enlightenment—can pierce. She knows quite well how to keep her mind to herself.

In his first conversation with Clawdia, after a long period of silence lasting for months, in which they had only eyed each other, Clawdia tells Hans almost nothing about herself as she is much more interested in gossip. Only much later, after her return to the Berghof with Peeperkorn, does she reveal just a bit of her thoughts to him (*L-P*, p. 704). Yet, when in response, he addresses her directly (in the second person, *tu*, an intimate form of address, rather than the formal *vous*), she protests: "What a way is that to address a lady whom one hardly knows" (*L-P*, p. 705), entirely

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[102] Much later, Behrens will notify Hans that "the little pussycat [*Kätzchen*] can meow some very pretty French and a stilted High German, but write?" (*W*, p. 419) and, furthermore, "our little pussycat will come slinking [*schleicht*] home evening after next" (*W*, p. 650), which combines Clawdia's slinkiness with her image as a "hot cat."

[103] In fact, in the way in which this incident left its impression on Hans, it was the same pencil of the same person (whom we may call Pribislav-Clawdia). See, for instance, *L-P*, pp. 616 17 (for the pencil) and *L-P*, p. 604 (for Clawdia's eyes which "seen long ago and then found again, the eyes of Pribislav Hippe and Clawdia Chauchat").

ignoring the fact that they had addressed each other intimately before. Nevertheless, Hans reminds her that he is still carrying with him her X-ray portrait—her "interior portrait"—the memento from their first amorous night. Asked whether she has kept his X-ray portrait, she answers, laughing: "I must look it out" (*L-P*, p. 706). All this demonstrates how far he is from her inner, psychical reality, as he knows almost nothing about her as a person. On Hans's first night with her, before the carnival begins, Settembrini warns him of her but in vain. At this stage Hans is already infatuated with her or, rather, with her image. Settembrini identifies her as Lilith, who, according to an ancient Jewish legend, was Adam's first wife and a wicked demonic female or a vampire.[104]

On their first night together, Clawdia reveals to Hans how serious is Joachim's health condition, for Director Behrens showed her "his pictures" (*L-P*, p. 424). Then, Hans mentions her portrait painted by Behrens, which he liked for its "fidelity," as Behrens succeeded in depicting the color of her skin very accurately. Castrop would like very much to be a painter himself "to have a reason to study her skin like him." It is a dreamlike situation, as he describes it to her, a reverie, which has been dreamt for ever, eternally enduring, as eternity is for him to sit by her side. And she, much more aware of the reality of temporariness and temporality, tells him that it is too late; he could have addressed her much before; he should have spoken to her much earlier. In eternity no one has to talk, he claims, to which she, characterizing him as "a very curious little dreamer," responds: "You seem quite at home in eternity, know its every detail [in depth, thoroughly], no doubt" (*W*, p. 401). In fact, Hans's dreamlike knowledge is not knowledge at all, either about himself, or about her. Revealing almost nothing about herself, she merely informs him that she will depart on the following day. Yet, that night, there is one thing that she tells about herself—her love of freedom, first of all the freedom to choose where to live. Then Hans, confessing his love to her, begs her: "I have seen your exterior portrait [*portrait extérieur*], but I would much prefer to see the interior portrait [*portrait intérieur*] you have locked up in your room" (*W*, p. 404; cf. p. 415, mentioning her interior silhouette [*inneres Schattenbild*]). In this way, he expresses his passion to know her as deeply and intimately as possible, a passion that eventually will be frustrated.

[104] The Hebrew name "Lilith" is folk-etymologically connected with Laila night, in Hebrew and interpreted as a "night demon;" it is also the Hebrew name for a nocturnal bird of prey. See: Ernest Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English* (Jerusalem and Haifa: Carta and The University of Haifa, 1987), p. 300a.

Most, if not all, of her enigmatic personality will remain inaccessible, much beyond his reach. The same holds for the reader.

The narrator throws a most interesting light on the contingency of actual events, especially, on the impossibility of access to other minds from without ("mind reading"): "Was it possible that she knew he was to be examined at two o'clock? It looked like it; but that was as impossible as that she should be aware of the thought that had visited his mind in the last minute; namely, that he might as well send word to the Director (*Hofrat*), through Joachim, that his cold was better, and he considered an examination superfluous" (*L-P*, p. 224). Clawdia could not know about his thoughts simply because accessibility from without to one's mind is impossible, whereas actual reality could have been quite different: After all he and Joachim met Behrens by accident, an occasion in which Hans could request him to examine him, too (*L-P*, p. 221). Furthermore, had Hans changed his mind as to the need to be physically examined, the examination would not have happened. The contingency of the actual is clearly indicated at this passage together with the impossibility of an epistemic access from without (an access that is not allowed to Clawdia or any other person). I think that she heard from Behrens about the time of the examination of the new patient.

In contrast to Clawdia's mind, which remains much of a mystery, that of Hans Castrop is entirely transparent to the reader. We know about his thoughts, feelings, emotions, wishes, dreams, and passions to the last detail. Such is the case because the narrator of *The Magic Mountain* has access to Castrop's mind. Such accessibility is not obvious, hence the narrator comments: "We are adhering strictly to the personal experience of our simple-minded hero, which in some way defying exact definition it has been given us to know" (*L-P*, p. 790). This may remind the reader that accessibility to other minds, even in fiction, is a problem that narrator and reader may both be aware of. Ironically, the narrator has such access even to the mind of a minor character, such as James Tienappel, the consul, who was sent by Castrop's family to persuade him, the "problem child," to return home, to a real, mundane life. At a funny moment, the narrator comments: "The consul had experiences of his own and impressions that he himself received, in which we do not want to continue eavesdropping[105] on him." This narrator can follow, observe or listen to the thoughts,

[105] *Belauschen* to overhear, to eavesdrop, to observe. Lowe-Porter translates: "to follow him" (*L-P*, p. 552; cf. *W*, p. 517: "we do not wish to spy on him any further"). Ironically, the narrator uses the same verb to characterize Behrens's skill: "he was such a master of auscultation that he could listen to a man's inside [*eines Menschen Inneres belauschen*] . . ." (*L-P*, p. 527).

impressions, and experiences of the characters of this novel. In contrast, Clawdia Chauchat's mind is entirely beyond the reach of the narrator until the last third of the text; it is the first time that the narrator knows something about her jealousy and wishes concerning Hans and about some of her hopes and hidden feelings (*L-P*, pp. 732–733). Literary imagination usually allows such an access to a particular kind of narrator, whether omniscient or partly knowledgeable, but our narrator makes little use of it except for his vast knowledge of what is going on in Hans's mind. Yet even in this case, this knowledge appears not to hold for the clandestine conversations and sessions of Castrop with Dr. Krokowski, about which the narrator has only guesses and conjectures (*L-P*, pp. 465–466; emphasizing "how can *we* know").

As Clawdia's mind is entirely inaccessible to all the characters in this novel, especially to Hans, and most of the time even to the narrator, it is clearly ridiculous to take seriously the possibility that any imaging technology could reveal more of her mind and personality. Especially absurd is the illusion of both Behrens and Castrop that X-rays might reveal her secrets, let alone her psychical interior portrait. Neither can sexual intercourse with her endow them with any access to her mysterious inner reality. In any event, only she can "reveal her heart" to other persons. No X-ray can reveal it in this metaphoric sense.

In the first séance scene, Clawdia's X-ray portrait magically appears on Hans's lap, and his associations concerning Joachim's "interior portrait" are mentioned in the grotesque séance in Krokowski's cabinet-den. What could it mean to a reader of our time? The materialization of the "ghosts" at the séance (actually, of the images restored or implanted in the medium's mind) is like the materialization or externalization of the mind either by relying on an X-ray interior portrait or on that of today's brain imaging. Both kinds of materialization-externalization are equally absurd. With regard to the topic of this chapter, we may extract a lesson from this scene: as much as no X-ray photography can grasp the "interior portrait"—the mind of the subject—so brain imaging cannot grasp anything of the subject's mind unless we rely upon a materialist-physicalist illusion that mind and body are one and the same physical being, entirely accessible to imaging technologies.

The portraits of Clawdia—both the external and the internal ones—as well as the symbolic pencil, associating her with Pribislav Hippe, may remind the reader of William Henry Fox Talbot's "the pencil of nature" as a phrase that epitomizes photography. I have not found any evidence whether Thomas Mann was aware of such an association. Nevertheless, it throws a fascinating light on the pencil episode(s) in this novel, in which the pencil is a symbol of the tool by means of which Pribislav-Clawdia, Hans, Behrens, and the narrator draw, each in his or her way, portraits, images, or fantasies.

Pribislav-Clawdia serves as a mirror for Hans Castrop's psychical portrait. In Freudian terms, it is Castrop's narcissism, projected first onto a homosexual love object. In Hans's fantasies, Clawdia is, at the same time, a boy and a young woman, as if his dreamlike infatuation mixed them together. On their first amorous night, Hans and Clawdia speak a foreign language, French, in which Hans believes he can speak "out of dream." This may remind the reader of Freud's "language of dreams," revealing what is buried in the unconsciousness. As for the French dialogue, it may remind the reader of the French dialogues in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, especially because Clawdia is a Russian with all the Russian mythical or religious aura (following *L-P*, p. 755).[106] Such a comparison sheds light on the fact that contrary to the Tolstoyan interlocutors who reveal their thoughts and emotions to each other, Clawdia keeps them to herself most of the time, divulging almost nothing of her mind, except as a mirror reflecting other characters.

In fact, Hans Castrop unconsciously produces a photomontage of the images of Pribislav and Clawdia, blending them into one and the same image. It is impossible for him, at least before deciding to leave the sanatorium, to realize that this is only an image. X-ray photography, portraits, and the like convey images, which he is unable to break through to reach the real person who is Clawdia. Her genuine psychical portrait remains far behind the dreamlike French words by which Hans attempts to draw it. There is a great similarity between "the image of life" about which Hans fantasized before his first night with Clawdia and her in the flesh, only because she is made in the image of Hans's "image of life." Much of Clawdia is a creation of Hans's imagination, desires, and wishful thinking. Indeed, for Hans she is an image of life, not life itself—the life outside of the sanatorium. Within it, under the tyranny of Behrens's materialism, images prevail.

It is enlightening to compare Hans's fantasy—in a sort of hallucination, of the "image of life," wholly associated with his passion for Clawdia—to that of Mynheer Peeperkorn. While completely intoxicated, Peeperkorn reveals his fantasies to Hans, also intoxicated: "Life, young man, is a female. A sprawling female, with swelling breasts close to each other, great soft belly between her haunches, slender arms, bulging things, half-

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[106] For Mann's fascination of Tolstoy's works, especially of *War and Peace*, consult *Letters of Thomas Mann (1889-1955)*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 47, 79, and 97.

closed eyes. She mocks us. She challenges us to expend our manhood to its uttermost span, to stand or fall before her. To stand or fall. To *fall*, young man—do you know what that means? The defeat of the feelings, their overthrow when confronted by life—that is impotence" (*L-P*, p. 714). This image of "a female" is a reduction of Clawdia to a sexual object that puts Peeperkorn's sexual potency to the test. An experience of impotence in presence of such a female body means, for him, "ruin and bankruptcy, the horrible disgrace . . . the end of everything, the hellish despair, the Judgment Day" (ibid.). It is as a kind of depersonalization, of total objectification of her simply as a means to test and prove his virility. For him, she is simply an image that he owns due to his might and fortune. Peeperkorn's "image of life" anticipates his suicide, as his being impotent and his discovery about Hans and Clawdia's affair will jointly drive him to commit suicide. Once his Dionysian-Almighty image is proven to be invalid, there is, for him, no longer any meaning in life.

Castrop's "image of life" and Peeperkorn's "image of life" are very similar images of Clawdia. Neither image captures anything of her as a person. Both are narcissistic (and Settembrini draws the attention of Hans to that aspect of Peeperkorn's nature). No image can replace a person, to begin with her interior X-ray portrait and to end with such narcissistic images.

Still, there is a difference between those images and the photographic ones. As Susan Sontag puts it, "a photograph is not only an image (as a painting is an image), an interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stenciled off the real, like a foot print or a death mask. . . . a photograph is never less than the registering of an emanation (light waves reflected by objects)—a material vestige of its subject in a way that no painting can be."[107] Nevertheless, first, a photograph is also an image that should be distinguished from the photographed object itself; secondly—it is not Clawdia's mind or person that leaves its marks or traces on the X-ray screen or plate; it is simply the shadows of the interior of her chest. Thus, the interior portrait is much less than a painting, which,

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[107] Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 1977), p. 154. Interestingly enough, she mentions Behrens's X-ray photography, Hans's lovesickness for Clawdia, and the "most precious of trophies" he made of her interior portrait (p. 163), with no association to the "pencil of nature," which she has discussed separately, on p. 154. For a psychoanalytic-metaphoric discussion of the relations between the painted external portrait and the X-ray interior one of Clawdia and the symbol of the pencil's episodes see: Eric Downing, *After Images: Photography, Archeology, and Psychoanalysis and the Tradition of Bildung* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), pp. 50–58.

as an interpretation of her embodied person, may suggest something of her personality. Paintings, in this respect, are closer to mental reality than are photographs. While subject to brain imaging, the traces or magnetic resonances of our brain are merely images subject to interpretation that can be quite wrong and, in any event, allow no access to our mind.

Plato's simile of the cave (*Republic* VII) warns us of the phenomenon of mistaking images, acoustic and visual---echoes and shadows—for the real objects or persons themselves. Physicians should be very careful about their interpretation and diagnosis of the images produced by X-rays, Computerized Tomography (CT), Ultrasound Echography (UE), Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), or Functional Resonance Imaging (fMRI), as they provide only "echoes" or "shadows" of one's *physical* interior. They are, indeed, depictions of what the body and its functions convey, but they inform nothing about what is going on in one's mind. Behrens would have been really happy to know about these technologies. As a "master of auscultation," one who so magnificently knows how to produce most accurate medical data by using the stethoscope (an instrument almost inseparable from him), data that the X-ray images confirm, would welcome the aforementioned modern technologies. Translating acoustic data into visual images is the mastery of using the stethoscope or the ultrasound scan. Translating magnetic resonance data into visual images on the computer screen is like that mastery. Behrens would thus be well prepared to welcome these modern devices. Moreover, as a full-blooded materialist, mistaking the brain images for the psychical reality of the patient, he would endorse her up-to-date interior portrait as the reflection of her personality. Mistaking images for truthful reality is a fallacy like that of the Platonic prisoners—mistaking the shadows and the echoes for the things themselves.

In many senses, the magic mountain is a Platonic cave, far removed from real time and the realities of a mundane life. Despite all the explicit signs and Settembrini's warnings, Hans "had indeed . . . preoccupied himself with this or that among the subjective shadows [spiritual shadows—*geistigen Schatten*] of things [*der Dinge*]; but the things themselves [*der Dinge selbst*] he had heeded not at all, having a willful tendency to take the shadow for the substance, and in the substance to see only shadow" (*L-P*, p. 891). What arouses him from his slumber are huge external forces—the thunderous sounds of the approaching war—like the external force that liberates Plato's prisoners and drives them out of the cave. Life again receives its erring problem child only to send him to an almost certain death on the battlefield, in which so-called heroic images and echoes play a crucial role. Inescapably, fatal images of a heroic death end the entire novel, which begins with Hans's escape from his mundane life, which he has not liked very much. As a "life's problem child," Hans has always been in need of a shelter or an asylum consisting of images.

The cinema is mentioned several times in this novel. It is quite expected to compare it with the Platonic cave. The replicable nature of photographic, cinematic, and auditory images should not escape our attention, especially in contrast to the singularity of each person and his or her authentic portrait. As for auditory images, they—like the echoes in the Platonic cave and also in the myth of Narcissus—play additional roles in *The Magic Mountain*: Hans Castrop enjoys immensely listening to records, as the electric gramophone is one of the modern technologies acquired by the sanatorium. Of course, listening to the gramophone, he could not see the faces of the singers—in persons they were far from the sanatorium—but from them he got the best they had to offer—the echoes, the images, of their voices. He appreciates very much this sublime abstraction, devoid of any personal intimacy. Hans deliberately prefers recorded music to a live performance. Similarly, he prefers Pribislav's voice as it is heard from Clawdia's throat. Her voice is the image, or in the image, of Pribislav's voice. In the eyes of Behrens, the gramophone, the latest model of that time, the German spirit "up to date," was a musical instrument, not simply a machine. And, in his eyes, the records are books; hence, the gramophone can "read" these "books." In what poetic words would Behrens describe brain imaging technology? I can imagine it quite easily: "This instrument can read what is going on in the mind, including the unconsciousness, of the subject."

Moreover, Behrens, quite a narcissist himself, would mistake the images of the brain for traces of the human mind. For him, there is nothing more to persons than their physical being (to echo some of Farah's words cited above). For him, everything about a human being is simply biological. Behrens is the predecessor of those people of today who believe in the ability of brain imaging to endow us with external access to the human mind. They believe that the interior "portrait" of the brain and its activity will turn out eventually to be the psychical portrait of the person under examination. It is as though brain imaging would allow them access to what is going on in one's mind.

Cursing the libido ("*die verfluchte libido*"), Behrens expels three young patients from the sanitarium because of a sexual scandal which simple biochemical factors—tuberculosis has been known to be involved with excessive libido—caused them to commit. Had he known about neuroethics, he would have subjected morality to it with no hesitation. As for today's brain studies, many of the brain scientists believe that there is no use in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy and that brain research should take the place of psychological research, especially that of psychoanalysis. Behrens apparently anticipates these scientists in the following: "We have psychoanalysis, we give the noodles every chance to talk themselves out—much good it does them! The more they talk the more lecherous they get" (*L-P*, p. 527).

Outside of the sanatorium and liberated from the inspection of Director Behrens, while Hans is devoted to his ski-adventures, he is reminded of his X-ray portrait as follows:

> His gaze was lost in the blind white void, he felt his heart pulse from the effort of the climb that muscular organ whose animal-like shape and contracting motion he had watched, with a feeling of sacrilege, in the X-ray laboratory. A naïve reverence filled him for that organ of his, for the pulsating human heart, up here alone in the icy void, alone with its question and its riddle. (*L-P*, p. 603)

Here our problem in this chapter is enveloped in a nutshell. All we have to do is simply to replace the heart with the brain, and the X-ray technology—with brain imaging. Contrary to Behrens's attitude, in Hans's mind, at that moment, there must be a clear distinction between the objective X-ray image of his heart and his sensations, feelings, and thoughts concerning this organ and his state in the snowy wilderness. There is a categorial difference between these two kinds of experience he has had of his heart—the objective and the subjective. Hans's subjective, psychical reality is accessible to him alone but is utterly beyond the reach from the outside, by other persons, even if equipped with imaging technology. In this paragraph, too, we hear the voice of the onmiscient narrator thanks to the license of fiction: Only literary fiction allows external, non-private accessibility to the mind of the characters involved, as long as they are fictional characters, not real persons. No "pencil of nature," as an imaging technology, but only the writer's pencil can write down those thoughts of Hans. No "pencil of nature," embodied as X-ray photography, CT, MRI, or fMRI, can read what is going on in a person's mind. No such pencil can render the subjective into accessible objective traces.

Clawdia's enigmatic mind ("heart") reveals a few of its secrets only after the Snow Scene, which, for Hans, has been a revelation of a grand truth about life and love. For only then, is he able to ask her about her relationship with Peeperkorn. She does not answer his question whether she loves Peeperkorn ("passionately"). Instead, she confesses that because of his love for her it is impossible for her to leave him: "'He loves me,' she said, 'and his love makes me proud and grateful, and devoted to him. . . . His feeling forced me to follow and serve him. What else could I do? . . . Is it possible for any human being to disregard his love?'" (*L-P*, p. 753). Peeperkorn's love for her gives rise to her pride, gratitude, and devotion. Does this not transform him into a mirror in which she can get pleasure in herself, be proud of herself? Furthermore, she has returned to the Berghof with Peeperkorn only because "sometimes I am afraid of the solitude with him—the inward solitude, *tu sais* [you know]—he is frightening; . . . I should be glad to feel I had someone beside me. *Enfin* [at last, in a word]—if you care to know—that was why I came back here with him—*chez toi*" ["at your place," not in the original but clearly inferred from the context] (*L-P*, p. 755).

What does it mean? She knows, so it seems, something that Castrop does not know yet; it will take him more time to realize that, only after the suicide of Peeperkorn and Clawdia's final departure. She understands that, like herself, Hans needs mirrors in which he can watch how wonderful and fascinating he apparently is. She has come back to him with Peeperkorn—that magnificent, huge, drunken mirror in which she is reflected as immensely desirable, and in which Hans is reflected as quite worthy. She is as much as a narcissist as Hans is. His fascination with Hippe is not only homoerotic; it is Hippe's looking at him and his voice addressing him that hold this fascination; equally fascinating are Clawdia's eyes and voice for him—mirrors, shadows, and echoes through which he would like acknowledging himself; not knowing himself, for it is impossible to know oneself only by means of images. The point is that Clawdia needs the grand mirror that Peeperkorn embodies as much as she needs the one that Hans provides her with. She needs Hans as a mirror to be pleased with herself—to realize how great is the fascination she has over him (after all, he had waited for her as well as for her return for years). She knows that Hans also needs these mirrors, in which he is reflected as a good man and not just an ordinary young one, who is "the problem-child of life." But what is so good about him? He is so good only because he is the mirror through which she is reflected as a fascinating beauty of all times, as a time-honored object of magic and strong passion. Lilith is simply a myth, but Clawdia is a walking myth—for Peeperkorn, Hans, and Wehsal. She is the mirror which is a vampire, as she needs their admiration until the last moment of their passion for her.

Peeperkorn is lacking an X-ray interior portrait. The literary reason for this is that he simply serves as a surface, the surface of a mirror that needs another, female mirror to acknowledge his virility and formidable strength. Is Hans Castrop at a much higher level of awareness than Peeperkorn? I doubt it, for Hans clearly shows that he entirely misreads Clawdia as a person: He considers her as an object instead of a subject who freely chooses her own ways. Thus Hans says to Peeperkorn: "Women, if you will permit me so to express myself, are creatures not of action but of reaction; they do not initiate, they are inactive in the sense that they are passive. . . . Woman, so far as I have been able to observe, regards herself, in a love-affair, as the object. She lets it come; she does not make a free choice, she only chooses on the basis of the man's having chosen . . ." (*L-P*, pp. 758–59). This is an excellent indication of how strongly he is enslaved to images and is completely blind to what human beings really are, especially Clawdia. Peeperkorn's Dionysian answer—"Man is intoxicated by his desire, woman demands and expects to be intoxicated" by his desire of her (*L-P*, p. 759)—is clearly parallel to Castrop's image concerning Clawdia. While Hans Castrop is a dreamer, whose grasp of reality is enslaved to images, shadows, and echoes, Peeperkorn lives in the night of drunkenness, of consciousness that is never lucid or sober. As we shall see, until the very end of this great *Bildungsroman*, Castrop is left captive in his misleading, even fatal, images. Instead of following his resolution in the Snow Scene that love and life will prevail, he prefers to follow those images. Walls of images separate from reality all the characters in *The Magic Mountain*, except for James Tienappel and Joachim, who truly know that the Berghof sanatorium is not a place for healthy, sober, mundane human beings.

Once Peeperkorn realizes that he can no longer use Clawdia to reflect his virility and might, nor to satisfy his desires, he commits suicide. Similarly, once Hans discovers that he has used both of them as mirrors to reflect his fascination on them, which can contribute nothing to his real education (*Bildung*) and development, the way is open for him to leave the sanatorium to sacrifice himself on the "fields of glory" of the so-called "Great War." This must be the result of what he "saw on every side," namely, "the uncanny [*Unheimliches*] and the malign, and he knew what it was he saw: Life without time, life without care or hope, life as depravity, assiduous stagnation; life as dead [*das tote Leben*]" (*L-P*, p. 790).

What does it mean? First, we have to recall that there is a similarity between Hans's image of uncanny life, life as dead, and that of Peeperkorn because of his impotence—they both experience their loss as the end of the world, as a world catastrophe, whereas, in reality, the real catastrophe, WW1 ("the Great War"), is approaching, entirely regardless of Peeperkorn, Hans, and the rest of the patients in the sanatorium. To experience a personal loss, however great, as a world catastrophe is a narcissistic way to mistake one's self-image for reality itself. Without

Clawdia and Peeperkorn, the isolated world of the sanatorium becomes uncanny (*Unheimliches*) or demonic for Hans. On the other hand, this is the moment of his sobriety; his release from some of the former grand images in his life; a moment of waking up from his dreams and fantasies especially concerning Clawdia and Peeperkorn. It is the moment when Castrop becomes aware that no human mirror is left to reflect him as a desirable, lovable, good young man and thus, he has nothing more there. Because he has determined to escape from the mundane life of the flatland, he will replace the mirrors and images of the magic mountain with the image of heroism (most probably, as a "heroic" death) on the battlefield.

Clawdia probably realizes that Hans no longer needs her especially after the suicide of Peeperkorn, the grandest mirror in which he, too, was reflected. Hippe as a primordial mirror and Peeperkorn as the grandest mirror were more important for Hans than her as a mirror. She was simply the link between these two mirrors, as she served as a link between one of the greatest image producers in *The Magic Mountain*—Behrens—and Hans. The power of the images of illness and disease is in Behrens's hands. At the moment he hypothesizes that it is not consumption this time but streptococci that cause Hans's heightened temperature, Hans begins, following Joachim in a way, to release himself from these images (while the images of disease or illness are replaced by those of "dead life"). Even though Castrop becomes aware of the narcissistic nature of his other images (in a Freudian manner, first appearing as homoerotic, after all such is the myth of Narcissus), he cannot liberate himself from such images, as they are more important for him than are his desires, especially his desire of life. Hence, for Hans, heroism on the battlefield is the replacement for Peeperkorn as a mirror; and both are associated with committing suicide or escaping from real, everyday life. Moreover, fatal heroism replaces the X-rays portraits, which, for Hans, reveal the death hidden in any human being, as does the image of the skeleton. Such heroism is the falsest of any mirror in which young men have ever attempted to reflect themselves as glorious. For them, like for Jose in *Carmen* (a musical episode that Hans particularly loves), what is the passion of life and of love in comparison to the grandeur and glory of such heroism? These are the images in the service of death, not of life and love. And the narrator's opinion is quite clear—this heroism has to do with madness, stupidity, and dumps. I wonder to what extent narcissism is involved in the passion of so many young people to die as heroes on the battlefield. Our hero, life's problem child, who cannot bear his mundane life on the flatland, prefers to end his escape from it on the battlefields in which the "heroic" images of death prevail.

To the extent that the distinction between images and reality can be solidly maintained, music, like any great art, can serve as a means of salvation. This is the way that Hans sees it on listening to a record of *Aida* (*L-P*, p. 812) but, alas, he will forget this lesson, and, while stepping over corpses in the battlefield, ignoring the horror and ugliness around him, he will sing a *Lied* from Schubert's *Winterreise*, obsessively aspiring for the eternal sleep of death and mistaking beautiful images for reality.

To the reader, *The Magic Mountain* suggests redemption by means of images—magic words written by the artist's pencil. Quite early in his career as a great writer and until its end, Mann was obsessed by the question of art, of its moral standing, its veridicality, or its reality. I believe that he remained Platonic in a way, for art—especially literary art—was for him a matter of images, not of real life.[108] Like Plato, he was a great dramatist. Both were under the Homeric spell and both knew how dangerous it could be. Both had difficulties concerning the standing of images in their creativity, thought, and writings.

The *Magic Mountain* does not liberate its characters (except, perhaps, for James Tienappel) from the cave of shadows, images, and echoes, but it has succeeded in turning this cave into one of the most beautiful stages ever created by a great artist. As Settembrini realizes, the physical heights of the Berghof sanatorium are merely an illusion or appearance. He likens Hans's descent "into these depths peopled by the vacant and idle dead" to Odysseus's descent into Hades, the kingdom of the shades (*L-P*, p. 75). Indeed, this grand theatre of shadows and images is not found in the heights of the magic mountain; it is clearly underground, touching deeply the shadows and echoes in the depths of the reader's mind.

Behind the veil of brain-imaging no mind hides. There are simply images, images of our brain but nothing of our mind as it irreducibly is. The important intellectual lesson of *The Magic Mountain* is, in my phrase, "when fascinated by images and enjoying them, beware of them and do not mistake them for reality, especially for the reality of persons." Nevertheless, those who believe that brain imaging can reveal some secrets of the human mind, do not distinguish between physical images

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[108] For a different analogy between Plato's writings and *The Magic Mountain* see Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflection from Plato to Foucault* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1998), pp. 19 45. For the special connection between Plato's literary art of writing and his philosophy see my *The Platonic Odyssey: A Philosophical-Literary Inquiry into the **Phaedo*** (Amsterdam: Rodopi Value Inquiry Book Series, vol. 17, 1994).

and the reality of human mind or persons. Just as Hans Castrop escaped from his real everyday life to the deceptive shelter of fascinating images, those believers escape from genuine psychical reality to the images that brain imaging projects on the screen of their Platonic cave. The profound truth that was clear to Thomas Mann appears to be far beyond the reach of those neuroscientists, cognitive scientists, psychologists, and philosophers who wrongly believe that our mind is accessible from without by means of brain imaging.

CHAPTER TEN

ACTUALITIES, PURE POSSIBILITIES, AND *THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN*

Actuality (reality—*Wirklichkeit*) and possibility (*Möglichkeit*)[109] both play a major role in Hans Castrop's life. For instance, "He may regard the general, impersonal foundations of his existence as definitely settled and taken for granted, and be as far from assuming a critical attitude toward them as our good Hans Castorp **really** [*wirklich*] was; yet it is quite **conceivable** [*möglich*] that he may none the less be vaguely conscious of the deficiencies of his epoch and find them prejudicial to his own moral well-being" (*L-P*, p. 41). As, at that time, Hans Castrop was simply an "unwritten page" (*L-P*, p. 46: *unbeschriebene Blatt*), and various, even opposing, possibilities had been open for his free choice. Hence, the narrator, detailing each one of them, comments: "It was quite possible—but so was the opposite [*Das war wohl möglich—und ebensowohl auch das Gegenteil*]" (ibid.). As a matter of fact, in the whole of *The Magic Mountain*, Hans faces opposing possibilities: To follow his occupation as a naval engineer *or* to follow his inner drive to be a painter; to remain at the Berghof sanatorium *or* to return to the mundane life of the flatland; to succumb to his irrational, dream-like infatuation with Clawdia Chauchat *or* to hold on to reality; to follow his images of life and death *or* to return to actual reality; to be loyal to his resolution and choice at the Snow Scene (namely, to be devoted to life and love) *or* to follow the images of heroic death on the battlefield.

Actual reality and individual pure possibilities become permanent poles in the whole plot of Hans Castrop's *Bildung*, from the very beginning

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[109] Which Lowe-Porter sometimes translates, as she does with *Denkbarkeit*, as "conceivability." This is not only a matter of imprecision, it is a matter of a metaphysical blunder, for conceivability is clearly mind-dependent, whereas the panenmentalist position, which I take, considers individual pure possibilities as mind-independent (provided that these possibilities are not psychical; psychical possibilities are, of course, mind-dependent). In my view, hence, individual pure possibilities are discoverable, not inventible.

to its final moments. The irony is that the actual reality in which he lives is ample with contingencies and accidents. The very decision to visit his cousin, Joachim Ziemmsen, in Davos for three weeks, which would turn out to be seven years, was caused quite by coincidence. The possibility of staying at the Berghof or leaving it for the mundane life of the flatland is always there for the choice of Hans and Joachim as well. These possibilities, though remaining pure, are much discussed in Hans's conversations with his cousin as well as with Settembrini. Again and again, the young Castrop weighs the mere, non-actual possibility of returning home (for instance, on L-P, p. 314). From time to time, Hans is obsessed with his thoughts about the possibility and impossibility of his separation from Clawdia, Joachim, and Settembrini. The same holds true regarding the possibility or impossibility of a visit from the flatland. Whether, when, and how the purely impossible will turn out to be actually possible occupies Hans's mind quite frequently.

Most interestingly, Thomas Mann relates the role that actualities (with their contingent, coincidental nature) and individual pure possibilities in his own life to that which they play in the *Bildung* (education or development) of Hans Castrop. Indeed, in "The Making of *The Magic Mountain*," Thomas Mann reveals to the reader something of great interest, both literary and philosophical, to the extent that individual pure possibilities and actualities are concerned. Mann's wife was hospitalized in a sanatorium at Davos. About his visiting her for a period of three weeks, he writes:

> The impressions grew stronger and stronger during the three weeks I spent at Davos visiting my wife while she was a patient. They are the same three weeks Hans Castorp originally meant to spend at Davos though for him they turned into the seven fairytale years of his enchanted stay. I may even say that they threatened to do the same for me. At least *one* of his experiences is a pretty exact transference [*Übertragung*] to my hero of things that happened to me; I mean the examination of the carefree visitor from the "flatland," and the resulting discovery that he himself is to become a patient too! . . . The head doctor, who of course looked rather like Director Behrens, thumped me about and straightway discovered a so-called moist spot in my lung. If I had been Hans Castorp, the discovery might have changed the whole course of my life. The physician assured me that I should be acting wisely to remain there for six months and take the cure. If I had followed his advice, who knows, I might still be there! I

> wrote *The Magic Mountain* instead. In *it*, I made use of the impressions gathered during my three weeks' stay.[110]

The break from the mundane life on the flatland, which the writer took, was at the same time and at the same place (under different names) that Hans Castrop planned to take. The difference can be found between two kinds of possibilities—the actual ones and the literary, fictional ones. The impressions, which the writer actually had of that place, turned to be the fictional possibilities for the making of *The Magic Mountain*. The actual three weeks turned to be "the seven fairytale years of his enchanted stay."

At this point, I would like to digress for a short while in order to turn to a strictly panenmentalist point. Any actuality (actual possibility; actual existent) is the restricted, spatiotemporally and causally conditioned part of an individual pure possibility. What Thomas Mann achieved in writing *The Magic Mountain* was, in fact, the *discovery* of the individual pure possibility that functioned as the identity of his actual staying of three weeks in that sanatorium. In other words, the seven fairytale years of Hans's enchanted stay in the sanatorium constitute the individual pure possibility of Mann's actual staying in the sanatorium. This pure possibility holds the meaning, significance, and identity of that actual stay. In this way, literature reveals to us the meaning and significance of the decisive facts in our life. If, in a sense, a novel may be considered as a *roman à clef*, it is not because the novel, which is worthy of its name, imitates an actual piece of life, but because an actual piece of life is but a restricted and conditioned part of an individual pure possibility as a whole, which, in turn, is entirely independent of any actuality and which by no means should be considered as a *roman à clef*. Whenever a novel, as a genuine piece of art, is concerned, *literature can serve as a key to actual reality, not the other way round.*

The actual threat of a much longer stay was there for the author himself, as the chief doctor examined him—exactly like Hans Castrop, a carefree visitor, who was examined by Director (*Hofrat*) Behrens—diagnosing Thomas Mann, the author, as afflicted by the very same symptoms of the disease that Hans, his protagonist, had suffered from his childhood. The threat in question is the very same—"the resulting discovery that he himself is to become a patient too"—except for the difference in that the author renders the actual threat into a fictional one. Mann writes that, in fact, he *transferred* to Hans incidents that had actually

[110] First appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly* (January 1953). Inserted in Lowe-Porter's translation of *The Magic Mountain* (New York: Random House/Vintage Books, 1969), p. 487. Hereafter abbreviated *L-PII*.

happened to him. As psychoanalysis is one of the major themes of *The Magic Mountain*, "transference" has a special meaning in this context. The ontology, which lies in its basis, is about the reality of individual pure possibilities, to be distinguished from actual reality. Mental states, such as transference, that are real for the mind are not only actualities; individual pure possibilities can be as real as actualities are for our mind and under some circumstances even more. Note that the pure possibilities under consideration, like actualities, are not general or abstract; they are individual or particular. The narrator presents the reader with concrete individual protagonists in particular situations. In the above quotation, Mann treats pure possibilities as counterfactual ones, but this does not diminish the ontological insight by means of which he considers literary or fictional reality. Individual pure possibilities, which we rightly take quite seriously, are the elements of which great novels are made. Mentioning "a sort of substitute existence" which "can, in a relatively short time, wholly wean a young person from actual and active life" (*L-PII*, p. 487), Mann explicitly refers to the crucial significance, which such possibilities may have.

Humor in general and jests in particular play a major role in *The Magic Mountain*, and these, too, have to do with artistic individual pure possibilities: "Goethe once called his *Faust* 'this very serious jest.' . . . It is a good definition of art, of all art, of *The Magic Mountain* as well. I could not have jested and played without first living through my problem in deadly, human reality. Only then could I rise, as an artist, above it" (*L-PII*, pp. 488–89). On the wings of a liberating humor can the artist reach the realm of artistic individual pure possibilities. In the former chapter, also about *The Magic Mountain*, I have referred to the liberating nature of art. We can liberate ourselves from the burden of actual reality by taking the artistic jest, concerning pure possibilities, quite seriously. The "dreamlike ramifications of this figment of thought" (*L-PII*, p. 489) should be taken seriously to liberate ourselves by means of art. It is our enslavement to actual reality from which we would aspire to liberate ourselves. Yet this liberation strongly depends on our capability to distinguish sharply, unlike those young people in the Swiss sanatoria, between pure possibilities and actual ones. To take the artistic jest seriously is precisely about this distinction. As long as we remember that this is nothing but a jest, we can take it seriously and liberate ourselves from the bondage of actual reality. This is perfectly compatible with what I said above, in the former chapter, about the distinction between images, especially brain images, and actual reality in *The Magic Mountain*.

The following may sound even more panenmentalist:

> . . . the book deals with yet another fundamental theme, that of "heightening," enhancement *(Steigerung)*. This *Steigerung* is always referred to as alchemistic. . . . [Hans's] story is the story of a heightening process, but also as a narrative it is the heightening process itself. It employs the methods of the realistic novel, but actually it is not one. It passes beyond realism by means of symbolism, and makes realism a vehicle for intellectual and ideal elements . . . All the characters . . . appear to the reader as something more than themselves in effect they are nothing but exponents, representatives, emissaries from worlds, principalities, domains of the spirit. I hope this does not mean that they are mere shadow figures and walking parables. And I have been reassured on this score; for many readers have told me that they have found Joachim, Clawdia Chauchat, Peeperkorn, Settembrini, very real people indeed. (*L-PII*, p. 490)

As much as individual pure possibilities pass beyond actual reality, this novel passes beyond realism (better, actualism). As I have shown since *Saving Possibilities* on, mental reality (namely, intersubjective reality), to be distinguished from psychical one, consists of real (though non-actual) individual pure possibilities and their general relationality existing independently of our minds but, yet, make worlds, principalities, or domains of the purely possible-mental. In this vein, Mann's protagonists are not "mere shadow figures and walking parables," they are, instead, real individual pure possibilities, very real persons indeed, though not actual ones. As for *Steigerung*, in what follows Mann will use similar substantive words—*Sublimierung* and *Vergeistigung*, both characterize a *Bildungsroman* (educational novel) such as Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* or Mann's *The Magic Mountain*, as both are sublimation and spiritualization of the novel of adventure (*L-PII*, p. 492). Now, "heightening," "enhancement," "sublimation," "spiritualization," and "transference" all have something to do with individual pure possibilities rather than with given actual reality. Passing "beyond realism by means of symbolism" (*L-PII*, p. 490) also has to do with individual pure possibilities, for any symbol is a particular combination of the actual-physical and the purely possible indicated by it.

Whether *Steigerung* refers to hermetic, metaphysical, or psychoanalytical metamorphosis or transmutation, it certainly has much to do with individual pure possibilities and with an ascent beyond the physical-actual. In a similar vein, Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, too, has to do, quite ironically, with individual pure possibilities, with the individual pure possibility of such a metamorphosis of a human being becoming a verminous creature. In this case, it is not an ascent but rather a descent, yet the verminous creature is a metamorphosis of a psychical pure possibility. The physical heightening and accentuation of some parts of the patients' bodies (especially of Clawdia's body—*L-P*, p. 264), as a result of tuberculosis, is in fact a physical metamorphosis, somewhat similar to that of Gregor Samsa, especially because it is a physical descent instead of an ascent. Yet, the libidinal arousal caused by this disease is a kind of a psychical ascent, which has an ironical, even grotesque, meaning especially for both Clawdia and Hans. In the light of this, the following makes sense: "The second creation, the birth of the organic out of the inorganic, was only another fatal stage in the progress of the corporeal toward consciousness, just as disease in the organism was an intoxication, a heightening and unlicensed accentuation of its physical state" (*L-P*, p. 362). This is one of the conclusions that Hans reaches in the section called "Research." Indeed, as Mann sees it, Hans is like "the seeker, the quester, who ranges heaven and hell, makes terms with them, and strikes a pact with the unknown [*Geheimnis*], with sickness and evil, with death and the other world, with the supernatural [*Okkulten*], the world that in *The Magic Mountain* is called 'questionable'" (*L-PII*, pp. 491–92). As such a researcher, Hans investigates the mind and body of the mysterious or, more precise, unknown Clawdia. Yet he does not investigate the great mystery of time. How surprising then, it is Joachim who, in his unexpected remarks on time and music, indicates "a certain alchemistical heightening [*alchimistischen Steigerung*] of his nature" (*L-P*, p. 685). And it is Naphta who notes that "the higher degrees of Freemasonry were initiates of the '*physica et mystica*,' the representatives of a magic natural science, they were in the main great alchemists" (*L-P*, p. 643), and, in his view, alchemy was not only transmuting into gold, "it was purification, refinement, metamorphosis, transubstantiation, into a higher state" (ibid.). All this culminates in Hans's confession to Clawdia:

> . . . chance brought me up here to these heights of the spirit you, of course, do not know that there is such a thing as alchemistic-hermetic pedagogy, transubstantiation, from lower to higher, ascending [*Steigerung*] degrees . . . what I had in me, as I quite clearly know, was that from long ago, even as a lad, I was familiar with illness and death . . . unreasoning [*unvernünftige*] love is *spirituel* [*genial*]; for death is the *spirituel* principle. . . , the *lapis philosophorum*, and the pedagogic principle too, for love of it leads to love of life and love of humanity. Thus, as I have lain in my loge, it has been revealed to me, and I am enchanted to be able to tell you all about it. There are two paths to life: One is the regular one, direct, honest. The other is bad, it leads through death that is the *spirituel* way. (L-P, p. 752)

The way that excludes matter or the physical is analogous to what I call the mental, the purely possible, and the mental (*genial* or *spirituel*) can be a way of death, according to this quotation. The physical-actual is subject to spatiotemporal and causal conditions or restriction, whereas death is never subject to them. It is the knowledge of the purely possible, which leads Hans to know what life and love really are. The knowledge of illness and death is the tool by means of which he tries to know life and love. The problem is that because of the fascination for the heroic images on him, he entirely forsakes his resolution in the Snow Scene to follow life and love; instead, he chooses a heroic death on the battlefield. He, thus, renders death as an epistemic tool into a goal. Furthermore, as I also explained in the former chapter, Hans can never break through from his images of Clawdia and of the reality in which he lives and, thus, his spiritual journey—his research, seeking, and requests—never comes to end. Instead of clearly distinguishing between images and reality, he exchanges his images about her, Peeperkorn and Hippe, for fatal, "heroic" ones. Hence, he never reaches the individual pure possibilities that actual reality or actual persons actualize and that the real knowledge of them as well as of his self-knowledge stay beyond his reach. In fact, his *Bildung* ends in a fatal failure. The only consolation left for the reader is Mann's literary art and the individual pure possibilities of which he composes this major masterpiece. This refinement is the enhancement or sublimation, which the reader, but not Hans, may have. This is the achievement of Mann's alchemy, as it is so well expressed in "The Making of *The Magic Mountain*." In contrast, Hans's "alchemy" consists of images—the photomontage he makes of the images of Clawdia, Pribislav Hippe, and their pencils. Such a partition of images blinds his judgment to grasp reality as it really is. In Platonic terms, he simply dreams reality instead of open-eyed seeing it clearly and truly. A dream-like asylum shelters him most of the time at the Berghof and continues to do so while he is on the battlefield. There, while stepping over corpses, ignoring the horror and the ugliness around him, he sings a *Lied* from Schubert's *Winterreise*, obsessively aspiring for the eternal sleep of death and mistaking beautiful images for reality. In this scene, Hans uses music and musical images as a shelter from the horror of reality to which, in fact, he is entirely blind.

Mann mentions the musical nature of the composition of *The Magic Mountain*. At this point, the distinction between the actual and the purely possible appears again: "Writers are very often 'really' something else; they are transplanted painters or sculptors or architects or what not" (*L-PII*, p. 490). In the case of this novel, the writer is "really" a composer. Thomas Mann was not an actual musician or an actual composer but the narrator of this novel is a purely possible composer using words and ideas, musically associated (ibid.), instead of musical notes. As a pure possibility or as a fiction, the narrator opens up further individual pure possibilities of narrating, which are not enslaved to actual reality.

To the extent that actualities can serve as pure possibilities, they become an instrument in the hand of the writer's free imagination. It is the freedom of creativity, but the creativity under discussion concerns the special discovery of individual pure possibilities and their general relationality. This discovery, surprisingly enough, though not in panenmentalist terms, is of a special kind of necessity, such as Tolstoy discovered about his writing of *Anna Karenina*: "It is possible for a work to have its own will and purpose . . . The work must bring it forth and compel the task to completion. Thus, I feel, all great works were written . . ." (*L-PII*, p. 488). In my presentation of panenmentalism, I have devoted much of my time and effort to discuss such kind of necessity (especially in my *Necessity and Truthful Fictions*).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A PANENMENTALIST COMMENT ON THE PURELY POSSIBLE IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S WRITINGS

In "The Window," the opening chapter of Virginia Woolf's notable novel *To the Lighthouse*, there is a phrase which I have found inspiring: "Since he [James Ramsay] belonged, even at the age of six, to that great clan which cannot keep this feeling separate from that, but must let future prospects, with their joys and sorrows, cloud what is actually at hand . . . "[111] Replace "future prospects" with "individual pure possibilities," and you can see how Virginia Woolf's insightful writing might illustrate, in just a few words, the nature of a panenmentalist mentality. In such a mental reality, pure possibilities may outweigh actualities or are just as real as actualities.

I am not the first to recognize an affinity between Virginia Woolf's writing and a kind of philosophical possibilism. Jaakko Hintikka compared her writing to the ideas of a famous member of the Bloomsbury group, Bertrand Russell, who in *Our Knowledge of the External World* states thus: "For the purpose of building his external world out of a sufficiently rich supply of [privately] experiential perspectives the actually occupied perspectives are not enough. He needs also potential [better, possible] perspectives."[112] Yet, Russell's admission of "the reality of merely [purely] possible entities in contrast to actual ones" was only a tacit one, for, typically, he avoided such entities (as we learn from his criticism of Meinong) (ibid.). Citing a long paragraph from *To the Lighthouse*, Hintikka writes: "This technique of Virginia Woolf's to write, not from the

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[111] Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin Book, 1927 [1964]), p. 5. Hereafter abbreviated *To the Lighthouse*.

[112] Jaakko Hintikka, "Virginia Woolf and Our Knowledge of the External World," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 38 (1979), p. 10. Cf. Ann Banfield, *The Phantom Table: Woolf, Fry, Russell and the Epistemology of Modernism* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 73 75.

viewpoint of any of her characters and yet not as an omniscient author-authority, can be thought of as using 'possible observers' not exemplified by any actual person in the story. If so, her technique is a writer's counterpart to Russell's use of possible perspectives."

In *To the Lighthouse*, we also read the following:

> How then . . . did one know one thing or another thing about people, sealed as they were? Only like a bee, drawn by some sweetness or sharpness in the air intangible to touch or taste, one haunted the dome-shaped hive, ranged the wastes or the air over the countries of the world alone, and then haunted the hives with their murmurs and their stirrings; the hives which were people. (*To the Lighthouse*, p. 60)

As a writer of genius,[113] Virginia Woolf captured the insights that pure possibilities are as real for us as actualities are, and that the psychical is only privately accessible. In this sense, I would consider her as a sort of literary ancestor or progenitor of some of the ideas that I would like to explore in the present book.

Many voices are heard in Woolf's texts. It *appears* as though the reader has an epistemic access to the consciousness of Woolf's protagonists. But such is not the case. By means of Woolf's way of writing, the reader can hear the voices as spoken words and sentences, which are *intersubjectively* accessible, but no reader has any epistemic access to the psychical privacy of another person, actual or possible. Any psychical, inner reality is subjective, which is independent not only of actual-physical reality but also of the intersubjective reality, which can be shared by the community of the readers who speak the same language. Outside reality is that of the physical-actual, including one's body. Inner reality is the psychical, subjective one, and it is inaccessible from without. Finally, intersubjective reality—for instance, that of the speakers of a language (which Wittgenstein called "a form of life")—is accessible by all of these speakers, but it is inaccessible to those who do not share the language, directly or indirectly, by means of translation. These features are certainly valid for Woolf's special way of writing, which, requiring a manifold of viewpoints of voices, does not break the rule that private, inner reality is entirely inaccessible from without, which is one of the panenmentalist main principles.

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[113]When *To The Lighthouse* first appeared, in 1927, the critic of *The Spectator* commented that her genius was "at once more difficult and more original than that of any other novelist of today." I am grateful to Marion Lupu for drawing my attention to this insightful comment.

CHAPTER TWELVE

HOW DOES LITERATURE MAKE THE CONTINGENT NECESSARY?

Philosophers have discussed issues such as "the meaning(s) of life," "the value of life," and "forms of life." What about "the necessity of life"? I have in mind not only the indispensability of a person's life but the possibility of such a life as necessary, as a necessary possibility, without which the entire realm of possibilities, especially psychical possibilities (although not only them), would lack some of its significance, meaning, value, and reality. This sort of necessity and indispensability sheds skeptical light on expressions such as "meaningless life," "insignificant life," "valueless life," or "formless life." If "forms of life" means "following rules shaping a person's life," this may point to a sort of necessity in a person's life that is not governed by randonmess, casualness, or contingency. Such a life has a "shape," "form," or "style." Literary works of art, serving as truthful fictions, may help a person discover (instead of inventing or fabricating) the necessity in, as well as of, one's life.

Truthful fictions move us in such a way that through them, as if through indispensable lenses, we experience, conceive, and relate to our lives differently, in a way which not merely arouses some of our emotions but which is palpable, intensive, integrative, comprehensive, or profound.[114] The beauty, form, and style in literary works of art, in fine

[114] Contrary to many writers about modal matters, I do not relate possibilities to conceivability. Take, for instance, Barry, who, accepting the concept of possible worlds, writes: "the thesis that guides this work is that there are putative evil characters from literature that are conceivable and that their conceivability has implications for the thesis that there are actual evil people. Further, I contend that reflections on these putative evil characters helps to understand just what makes someone an evil person that is, how evil people differ from merely morally bad people. . . . My general task . . . is to explain why reflection on fictional and unreal characters says something about the actual world." See: Peter Brian Barry, *The Fiction of Evil* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), p. xiv (cf. op. cit., p.5: "Why are *fictional* texts relevant to our *actual* lives? Why should reflection on

works of truthful fictions, or in works of art in general are real because they strongly relate to the hidden, as yet undiscovered, beauty, form, and style within a person's inner reality. Reading and experiencing such works, we gain indispensable assets, however fictional, such that we cannot imagine our life without them, and thus such works serve as part and parcel of our very life. Without such fictions, our life would be quite different, as far as our consciousness is concerned. Without them, each of us would be left without a real sense of some most valuable meanings, significance, forms and, most of all, of some of the necessity of a person's life. Reading and experiencing fine literary works of art, we gain some sense of the necessity of our life.

As an individual pure possibility, each human life is necessary, equally as each singular being is necessary. Each human life is indispensable, valuable, meaningful, and significant. Yet in most cases, people are not aware or conscious of the necessity of their life. They are not aware that each one of them is necessary, indispensable, irreplaceable, and the like, as each one of them is a singular being universally relating to any other being, especially any other singular being. Being quite sure about our feelings, we feel that what we deem great in truthful fictions is about us in a most personal sense. Reading and experiencing them, we recognize, capture, identify, and understand the significance of what exists within our souls.

In Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, the grandmother of the narrator, Marcel, calms him down during their stay in the Grand Hotel at Balbec simply by assuring him that she cannot mistake his knock on the wall separating their rooms for any other knock in the whole world.[115] Proust devotes much of his talent to this episode, which is no less important than the goodnight kiss from Marcel's mother, which is habitually considered as the focal scene of the entire novel. Proust's philosophy of love relies heavily on the grandmother episode, depicting what genuine love, cognitively and emotionally, should be.

Reading about Marcel's need for love, we may get much closer to our need for love, we may empathize with this need and experience it in such a

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unreal scenarios provide evidence about how we should *really* live? This is itself a philosophical question"). In contrast, in a panenmentalist conversion of such an idea, I would say: literary characters, evil or otherwise, are literary individual pure possibilities that can be actualized in actual reality, and, as a result, such pure possibilities say something of importance (concerning identities, meanings, values, and significance) about the actual world and help to understand actual people.

115 Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, vol. 1, pp. 717 20; cf. vol. 2, p. 790.

way that it brings tears of profoundness and understanding to our eyes. These tears are possibly the clearest lenses expressing our experience, recognition, knowledge, and understanding of our need for love. These lenses magnify our inner realities for us and make their conceivability much clearer and more precise. Reading "The Dead" by James Joyce, we may in a different way, more fully experience, conceive, and understand the significance of the dead who are dear to us. We may differently, deeply experience, conceive, consider, and understand what intimacy really is.

The special sense of reality, psychical and intersubjective, with which such lenses endow us, detects for us the necessity, meaningfulness, significance, and value of our lives. To understand a person's story of life, to tell it, to share it with others is to convey the necessity of the life that is the subject of such a story, unlike history, which may divulge the contingencies in a particular history or in history in general. But what is a story? Every story consists of individual pure possibilities, for it is not like a photograph of any actuality, and even the actuality of a photograph is not the actuality of the life that it documents or depicts. The story discovers and displays the identity-possibility of a person's life, its form and style. Reading *Remembrance of Things Past*, I have the confidence, as well as the definite and undoubted knowledge and recognition, that this great piece of art is also *about* the inner core of my psychical life, about its singular possibility-necessity. In other words, this piece of art displays some significance, values, meanings, forms, and style concerning my psychical life. The possibilities that Proust's masterpiece displays relate in a very special sense to some singular psychical possibilities without which I would have been quite a different person, which is impossible, since I could have not been another singular being. Thus, they relate to the necessity that has to do with the singularity of my psychical life.

Self-knowledge cannot do without truthful fictions. As reflectors, mirrors, "telescopes," "microscopes," detectors, or sensors, truthful fictions are indispensable for self-knowledge. Without them, we would not have discovered many of our psychical possibilities and their relationality, namely, significance. As "telescopes," such fictions receive what appears to be remote from us, alienated, or foreign as much closer or familiar; as "microscopes," they magnify and emphasize what appears to be insignificant, negligible, tiny, or trifling but which is truly psychically significant or meaningful for us. Literary pieces of art consist of specific, concrete possibilities, not of generally theoretical ones. Literary truthful fictions can contribute even more than psychology or psychoanalysis to our self-knowledge. Owing to their specific, concrete nature, the literary possibilities are closer, more meaningful, and more significant for each singular psychical reality. The more concrete, specific, or particular a pure possibility, the stronger is its relationality to singular possibilities. Such relationality is indispensable to self-knowledge.

To what extent are such fictions truthful? The more such fictions affect the mind, the more they move or "touch" it deeply, the more they are meaningful for it. Personal or interpersonal experience attest to the truthfulness or reality of fictions. We psychically or intersubjectively react to fictions, as we react to individual pure possibilities, which are objects of our thinking. We cannot be indifferent to some of them. The more different we are, the more deeply we are moved, the more reality or truthfulness we should ascribe to the moving fictions. We can even "measure" or estimate our sensitivity to fictions. The more sensitive we are to them, the more truthful and real they are for or about us. They are trustworthy sensors of our psychical reality, which has much to do with their accuracy.

Yet how can we really distinguish fictions relating to mere images that, if not entirely false, are still superficial or shallow, from truthful fictions relating to the inner core of a person's life? Popular fictions, films, and the like may move the readers, viewers, or listeners quite impressively and effectively and may arouse strong emotions in them. They may strongly react to these stimulating fictions. But such an effect does not make such fictions indispensable for a person's self-knowledge and does not render them detectors or sensors of the necessity in or of a person's life.

Thus, we need a reliable criterion to tell fictions relating to superficial or false images from truthful fictions relating to the necessity in or of a psychical reality. The more concrete, specific, particular, accurate, and closer to singularity the truthful fiction is, the more necessity it may disclose of a person's psychical life. Fictions concerning mere images, let alone false images, bear a general, common, unspecific, or inaccurate nature, far from any singularity. The more similar fictions are, the less they touch a person's inner soul, the less they touch, or are relevant to, singularity.

For instance, pornography may arouse a person's sexual desire, but it can never appeal to his or her erotic sense of life that must bear the signature of concreteness, exactness, and singularity. Pornography has to deal with sexual contingencies, not with erotic necessity; it deals with substitutes or surrogates instead of truthful, real, singular life. With pornography, nothing is left but the images. The images of the actual-physical, not of the psychical-possible that bear the mark of singularity, lie at the heart of pornography. For this reason, each pornographic work is quite similar to the others of its kind and, in this sense, it is dispensable, while each piece of erotic art is different, even quite different, from the others, and each bears its indispensable, special, unique, or accurate cachet.

The more unique and accurate is a truthful fiction, the more it possibly relates to the inner core of a person's psychical life and can reveal its significance and necessity, which are deeply far beyond and independent of any image. Commonness, imagery, superficiality, and contingency go hand-in-hand. Since one of the views of this book is that beauty and necessity are closely related, as, for instance, in mathematics, pornography should not be considered beautiful, whereas truthful fictions, accurately relating to the necessity of individual pure possibilities and revealing it, have a strong affinity with beauty. Beauty moves us because it relates to the deep necessity and accuracy of the singularity of each of us. Pornography moves or stimulates its consumers, because it touches their images, contingent expressions of something valuable that is far removed from these images and contingencies. When similarity disappears, psychical reality, its significance, accuracy, and necessity, grasped by means of valuable, truthful fictions, enter the scene.

What the mind minds is meaningful or significant for it. What the mind minds is under a psychical determinism. Psychical determinism subsumes or subjects each psychical possibility to necessity and exempts it from contingency and arbitrariness. Since we genuinely mind truthful fictions, they reveal the necessity about our psychical realities. The discovery or revelation under consideration is indispensable for our self-knowledge. Truthful fictions thus have much to do with the necessity about and of our psychical lives, a necessity without which these lives would turn out to be meaningless or insignificant. Singularity, psychical necessity, and truthful fiction thus go hand in hand.

Let us turn now to my question about literature, namely, how does literature make what is contingent in life necessary? I put the following answer to this question under the title "Necessity in literature—between friends and foes."

Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* serves me well as an example of how literature reveals the necessity behind the "contingencies" of life. Alexander Nehamas has aroused much attention, which his book really deserves.[116] Richard Rorty[117] and David Conter[118] both challenge the way

[116] *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).
[117] *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 98 107.

in which Nehamas compares Nietzsche's writing to Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. Of special interest is Rorty's view on the relationship between contingencies and the "realm of possibilities." Although I do not accept the analogy that Nehamas draws between Nietzsche and Proust, I find much truth, although for quite different reasons, in his view on the necessity that literary masterpieces maintain. On this matter, I side with Nehamas, not with Rorty and Conter who point out many examples of contingencies that allegedly have a place in literature in general and in Proust's masterpiece in particular.

From the panenmentalist viewpoint, this debate is of great interest. What should intrigue many genuine enthusiasts of literature is the creative freedom that it depicts. If anything about a literary masterpiece is necessary and nothing about it is contingent, what will remain then of the cherished literary freedom and imagination? These enthusiasts tacitly and dogmatically assume that necessity and literary freedom or imagination are incompatible "by terms" or "by nature." As both a panenmentalist and a great admirer of literary works of art, I find no contradiction or incoherence at all in assuming them the necessity characterizing the relationality of pure possibilities. As I have shown, psychical pure possibilities, determinism of pure possibilities, and freedom of choice (even the "notorious" free will) are well compatible under panenmentalism.[119] The same holds for fine literature: Necessity, pure literary possibilities, and the freedom of the literary creativity and imagination are excellently compatible under panenmentalist terms. Creativity is a discovery of individual pure possibilities, which necessarily relate one to the other. Yet it is a personal discovery, which only the author can perform. She or he has to remove all the superfluous, all the contingencies about the materials of the work. In this way, the author expresses her or his genuine personality, an expression of great freedom.

Counterfactuals are pure possibilities. As I see it, Rorty and Conter, like many others, share a tacit modal assumption: Counterfactuals, pure possibilities, and contingencies overlap, whereas necessity and possibility are contraries. From a panenmentalist modal viewpoint, however, such is not the case. Actualities and contingencies overlap, whereas the relationality of individual pure possibilities and necessity are inseparable. No contingency has any place in a literary masterpiece. Relating to contingencies and counterfactuals, however ironically delineated, the narrator(s) of such masterpieces exclude anything unnecessary, meaningless, or insignificant

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[118] David Conter, "Eternal Recurrence, Identity, and Literary Characters," *Dialogue* 31 (1992), pp. 549 566.

[119] Gilead, *Singularity and Other Possibilities*, pp. 131 156.

and remove it from the literary piece of art. The relationality of the narrator(s) is like that of the mind: Everything a person minds necessarily bears meaning and significance for that person. In actual reality, many details are rightly considered as insignificant, contingent, or fortuitous, while their pure possibilities are revealed by a literary masterpiece as meaningful and necessary. In this way, literature makes the contingent necessary or, to be more exact, the individual pure possibility of the contingent-actual is discovered or revealed as necessary by literature or under its terms. The literary artist shows the necessity in a handful of dust.

Note that there is no necessity about any actualization, which depends upon contingent circumstances. According to panenmentalism, there is no determinism of actualities; determinism is valid only for individual pure possibilities and their relationality. Hence, necessity is about individual pure possibilities and their general relationality and by no means about actualities.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

FREUDIAN PURE POSSIBILITIES

It was Thomas Mann who deeply understood that Freud was not only the father of psychoanalysis, contributing to the most precious scientific knowledge concerning the human psyche but, no less, a great literary artist. For Mann writes:

> If I should be asked which one of Freud's courageous and revolutionary contributions has made the strongest impression on me, and which of his literary works first occurs to me when his name is mentioned, I should answer without hesitation: *Totem and Taboo*, . . . Its extraordinary fascination may be explained in various ways: First of all it is without doubt the one of Freud's productions which has the greatest artistic merit; both in conception and literary form, it is a literary masterpiece allied to, and comparable with, the greatest examples of literary essays. . . . the metaphysical relationship between human nature and form which pervades and dominates in the sphere of poetry and *belles lettres*. This is the world of things which defy expression but which are nevertheless well expressed, the world of the poet and the novelist. This is the world to which this work undoubtedly belongs. It is not ordinary scientific hack-work, but a piece of world-literature.[120]

I share Mann's appreciation of Freud's art of writing though on an independent basis, a metaphysical one: Freud's form of writing has much to do with his conception of psychical and mental individual pure possibilities.[121]

Freud distinguishes possibilities ("the realms of possibility") from actual realities.[122] Imagination, "imaginary reality" or "poetic reality,"[123]

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[120] Thomas Mann, "Freud's Position in the History of Modern Culture," *The Psychoanalytic Review* 28 (1941): 92 166, pp. 92 93.

[121] The following discussion, until the end of this chapter, is an extract taken from my *Saving Possibilities*, Chapter 2.

[122] Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny'," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. under the general editorship of James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis

fantasies,[124] and psychical reality as a whole all belong not to the realm of the actual-material but to that of the possible. These examples are sufficient to introduce the means whereby Freud's psychophysical concepts can come closer to my panenmentalist conceptual frame, according to which the physical is the actual, and the psychical is the purely possible. Yet Freud never sufficiently elaborates these concepts in such a manner. He is not always meticulous enough about the categorial difference between the possible-psychical and the actual-physical. Freud never makes use of these concepts in order to conceptually bridge the psychophysical gulf, which no dualist appears so far to have closed. Freud was a dualist, and he resisted any attempt to consider the psychical and the physical identical. They are certainly not. Manifest differences exist between the possible-psychical and the actual-physical, despite the intimate connection, which firmly unites them.

The purely possible plays a crucial role in classical Freudian psychoanalysis. Repression is an attempt to destroy possibilities. The fetishist, according to Freud, represses the fear of castration. Thus, "[t]he creation of the fetish was due to an intention to destroy the evidence for the possibility of castration, so that fear of castration could be avoided."[125] The context of this interesting comment is the splitting of the ego in fetishism and in neuroses, involving the disavowal of some reality, in this case psychical reality, that of possibilities. Another disavowal of reality is derealization, which is a negative counterpart to the illusions of *fausse reconnaissance*, *déjà vu*, and *déjà raconé*.[126] Freud does well in analyzing such derealization thus:

> The fact that the piece of reality that we were trying to repudiate was to begin with only a *possibility* determined the character of our immediate reactions. But when we were standing on the Acropolis the possibility had become an actuality. . . . This incredulity, . . . this doubt of a piece of reality, was doubly displaced in its actual expression: First, it was shifted back into the past, and secondly it was transposed from my relation to the Acropolis on the very existence of the Acropolis.[127]

[1953-1974]) (hereafter abbreviated *SE*), vol. 17, p. 247; *cf.* "A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis," *SE* 22, pp. 243 and 246.

[123] Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny'," p. 219.

[124] "The 'Uncanny'," p. 236

[125] *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis*, *SE* 23, p. 203.

[126] "A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis," *SE* 22, p. 245.

[127] Op. cit., p. 243; *cf.* p. 246.

All these phenomena, including transference neuroses, rest on illusions in which the possible and the actual, internal and external reality, are interchanged, and no distinction is made between them (for instance, "the place of the external frustration is taken by an internal one").[128] These phenomena all involve splitting the ego, in which one part is conscious and the other is repressed and unconscious.

Freud writes, "at some time in the past I had doubted the real existence of the Acropolis—which, however, my memory rejected as being incorrect and, indeed, impossible."[129] The same holds for the analysand: What is repressed in the analysand's unconscious must be considered impossible for his or her conscious, but it is still possible, insofar as it really exists in the unconscious. We should bear in mind that one "party" of the analysand's splitting ego is eager to accept this possibility, although the other "party" does its best to destroy it, to disavow it as impossible. The repressed, the "impossible" for the conscious, is eager to reveal or to express itself to the conscious. Acknowledging the repressed possibility is what the analyst and the unconscious party of the analysand's ego are jointly interested in. Psychoanalysis makes the analysand consider, recognize, and acknowledge the possibility of the repressed content and its meaning for that person. When the analysand's resistance becomes weak enough, the analysand can consider the possibility that the analyst may suggest.

What the analysand lacks is an acquaintance with those possibilities that are really indispensable for that person's psychical growth, not only for the removal of the pathological symptoms. What psychopathology blocks as impossible, analytical psychotherapy may open up as really possible. As a result, to initiate a psychical process of growth and maturity becomes possible, free from the impediments, confinements, and restrictions of a traumatic past. The process as a whole may lead to many more possibilities that become available to the analysand's psychical life.

Repression fends off some demand from reality, whether inner or external. Repression involves ignoring or disavowal. But, while entailing the splitting of the ego, this is really a case of self-deception. The conscious "party" of the ego ignores or disavows what is menacing, frustrating, or distressing, as if it were senseless, meaningless, insignificant, negligible, nonsensical, or not real—in a word, impossible. But the truth, to which the unconscious "party" of the splitting ego sticks, is quite the contrary. What is really possible for our psyche and belongs to

[128] Op. cit., p. 242.
[129] Op. cit., p. 243.

its specific possibilities, must be meaningful or significant for us. Treating the repressed as impossible begins by devaluating it. To devaluate and to deny what is really meaningful for a person is self-deception.

Neurotic persons deceive themselves about the meaning and significance (or value) of the event or the fact for them. Insofar as their inner reality is concerned, they obliterate (repress) and ignore the psychical possibility of this event or fact. Not appearing in inner reality, unless in a disguised form, this fact is as if it had not existed at all. Self-deception occurs in the neurotic or the psychotic. In both cases, ignoring the distinction between inner and external reality takes place through flight, such as the manic flight from internal depression or the flight that ignores external facts or else the flight to a complete replacement. The reality of some possibilities and experiencing them is the crux of the matter in each of these psychopathologies. We experience the actual, which must be possible too, but we also experience the purely possible. Such is the case of imagining, fantasizing, believing, fearing, worrying, expecting, hoping, aspiring, wishing, intending, and wanting.

Psychoanalysis can open up possibilities for the analysand's ego, whereas the physical provides the energy actualizing these possibilities in physical, external reality. Transference or imagination can make the analysand familiar with the possibilities that are relevant to the analysand's psychical life. In both cases, real, "hot" possibilities are involved, which "concern conflicts that are active in [the analysand] . . . at the time."[130] Such possibilities cannot leave analysands indifferent, each being meaningful and significant for them, participating in their real experience, and touching their inner reality. These possibilities must eventually be distinguished from external reality.

This certainly holds for the transference-love neurosis, which is also a matter of possibility, not of actuality. The following passage demonstrates this:

> The patient is *repeating* in the form of falling in love with the analyst mental experiences which he has already been through once before; he has *transferred* on to the analyst mental attitudes that were lying ready in him and were intimately connected with his neurosis. . . . what he is showing us is the kernel of his intimate life history: *He is reproducing it tangibly, as though it were actually happening, instead of remembering it.* In this way the riddle of the transference-love is solved.[131]

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[130] "Analysis Terminable and Interminable," *SE* 23, p. 233.
[131] *The Question of Lay Analysis*, *SE* 20, p. 226.

The psychical experiences (which Freud calls "mental") and attitudes under discussion are not of the analysand's actual present or of the actual analytic situation, but of the past. Analysands are under the illusion that what they experience is actual. To repeat something "as though it were actually happening" is an illusion. Curing the patient of this neurosis-illusion is to make the patient distinguish the transference-love from the actual situation of the analysis. Instead of repeating the repressed material, the analysand becomes able to remember it, to experience it as belonging to the past and not as actually happening. This clarifies the border separating inner from external, actual reality, the border that has been blurred by psychopathology. Therefore, the "only possible way out of the transference situation is to trace it back to the patient's past, as he really experienced it or as he pictured it through the wish-fulfilling activity of his imagination."[132] Substituting remembering for repeating is a necessary condition for a cure. In other words, the conscious knowledge of where inner reality ends and actual reality begins is a necessary condition for successful psychotherapy.

Psychoanalytic cure opens up new possibilities for the analysand, whereas repetition sticks to stereotypes. Freud writes that a "neurotic cannot be cured by being enabled to reproduce uncorrected an unconscious stereotype plate that is ready to hand in him."[133] Curing patients means enabling them to relinquish their repetition of neurotic stereotypes. The range of possibilities, still open for the analysand, is far wider than the restricted and confined range that the traumatized, feeble ego of the neurotic has. Neurosis consists in closing possibilities. But facing actual reality, getting back the remembrance of the lost past experience, and being aware of open possibilities, some of which are quite new for the analysand, this person gains self-knowledge and freedom, which are central aims of psychoanalysis, and which, in my view, require saving possibilities. Another way in which psychoanalysis saves possibilities is the overall possibility to conceive the analysand's life story differently, in the light of different meanings and significance. The same data that the analysand reports to the analyst can be conceived under different, veridical possibilities, which reveal the hidden meanings and significance of the same life story.

Repetition, illusions, and disavowing possibilities also characterize the cases of *fausse reconnaissance*, *déjà vu*, and *déjà raconé*.[134] The same holds for illusions (even delusions and hallucinations) concerning "the

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[132] Op. cit., p. 227.
[133] Ibid.
[134] "A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis," *SE* 22, p. 245.

double" (*der Doppelgänger*).[135] All these phenomena involve repression and the splitting of ego. All are devoid of remembrance and consist of not distinguishing the possible-psychical from the actual-physical, inner from external reality. Instead of consciousness and remembrance, repetition of the repressed take place. The illusion of the double is an unconscious externalization or projection of the repressed, "uncanny" disguised memory or experience. But, as I argued above in chapter one, in reality no two possibilities can be identical, and no two persons (psychical subjects) or psychical possibilities of two persons can be similar. Disavowing possibilities, repressing them, brings about all these psychopathological phenomena. But possibilities are indestructible, and what the patient represses and wishes to destroy is conjured up in the illusion as if it were a piece of external reality. The illusion of external reality replaces the repressed possibility, whereas psychoanalysis attempts to save possibilities from repression and disavowal.

Had they not been saved by fictions, many psychical possibilities would have been "lost" for us; they would have escaped our consciousness or awareness. As if paradoxically, fictions and myths may serve us against the self-deception involved in the dismissal or disavowal of these possibilities. Myths and fictions are less menacing and may be more bearable when suggesting "mere possibilities." That Freud associated the possibility of the Oedipus complex and of Oedipal psychopathologies with Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is not a matter of chance. Fiction is the means by which possibilities, actualized or not, are discoverable, recognizable, and noticeable, despite much resistance. Besides aesthetic pleasure and appeal, we may be interested in myth and fiction because they mean much for us, whenever they touch our inner reality and move us. By first pacifying ourselves that they are "just" interesting fictions that hardly bear on our real life, we may end by recognizing our inner reality reflected in them. In a similar way, Freud and Kohut employ myths as mirrors in which our psychical reality is well reflected or communicated.

On the ground of my understanding of the indispensability of fictions for the contributions which psychoanalysis makes in discovering psychical possibilities-realities, I accept the following account in Freud's letter to Fliess (15 October 1897) as true and illuminating:

> A single idea of general value dawned on me. I have found, in my own case too, [the phenomenon of] being in love with my mother and jealous of my father, and I now consider it a universal event in early childhood, even

[135] "The 'Uncanny'," *SE* 17, pp. 234–235.

> if not so early as in children who have been made hysterical. . . . If this is so, we can understand the gripping power of *Oedipus Rex*, in spite of the objections that reason raises against the presupposition of fate; . . . the Greek legend seizes upon a compulsion which everyone recognizes because he senses its existence within himself. Everyone in the audience was once a budding Oedipus in fantasy and each recoils in horror from the dream fulfillment here transplanted into reality, with the full quantity of repression which separates his infantile state from his present one.
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> Fleetingly the thought passed through my head that the same thing might be at the bottom of *Hamlet* as well. . . . How does Hamlet the hysteric justify his words . . . ? And does he not in the end, in the same marvelous way as my hysterical patients, bring down punishment on himself by suffering the same fate as his father of being poisoned by the same rival?[136]

Hamlet and *Oedipus Rex*, as meaningful fictions, play an indispensable role in the account of this profound discovery. Similarly, in his letter of 12 December 1897 to Fliess, Freud self-ironically considers the product of his self-analysis "psycho-mythology," and he refers to "endopsychical myths" reflecting our psychical, internal world.[137]

Another source for Freudian insights is the myth of Narcissus. Freud assumed that paranoia, as a narcissist disorder, must stem from a repressed, unconscious homosexuality.[138] The myth focuses on the rejection by Narcissus of the nymph Echo and, by contrast, on his fatal attraction to his own reflection, which he mistakes for a beautiful young man. The psychological insight of this myth enabled Freud to link the homosexual unconscious attraction, hidden in the paranoiac psyche, to narcissism. Freud attempted to confirm this link by observing paranoiacs. As we shall see, he considered narcissist pathologies not susceptible to analytic therapy. At this point too, the Narcissus myth served as an inspiration. Psychoanalysis is an empirical, dialogic self-knowledge, but narcissists, being unable to tell inner from external reality, cannot know themselves. According to Teiresias' prophecy, "Narcissus will live to a ripe old age, provided that he never knows himself."[139]

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[136] *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess (1887 1904)*, trans. and ed. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press-Belknap), pp. 272 273.

[137] Op. cit., p. 286.

[138] "Formulations of the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," *SE* 12, p.215; "A Case of Paranoia Running Counter to the Psycho-Analytic Theory of the Disease," *SE* 14, p. 263.

[139] Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*, vols. I (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1960), p. 286.

Challenging Freud's interpretation of Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex*, Kohut refers to the counter-myth of Odysseus and his son Telemachus.[140] In contrast to the Oedipal patricide and the murderous intentions toward Oedipus of his parents, we may prefer the "semicircle of mental health" demonstrated in the Homeric myth of Odysseus and Telemachus. Kohut believed it to be "a fitting symbol of the fact that healthy man experiences, and with the deepest joy, the next generation as an extension of his own self."[141] As Kohut saw it, Freudian psychoanalysis seeks scientificity on the ground of its affinity with biology (owing to the drives originating from the biological bedrock of the psychical apparatus), whereas Kohutian psychoanalysis seeks a scientificity which is altogether psychological, and thus employs pure psychological tools such as introspection and empathy. But this difference in views over the adequate scientificity of psychoanalysis does not bear on the crucial function of fictions or myths in revealing possibilities and meanings concerning inner reality. Thus, Kohut believes that the symbol of the semicircle of Odysseus's plow leads us to the "most central core of our self."[142] We may wonder whether Freud or Kohut could recognize the possibility and meaning of the Oedipus complex or of the psychical health of Odysseus-Telemachus without the help of these myths.

Kohut uses this means of reference to myth in order to turn our attention to a counter-possibility to the possibility adopted by Freud. But some of us are under the spell of the Freudian magic, and the counter-myth attempts to bypass our possible resistance, as is customary in psychoanalysis. Not only under psychoanalysis, but also in observation, whether extrospection or introspection, we resist what contradicts our prejudices, partiality, or preconceptions, and thus we deceive ourselves. Revealing other possibilities by means of myths, stories, or fictions in general may greatly help in perceiving and conceiving the psychical data as honestly and reliably as possible. Nothing can be better and more efficient than fictions to remove or bypass our resistance to realizing some crucial facts about ourselves and our inner life. Fictions are the sensors of what is meaningful and significant in our inner reality.

For this reason, Freud and Kohut devoted considerable efforts to borrowing from literary pieces of art. Freud also made much use of his indisputable artistic talent in writing, especially case-histories. Steven Marcus meticulously analyzes the case-history of "Dora" (1905) as a piece

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140 Heinz Kohut, *The Search for the Self: Selected Writings (1978-1981)*, vol. 4, ed. Paul H. Ornstein (Madison, Conn.: International Universities Press, 1991), pp. 561 564.

141 Op. cit., p. 563.

142 Op. cit., p. 565.

of literature excellently written.[143] Much truth is in his comment that "Freud is as much a novelist as he is an analyst" (op. cit., p. 288), and that "Freud's case-histories are a new form of literature" (op. cit., p. 310). As early as 1895, Freud himself was amazed by the literary nature of his writing of case-histories that "should read like short stories," for "a detailed description of mental processes such as we are accustomed to find in the works of imaginative writers enable me . . . to obtain at least some kind of insight" into hysteria.[144]

Freud's "Femininity"[145] is a fascinating tragedy, whose meaning was not entirely revealed to him. "A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis," an open letter to Romain Rolland, is also a piece of literary art. Many other striking examples exist of Freud's artistic talent and creative imagination,[146] which were well acknowledged by such a literary genius as Thomas Mann. This art of writing served Freud very well. Although Freud's writings are not literary fictions, they may also serve us as if they were. We may use them as fictions that shed light on psychical possibilities, even beyond what Freud was aware of, and in some cases even against his explicit misinterpretations and errors. Such is the case of "Femininity." We may divulge the psychical possibilities pertaining to our inner reality and subjective experience by means of the particular possibilities illuminated in Freud's artistic narration, no less than by means of the possibilities conveyed by classical myths and insightful fictions.

Freud's literary art of writing conveys the concreteness, particularity, and even the uniqueness of any specific case-history that should not be swallowed up in general theories. He succeeds in sustaining the irreducibility and uniqueness of any case-history, and the general theory thereby finds its ground in particular possibilities. When we are moved and involved by this art of writing, which helps render the text meaningful for us, we may become more ready to recognize hidden, meaningful possibilities in our own inner reality.

Narration and creating fictions that may help refer to a unique, subjective, and intimate experience are an indispensable means of

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[143] Steven Marcus, *Representations: Essays on Literature and Society* (New York: Random House, 1975), pp. 247 310.
[144] Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria*, *SE* 2, pp. 160 161.
[145] Lecture 33 in *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, *SE* 22, p. 3.
[146] Patrick Mahony, *Freud as a Writer* (New York: International Universities Press, 1982); Malcolm Bowie, *Freud, Proust, and Lacan: Theory as Fiction* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

communication. For this reason, Freud assumed that acquaintance with literature and mythology must be indispensable for analytic training.[147]

Psychical possibilities, like actualities, are discoverable in the light of mental pure possibilities. The "appropriate anticipatory ideas,"[148] conveyed by the analyst to the analysand, are such psychoanalytic pure possibilities that may be conjectures, fictions, or myths, adequately relating and intersubjectively corresponding to ("tally" with) the analysand's inner reality and its singular psychical possibilities. Such anticipatory ideas are necessary means to discern some psychical possibilities under the introspection of the analysand. "In the same way," writes Freud, "a student who is looking through a microscope for the first time is instructed by his teacher as to what he will see; otherwise he does not see it at all, though it is there and visible."[149] Indeed, without an anticipatory acquaintance with possibilities, facts and phenomena would escape our observation, and we would not recognize them. Psychoanalysis is an empirical science, but this does not commit it to an empiricist view. Freud was aware of this. Anticipatory ideas are all the more indispensable in psychoanalysis, for the natural tendency of analysands is not to conceive some psychical possibilities, otherwise repression could not occur in them. The indispensability of anticipatory possibilities to discern and observe some phenomena, whether external or inner, holds for both analyst and analysand. Yet the analyst should be aware that as much as psychoanalytic pure possibilities may lead analysands to know their inner reality deeply and adequately, these possibilities may mislead and deflect them from the right way. Being so aware, the analyst does not relinquish the empirical devotion above all to clinical observation, which is a necessary condition for the scientificity of psychoanalysis. This devotion must be followed by skeptical prudence. The inner journey on which analyst and analysand keep company is an experience in which they both should examine psychical reality with skeptical and sober eyes, since the danger of self-deception threatening both analyst and analysand always exists.

No general meaning should be ascribed to the analysand's symptoms. Conveying anticipatory ideas to the analysand, any analyst should remember that they are worthless as long as no meticulous confirmation is clearly found in the analysand's vicissitude of symptoms, transferential reactions, associations, resistances, and recollection. In the analyst's mind, the analysand's reality should always be kept distinct and separate from the analyst's. The analyst may convey the anticipatory ideas most sparingly,

[147] *The Question of Lay Analysis*, *SE* 20, p. 246.
[148] *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, *SE* 16, pp. 437 and 452.
[149] Op. cit., *SE* 16, p. 437.

and only when analysands are close to reaching them by themselves, but the last residue of the defense still prevents them. The confirmation of the anticipatory ideas should be strictly specific and singular, appropriate to the analysand exclusively, regarding the unique complexity of his or her psychical reality and subjective experience. As long as the analyst's theoretical possibilities are distinct from the analysand's psychical or actual reality, the confirmation must shed new light on the theoretical possibilities and enrich them in a novel and special way. The analysand's symptoms have singular meanings discoverable through the appropriate possibilities conveyed to him or her by the analyst. Reconstruction requires inner, psychical data. If inner, psychical reality exists, and if there are unconscious data about it, the analysand's accessibility to, or the analyst's communicability with, these internal data proceeds through the analysis of transferential reactions, defenses, free associations, psychical parapraxes, and dreams, all related to the psychoanalytic situation. If these data are contaminated by the analyst's suggestion, it is her or his duty and competence to realize this. Psychoanalysis is a veridical means of being aware of unconscious psychical data, just as it is a reliable way to communicate with them intersubjectively.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

HOW DOES LOVE MAKE THE UGLY BEAUTIFUL?[150]

It is obvious to see how greatly Gideon loves his wife, who is physically quite an ugly old lady. Nothing about her physical appearance or gait seems beautiful, at least to the extent of what meets your eye. Physically, she seems not to be considered beautiful at all. Still, Gideon is quite sure that his beloved wife is the most beautiful woman in the entire world. He cannot fathom why other people do not realize that obvious truth: Mira is a real, fascinating, unique beauty. "But, dear Gideon," says one of his friends, "you cannot deny a very simple fact, Mira is a most beautiful *person*, and it is a great fortune to know her, all the more to know her intimately. Still, physically judging, she is not beautiful at all. It is an undeniable, *objective* fact." Gideon's answer does not fail in its directness: "Well, those who are *blind* to her physical, actual beauty, should *discover* it. Like the Michelangeloean sculptors, who must reveal and disclose the sculpture hidden in the marble, those people should expose and realize her *physical*, *actual* beauty." For Gideon, beauty, physical or mental, is an objective matter, which should be discovered, not invented. For him, beauty is not just in the eye of the beholder, but it lies there waiting to be uncovered and revealed to the world. For Gideon, those whose eyes meet Mira's ugliness are not ready or fit to remove the superfluity that covers her beauty, whether mental or physical. Removing all that is superfluous in the marble is necessary to give birth to the sculpture. Like a midwife, the artistic gaze gives birth, and this gaze is not just the property of customary artists, but also of lovers. To love means to reveal, to create or discover beauty.

I believe that William Butler Yeats put this in the most aptly manner: "All changed, changed utterly: / A terrible beauty is born." The lover's gaze exposes such a beauty, even as regards the husband of the woman

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[150] A first version of this chapter was published as a paper by the same name in *Philosophy and Literature* 27 (2003), pp. 436 443.

that the poet loved for so many years but in vain: "This other man I had dreamed / A drunken, vainglorious lout. / He had done most bitter wrong / To some who are near my heart, / *Yet I number him in the song; / He, too, has been changed in his turn, / Transformed utterly: / A terrible beauty is born*" ("Easter, 1916"). The artistic, poetic gaze redeems the "direct object" of his love, but also redeems what is so ugly, like the "drunken, vainglorious lout," about her. After all, her decision to maintain her miserable marriage instead of accepting the poet's love is ugly or contemptuous in the eyes of the poet-lover. But this is the strength of his poetic, artistic revelation: To give birth even to the hidden beauty of that vainglorious lout who, unfortunately, happened to be her husband.[151] All the more so, to reveal the real beauty of the loved woman, "the loveliest woman born" ("A Prayer for my Daughter"). Another gaze, by those who do not love her or were indifferent to her, could not realize her beauty at all, physically as well as mentally.

Yet others believe that we can love somebody who is physically ugly, even the "ugliest woman born"—as a person she may be considered "the loveliest woman born." I would like to challenge this commonplace. In the eyes of the artist-lover she is physically beautiful, no matter how ugly or lacking in beauty she may be in the eyes of others looking at her indifferently, as though nothing has happened, there is nothing to stay with, and nothing has left its impression. Indeed, Gideon's love reveals that Mira is physically beautiful no less than mentally. Her gaze, gait, even clumsiness, all her physical "flaws," and other attributes are considered beautiful in his eyes as a lover-artist. To be more precise, all of her traits are so considered. The person as a whole, physical as well as mental, is considered as beautiful. We may long for our love, for her flaws, "bad" odors, some crazy, stupid things, her funny behavior, childishness, and many other traits that under different circumstances would be deemed annoying, ugly, repulsive, or just petty or vain. Love reveals the significance, value, worth, and deep meanings of what may be deemed insignificant or negligible through other eyes, failing to see the uniqueness, singularity, and worth of a person. Failing to love such a person, we may be blind to the meaning and significance of many of her physical properties as well. Moreover, in such a case we would be blind to their beauty and would not esteem them as such. Something that is meaningless or insignificant for us cannot be considered beautiful for us, however remarkable it may be physically. At least insofar as persons are

[151] The contingency of her dreadful marriage, according to "Easter 1916," should be contrasted to the poet's love to her, which is, as I will explain, necessary.

concerned, beauty is not only a matter of structures, proportions, or combination of colors. Physical beauty appeals to the beholder's mind, since this beauty bears meanings, which are undoubtedly mental (intersubjective) or psychical (subjective), for the beholder. The beautiful object embodies, materializes, or actualizes what is aesthetically meaningful and significant to the beholder. No beauty exists without a mind to discover, reveal, or realize that beauty. This consideration necessarily leads us to the psychophysical question.

Although the psychical and the physical should be distinguished from each other and should not be eliminated or reduced one to the other, they are still most intimately connected. Do not misunderstand me at this point: The psychophysical distinction is both epistemic and ontic. Yet a distinction does not necessarily lead to, or entail, a separation. Thus, the psychical and the physical are epistemically and ontically distinct but not separate, which makes the psychophysical problem so intricate; indeed some believe that it is even insoluble.[152] To be distinguished from identity, the psychophysical *unity* is, epistemically and ontically alike, an undeniable fact. Hence, Mira as a physical being and as a psychical being as well, is one and the same person. Her personhood is the unity of her mind and body as an integrative whole. One can ask about her, "Is this woman beautiful?" Now, suppose that she is an extremely nice person indeed, good-hearted, moral, benevolent, modest, courageous, and wise, having other mental merits, yet physically she *appears* quite ugly to most people. Her many mental and moral virtues do not strike the eye immediately; many people, however, in the long run, have grown to love her and to seek her friendship and love. As time passes, these people have revealed her beauty, hitherto hidden.

For them, she is not only beautiful, she has become a real beauty, psychically and physically alike. These persons have grown to discover her psychical beauty as actualized or embodied in her physical appearance and behavior as well. They have studied her in depth, and realized that what met the eyes in the beginning should not be the deep truth about her, psychically and physically alike. Real beauty in depth should be discovered, revealed, and even deciphered. With such a beauty, one's eyes should be opened to realize and reveal what is newly perceived as well as true and real about her.

Postulating, with panenmentalism, that the physical and the actual are one and the same, and postulating that the purely possible and the mental or the psychical are one and the same, physical beauty is only an

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[152] See, for instance, Colin McGinn, "Can We Solve the Mind-Body Problem?" *Mind* 98 (1989), pp. 349 366.

actualization of psychical beauty, as much as anything actual is only an actualization of its individual pure possibility, which is also its identity. Under the identity of something, we may conceive not only its actual being and states but also all the possibilities, including the possibilities of change or variation, within the range at which it still keeps its own identity. We cannot identify anything actual, unless we assume, conceive, or grasp its pure possibility-identity first. To realize physical beauty as such, we must first assume or conceive its pure identity-possibility and not exclude it from the outset. Since the actual is possible too, but not all possibilities are actual, I distinguish between pure possibilities, of which the mental or the psychical consists, and actualities or actual possibilities, of which the physical consists (both pure possibilities and actualities are individuals). To abbreviate, mentioning "possibility/ies" in this book as a whole, I have individual pure possibility/ies in mind.

As everyday experience, say, of parents and children, clearly shows, love displays the singularity of the loved person. Singularity is one of the differences between "pornographic" attraction and erotic attraction based on genuine love to singular persons. From now on, whenever I mention "love," I have genuine love in mind. As I noted earlier, "pornographic" attraction rests on characteristics such as repetitions, common traits, and similarities. Any "pornographic" attraction is indifferent to its subjects, as long as they are physically attractive and arousing the consumer's libido. By contrast, love is aimed at singular subjects, namely, persons that are singular or absolutely irreplaceable. Not so are the objects of "pornographic" attraction: Each of them is absolutely replaceable by others, as long as they share some similar traits appealing to the consumer. "Pornographic" attraction separates, actually abstracts, some physical traits from any of its objects, ignoring his or her personality entirely. Under "pornographic" attraction, the object is not identifiable as a subject or person at all. In this matter, "pornographic" attraction is blind or totally ignorant. Furthermore, "pornographic" attraction aims to cause sexual arousal, which can be satisfied in quite a short time. The arousal and its almost immediate satisfaction are the aim of pornography. Not so with love. Love may focus on sexual arousal and its satisfaction, yet the erotic and psychical attraction in such cases is not satiable. There is no end to this love and attraction, and it can survive even the actual death of the loved one. Under love, we always long or yearn for our loved ones. Even in their actual presence, we still miss something of them, for we miss something that is purely possible about them, or what is still possible but not actual about them. Yet "pornographic" attraction identifies what is possible about its objects with their actual being. By contrast, love always realizes the difference between the actual, physical being and the individual pure possibility-identity of each of the loved ones, each of whom is a singular human being. Finally, under "pornographic" love, no difference is made between the actual object and his or her image, even when attraction to the actual object is concerned. Images are enough to cause an arousal in the consumer. Not so is love, which needs much more than mere images. Under it, we distinguish between the loved one and his or her images. It is the persons themselves that we really, genuinely love, not their images. Because of this, we cannot compare any of our loved ones to any other person. Each individual loved one is incomparable.

Each love is aimed at a singular person. Love is our only way to know about the singularity of the loved person.[153] No other way exists to reveal her or his singularity and to know anything about it, including its significance and meanings. To get to really know the beauty of the physical realization, namely the actualization, of a person, we thus have to love her or him as a person first. Otherwise, we cannot come to realize her or his physical beauty, which would leave us entirely indifferent, as if it were not beautiful at all. What "touches" or "moves" our mind is what is meaningful or significant for us. We may be quite indifferent to a person, whose hidden beauty escapes our attention. "Don't you see Mira's beauty?" we would ask someone who does not realize her beauty at all. Such a person could not see her beauty, since his or her mind is indifferent to her singularity as well as to its meanings and significance, especially concerning her hidden beauty. Such an indifferent person is unaware of Mira's singularity at all. Yet without the "eyes" of our mind, we cannot realize another's beauty, let alone the meaning and significance of it. In our mind's eye, we conceive what is purely possible about a person, we conceive her or his possibility-identity and psychical being or personality. With the eyes of the flesh, on the other hand, we realize the actual, physical beauty of that person. In that person, both kinds of beauty, psychical and physical, are united.

Revelation is not a foreign phenomenon insofar as love is concerned. Falling in love with someone, we have the feeling or experience that this person is a singular human being who bears a universal significance, since in the whole world there is no other person like her or him. The same holds for the beauty of this person. Falling in love with her or him, we find revealed a new beauty, a beauty is born against our very eyes. Such a beauty may be either terrible or wonderful. But in any case, it is most significant. By contrast, in the absence of love we may not realize at all

[153] See Gilead, *Singularity and Other Possibilities*, pp. 19 41.

how beautiful that person is. The hidden beauty of that person should be a genuine innovation for us. It could change the entire universe for us.

The Christian religion has grasped that truth but, instead of beauty, it relates it to holiness. The beauty revealed by love has the nature of sublimity about it, but this does not render it holy. It is the totalitarian aspect of religion that attempts to restrain beauty and love and to subsume them under the power or the interpretation of religion. In this way, love and beauty can lose much of their value, even when love aims at God as a unique, singular being. The terrible beauty that was born was not divine. God and religion have nothing to do with it. Real beauty has to do with the unity of the psychical and the physical. It has to do not only with the pure possibility of beauty but also with its physical realization, i.e., actualization.

"Making love" means, first of all, rendering a person beautiful, or, better, discovering or revealing how beautiful this person is. Love has thus the capability to make what seems to be ugly really beautiful. The singular possibility thus becomes actual. Actuality must in turn be physical. The beauty of the person, or the beauty of the person's soul, becomes realized and also recognized as physical. Like a religious grace or blessing, love endows the loved person with the grace of redemption or salvation. It is the salvation from ugliness, desertion, negligibility, insignificance, triviality, ignorance, or indifference. Love is a sort of knowledge, the knowledge about the singularity of a person, the knowledge about her or his real beauty.

Some have argued that real beauty is objective,[154] despite the common view that beauty is only subjective, a matter of personal taste. I tend to agree with the objectivist view concerning beauty but on different grounds. Does my objectivist-realist view necessarily force me to admit that any person can be loved by any person? Not at all. Although beauty is objective and its meaning and significance are universal, still the discovery of beauty is personal or subjective and must lie under the restriction of psychical singularity. Just as Michelangelo's sculptures are really or objectively hidden in the marble, the beauty of the loved person really or objectively exists, waiting for its revelation or discovery by the lover-artist. Yet, in both cases, the discovery can be only personal. Only Michelangelo was capable of revealing or exposing the sculptures that he, and only he, could create. Equally, only the singular lover is capable of revealing or discovering the particular beauty, this and not another beauty of the loved person. Thus, love is a most personal and intimate matter,

[154] For such an argument consider Eddy M. Zemach, *Real Beauty* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

although the beauty of the loved person is an objective, universal matter. Moreover, in this way, love is a kind, a very special kind, of art.

Real beauty exists, and the objectivist-realist view concerning aesthetics holds much water. But there is much more to it. Beauty is not only objective, intersubjective, or real, but also *necessary*. The logical significance as well as the logical necessity of mathematics are well acknowledged. Also acknowledged, especially with Pythagoreans and Platonists, is the intimate link between mathematics and aesthetics. As G. H. Hardy pointedly put it, "Beauty is the first test: There is no permanent place in the world for ugly mathematics."[155] Ugly mathematics, if possible at all, must be transient. If beauty is really the first test of valid mathematics, beauty should relate to the necessity that is essential for mathematics. This necessity is well compatible with the objectively-realistically ontological status of beauty. Equally, the object of love is the beautiful person as a whole, psychically and physically, and there must be a sort of necessity about the singularity of that person, and, as a result, about the uniqueness of her or his physical realization, namely actualization. The lovers know for certain that their loved ones are necessary as well as indispensable (at least for them). For the lovers, it is *im*possible to surmise anything contingent or meaningless about the being or existence of their loved ones. The loved ones must be there, and no one else can replace them. No one else, in the entire world or universe, can be identical to any of them, not even intrinsically similar to her or him. *Under love, singular beings, beauty, and necessity or indispensability are inseparable.*

In this way, genuine love transforms what is ugly, aesthetically insignificant, meaningless, or contingent into something beautiful and necessary. Michelangelo's "excluding or removing the superfluous" leads to the same result. To expose the beautiful or the necessary, the artist must remove or exclude all that is superfluous, which entails transforming the contingent into the necessary. According to the ontological postulate as above, the purely possible, namely the mental, spiritual, or psychical regardless of its actualization, is necessary, whereas the actual-physical as such (as regardless of its individual possibility-identity, which is pure) is contingent.[156] Identity has to do with the purely possible. Insofar as art relates the beautiful to the necessary, the art of love enlightens us about the possibility, identity, and meaning of the loved person. No less, this art reveals the significance, that is, the beauty, of the physical realization of the loved person as a whole. The art of love, therefore, makes the

[155] *A Mathematician's Apology*, p. 85.

[156] About this intricate issue, consult Gilead, *Saving Possibilities*, pp. 5 40, and *Singularity and Other Possibilities*, pp. 131 156.

physically ugly beautiful, by means of revealing its hidden meanings and significance.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE SINGULARITY OF BENJY COMPSON

Panenmentalism devotes special attention to the principle and value of human singularity.[157] According to this principle, each pure possibility-identity of a human subject, which is a special psychical subject—a human mind—is singular. That is, no two individual pure possibilities-identities of two human subjects can be similar, let alone identical. Hence, each human subject, each human mind, is wholly different from any other human mind, let alone any other pure possibility. This is the distinguishing mark between human subjects and any object, including the human body. Each human mind is wholly different from every other human mind, yet they share a *common intersubjective* reality. Such is the case because they relate to each other in a universal way (whether this relationality is conscious or not). To be wholly different entails mutual relationality. For instance, if Alina is entirely, wholly different from any other human being, she relates, consciously or unconsciously, to any other human being. Thus, this relationality is universal. Human psychology deals with psychical patterns, structures, and even laws, but all these are not valid for human beings as they are in themselves, but only to the intersubjective reality that they share as human minds.

Singularity should be distinguished from uniqueness. While each human mind is singular, each human body is unique. Each human body has a unique identity, which its immune system recognizes and identifies. Each has a unique genetic identity. Singularity is of individual pure possibilities that cannot be similar, whereas uniqueness is about the fact, for instance, that there is no another human body that can be identical to mine. My fingerprint, for example, is mine, and mine only; it is unique to me. According to panenmentalism, my body is an actuality of my mind, and since actuality, contrary to its individual pure possibility, is subject to common causal and spatiotemporal conditions, actualities are similar to each other, even if they are unique.

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[157] See, especially, Gilead, *Singularity and Other Possibilities*.

The singularity of each human mind implies that we have no epistemic access to any other human mind. Each one of us has epistemic access only to his or her own mind, which establishes an inner reality, inaccessible from without. Hence, we cannot know what are the thoughts, wishes, desires, feelings, emotions, and any kind of psychical state of other minds as they are in themselves, for we have no access to these minds. When we rely upon such "knowledge," it is not knowledge about other minds as they are in themselves, but only about the intersubjective imprints, impressions, and effects that other minds leave upon our common intersubjective reality, in which language and behavior play crucial roles and which is subject to rules and, sometimes, laws. Such a view is somewhat similar to that of Kant, according to which we cannot know the thing-in-itself but only the relations, the phenomenal relations, between it and our mind. In a similar manner, according to panenmentalism, we do not know what is going on in the mind of another human being, however close and intimate he or she is for us, but can know only the intersubjective or interpersonal (to refer to more intimate relationships) significance of what is going on within this person's mind.

Singularity implies universal significance, for each singular being is wholly different from *any* other being, and this endows singularity with a universal significance. For example, as a singular individual pure possibility, a mind is wholly different not only from any other mind but also from *all* the rest of reality, purely possible or actual.

The singularity of each human being has epistemic, ontological, and moral significance for each of us. What makes us human is the singularity of each one of us, including those who, unfortunately, are called "idiots" or "morons." The case of Benjy Compson is a fine literary achievement that shows how a "moron" or an "idiot" can lead a universally significant life.

As is well known, one of the greatest novels of the twentieth century, *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner, tragically echoes the famous Shakespearian words:

> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more: It is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.[158]

[158] William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act 5, Scene 5.

Indeed, the novel's First Chapter is a story of a particular day, April 7, 1928, told by Benjy, an idiot at the age of thirty-three. This story is not a coherent tale but a series of associated impressions and sensations, like a rhapsody devoid of any causality or substantiality. Benjy's story, as never told by Benjy alone (but by means of the writer's words), is full of sound and fury, *apparently* signifying nothing. Nevertheless, is the story of the next day in Benjy's life, as told by the narrator or experienced by Dilsey, the black servant who devotedly takes care of Benjy, also takes part in an insignificant life? There are many reasons to consider Benjy's life as insignificant—he is a hopeless idiot, castrated for a crime that he did not commit and had no intention of committing, deserted by his sister Caddy, the only person whom he really loves, being a mere victim, in fact mute, and his appearance is simply monstrous except for his blue eyes:

> a big man who appeared to have been shaped of some substance whose particles would not or did not cohere to one another or to the frame which supported it. His skin was dead looking and hairless; dropsical too, he moved with a shambling gait like a trained bear. His hair was pale and fine. It had been brushed smoothly down upon his brow like that of children in daguerreotypes. His eyes were clear, of the pale sweet blue of cornflowers, his thick mouth hung open, drooling a little.[159]

This description is of Benjy at the age of thirty-three, one day after his inner monologue in the First Chapter. Exactly like this monologue, Benjy's appearance makes no sense—it is incoherent, lacking a firm frame to support the details of his body, a broken, fragmented picture of a castrated man whose skin is hairless, a huge retarded, certainly immature, child. Like a dog, he perceives changes in the physical and psychical state of the people around him (especially Caddy, his sister) by using, like a dog, his sense of smell for he has no intellect to conceive or understand such changes. Only the special color of his eyes fits his childish innocence. At least, this is the Benjy that meets the eye.

Nevertheless, is Benjy's life really, deeply insignificant despite all these pathetic features? A distinction that makes no difference is insignificant, whereas what does make a difference is significant and should not be considered as negligible. What difference does a life of an idiot, such as Benjy Compson, really make?

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[159] William Falkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (New York: Vintage/Random House, 1990 [1929]), p. 274. Hereafter *SF*.

So far, I have not found adequate answers to these questions in the secondary literature, as it has not devoted a substantial discussion to this issue, namely the significance or meaning of Benjy's life.[160]

It appears that not only does the title of the novel correspond with the above-mentioned Shakespearian words but so does the opening sentence of the last chapter, Chapter Four, of the novel, depicting the day of April 8, 1928: "The day dawned bleak and chill, a moving wall of gray light out of the northeast which, instead of dissolving into moisture, seemed to disintegrate into minute and venomous particles, like dust" (*SF*, p. 263). The disintegration of dust reminds us of the disintegration of Benjy's inner monologue in the First Chapter and of his appearance, as it is described in the Fourth Chapter (see the passage cited above). And the above-mentioned correspondence is double—with the Shakespearian "the way to dusty death" (death and the ride to the graveyard play a major role in Chapter Four), while the words "disintegrate into minute and venomous particles" remind the reader very strongly of the nature of Benjy's narration in the First Chapter. In this Chapter, in an allusion to

[160] Nevertheless, I would like to mention the following comments concerning the issue of meaning of life in this novel: Alexander J. Marshall III refers to "the meaningless yet meaning-full moan of Benjy." See "The Dream Deferred: William Faulkner's Metaphysics of Absence," in Doreen Fowler and Ann J. Abadie (eds.), *Faulkner and Religion: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1989), p. 187. In contrast, Linda J. Holland-Toli mentions "Quentin's strange and reluctant absorption in trying to make sense of Sutpen's highly ambiguous life story, his unavailing attempts to reweave those webs of significance which impose meaning on life, and his ultimate failure are what drive him to suicide." See "Absence Absolute: The Recurring Pattern of Faulknerian Tragedy," *The Mississippi Quarterly* 51 (1998), pp. 436 ff. The following is also interesting for our discussion here: "Probably the most crucial indication of Faulkner's intention is the fact that the endings of all his novels not only fail to resolve many of the tensions and meanings provided in the novels but also seem carefully designed to prevent such resolution. Above all, they leave unresolved the question of the meaningfulness of the human efforts and suffering we have witnessed, whether *The Sound and the Fury* is part of some larger design or whether it has signified nothing in an essentially meaningless universe." See Walter J. Slatoff, "Unresolved Tensions," in *Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Sound and the Fury*, ed. Michael Cowan (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968) p. 30. Arthur A. Brown reads *The Sound and the Fury* through Walter Benjamin's lens, according to which "the meaning of life, and the warmth we draw from it, is precisely our ability to die." See "Benjy, the Reader, and Death: At the Fence in *The Sound and the Fury*," *Mississippi Quarterly* 48 (1995), pp. 407 ff. My reading of the novel and especially of Benjy's part in it is quite different from the abovementioned readings.

Shakespeare's "walking shadow," dust is mentioned thus: "I . . . tramping my *shadow* into the *dust*" (*SF*, p. 110; italics added; cf.: "The first boy went on. His bare feet made no sound, falling softer than leaves in the thin dust" [*SF*, p. 120], which, again, associates a road with dust). The way, this time, is not to dusty death but is associated with the memory of Benjy's castration: "**There was something terrible in me sometimes at night I could see it grinning at me I could see it through them grinning at me through their faces it's gone now and I'm sick**" (ibid.).[161]

Furthermore, the dusty way, leading to death, is mentioned most vividly in Quentin's monologue thus:

> Some days in late August at home are like this, the air thin and eager like this, with something in it sad and nostalgic and familiar. Man the sum of his climatic experiences Father said. Man the sum of what have you. A problem in impure properties carried tediously to an unvarying nil: Stalemate of ***dust*** and desire. **but now I know I'm dead I tell you** . . . The buggy was drawn by a white horse, his feet cropping in the thin ***dust***; spidery wheels chattering thin and dry, moving uphill beneath a rippling shawl of leaves. (*SF*, pp. 121 122; italics added)

Quentin committed suicide, and the time of his narration of his suicide is the time in which he is dead already (mixing different times is quite common in this novel, and in this Chapter it has a shocking quality as if to say that in the midst of life we are dead). In the dusty way, leading to death, human life is so short, and the passage of time appears senseless. This certainly corresponds with the aforementioned passage from *Macbeth*. Father Compson's original claim was that man is the sum of his misfortunes. All this caries one to "an unvarying nil" in which nothing has been really changed. The end is but a dead end of dust and frustrated desire, and Quentin's impression of "something among dusty shelves of ordered certitudes long divorced from reality" (*SF*, p. 123) reveals again what he has in mind: The dusty way leading to death, "divorced from reality." This reality, or what reminds of it, can be found now only in his memories and imagination. In his imagination, Quentin, as the narrator of this Chapter, addresses Caddy, his beloved sister, to join him and Benjy and to leave home at the age of their lost innocence. Nevertheless, the buggy—as a childhood cradle or, alternatively (without making any

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[161] Faulkner used italics to indicate that the italicized words refer to a different time from that of the narration. In quoting passages from the novel, I use italics to highlight the words that are especially significant for my analysis. To make a difference between the two uses of highlighting, I have converted Faulkner's italics into bold fonts.

difference to this matter), as a cab carrying the dead or the mourners to the graveyard—is drawn by a white horse whose feet are cropping in the thin *dust*. Distancing from their age of innocence, Caddy and Quentin "went on in the thin *dust*, our feet silent as rubber in the thin *dust* where pencils of sun slanted in the trees" (*SF*, p. 133; italics added). The death of past generations is also associated with dust: "Our windows were dark. The entrance was empty. I walked close to the left wall when I entered, but it was empty: Just the stairs curving up into *shadows* echoes of feet in the sad generations like light *dust* upon the *shadows*, my feet waking them like *dust*, lightly to settle again" (*SF*, p. 169; italics added). This is also a further explicit echo of Macbeth's "The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow."

Dusty roads ending in death have much to do with insignificant lives, as it were. For dust signifies something deserted, not useful or not in use, something that belongs to the past, irrelevant at the present, or neglected like the memory of the dead. Something that is insignificant for the present is covered with dust. Such dusty roads do not make a difference for the living.

Nothing but Faulkner's dusty roads, leading the human shadows to death, can correspond better with Shakespeare's line and with Benjy's soliloquy as well. And yet the age of innocence, either as it actually was or simply as a fond memory, the age that they—Benjy, Quantin, and Caddy—shared, was most significant for each of them. For Benjy, the loss of Caddy is even more significant than having her with him.

Moreover, the significance of Benjy's innocence becomes even more prominent in the combat between good and evil. Jason's evil character is quite apparent in the novel and the narrator does not try to hide or mitigate it. Dilsey takes care of him, like of any of the Compsons, but as Mother Compson says, "I know you have never had any tenderness for Jason. You've never tried to conceal it" (*SF*, p. 272), to which Dilsey did not respond. She simply said nothing to deny this plain truth. The person for whom she certainly had a lot of tenderness, is Benjy. At this stage of the narrative, the narrator mentions that Benjy's "eyes were clear of the pale sweet blue of cornflowers" (*SF*, p. 274), and, after some lines, "he watched Dilsey with his sweet vague gaze" (*SF*, p. 275). At the section describing the Easter ceremony, while Benjy sits beside Dilsey, his blue gaze is mentioned several times. To return to the former section, immediately after mentioning the sweetness of Benjy's gaze, Jason is mentioned in a short conversation between Dilsey and Luster. Jason has already woken up, whereas Benjy will remain with no real consciousness until the end of his life. Jason is an evil person, far from any innocence, sweetness, or goodness. He is the opposite of his castrated victim, Benjy, the symbol of innocence and goodness in this novel. There is a wordless combat between these two human poles, and the Easter ceremony, highlighting the Lamb of God, the Christian symbol of innocence and goodness, points indirectly to Benjy, as he sits beside Dilsey throughout the exciting ceremony. In its light, the victory is that of the Lamb over the evil Wolf, for such is the way the Christian faith (which plays a major role in the last Chapter) considers it. Benjy is the Lamb, depicting all the sublime values that Jason and his likes repudiate or abandon. Dilsey, as many readers and critics have realized, is still the humble and faithful bearer of these values. Jason is a dark character whose evil nature forms the focal contrast of the novel as a whole—the contrast between Jason's evil and Benjy's innocence and goodness. Jason wishes to castrate the innocent and the good for several reasons, the first of which is that he cannot accept anything innocent or good as such and he cannot conceive it in his mind. He believes only in what he can buy (hence he pays his only lover for making love with her, otherwise he could not trust her). He blames the innocent idiot for attempting a crime that he never had any intention of committing. Benjy is like a candle that illuminates Jason's evil and darkness. Benjy's innocence and goodness gain a further significance in this on-going ancient combat between good and evil. This combat makes a real difference, and making a difference is what significance is about.

As opposed to Benjy's mutilated, poor, extremely basic narration, the last Chapter is narrated quite differently. In this Chapter, Benjy is spotlighted thus: "In the midst of the voices and the hands Ben sat, rapt in his sweet blue gaze. Dilsey sat bolt upright beside, crying rigidly and quietly in the annulment and the blood of the remembered Lamb" (*SF*, p. 297). This is the focus around which the narration from this point to the last words of the last Chapter is coherently arranged. The ending is the dramatically systematic peak of the novel as a whole, as each detail, the broken and the corrected, is put in its ordered place: "The broken flower drooped over Ben's fist and his eyes were empty and blue and serene again as cornice and facade flowed smoothly once more from left to right, post and tree, window and doorway and signboard each in its ordered place" (*SF*, p. 319).

Thus, similar to the narration of *Macbeth*, Benjy's life story is far from insignificant; on the contrary, it is full of significance, thanks to the symbolic aspect of his life but no less, even more, to his life in itself. Faulkner's art, like that of Shakespeare's, redeems the story and reveals its ample significance; and this significance has much to do with its impact on us. I can hardly recall other novels whose ending has moved me like that of *The Sound and the Fury*. Its impact is not only because of the symbolic significance of the castrated idiot as a Lamb of God (*Agnus Dei*) in the image of Jesus Christ. It is also because of the sound and the fury of the dumb young man, holding in his fist a broken flower, a narcissus, to put on the grave of his father. His biological mother, because of her illness (physical, psychical, or both), could not serve him as a mother. The surrogate mother, the black-skinned Dilsey, who asks Luster to find for Benjy an unbroken flower, has served as an actual mother for him, as well as for his brothers and beloved sister, Caddy. Devoid of human intelligence, of words, of manhood, only with a broken flower in his fist, Benjy signifies indeed something so great and moving that our heart must be moved by him; it is impossible for us, as human readers, to remain indifferent to him and to his fate. We wish with all the strength of our heart and soul that fate could be much better, much more humane, for him, that Caddy, his beloved sister, would not desert him, and that he would not be castrated for a crime he had never committed and had never intended to do. What makes such a great difference for us cannot be insignificant. Only significant things make differences for us.

Moreover, Benjy's idiocy is really his innocence.[162] Innocence is not only the trait he shares with Jesus; it is the trait he shares with babies and children (contrary to the view of Augustine about our lack of innocence from childhood to maturity). Benjy remains entirely innocent from the beginning of the novel until its end. He is the only character in this novel who remains absolutely so. The readers lament his innocence and long for it at the same time, as they lament their own lost innocence and long for it. Benjy is a human treasure of innocence that no reader can have any more, simply because he or she is not an idiot or saint.

As for the great ending, is each thing in its ordered place? The disorder of the First Chapter as told by an idiot appears to be amended in the last Chapter. Why? Is it really amended? If innocence means to accept things as they are, with their evil traits and with their good ones as well, each thing appears in its ordered place. In the end, Benjy accepts everything as it is, including the broken narcissus in his fist, and thus he is calmed down. Accepting the broken narcissus signifies also accepting his loss of Caddy. In the end, in contrast to his usual state of mind, Benjy is quiet and serene.

[162] Cf. "Without ceasing to be a slobbering idiot, Benjy comes to stand for crucified innocence in the context of the Easter service at the Negro church. The man-child becomes an analogon of Christ." See André Bleikasten, *The Ink of Melancholy: Faulkner's Novels from the **Sound and the Fury** to **Light in August*** (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 134.

To accept Benjy's innocence means to accept our own innocence, even if it may be lost in actual life and yet it is still real as remembered.

The words "innocence" and "innocent" rarely appear in the novel. I will refer now to their occurrences in it.

Quentin mentions a "guide mentor and friend to unnumbered crops of innocent and lonely freshmen, and I suppose that with all his petty chicanery and hypocrisy he stank no higher in heaven's nostrils than any other" (*SF*, p. 96). At this passage, innocence is associated with young and lonely freshmen (and, typical of this novel, innocence stands in contrast to its opposite—in this case, the chicanery and hypocrisy of that "guide mentor"—similar to the contrast in the case of Benjy and Jason as I described above). And Quentin thinks that "women do have . . . an affinity for evil, for believing that no woman is to be trusted, but that some men are too innocent to protect themselves" (*SF*, p. 103). Probably he has such freshmen in mind because he is, or at least used to be, one of them.

Luster minds his business that he hides from his grandmother, Dilsey, while she calls him to look after Benjy. To her question, Luster "answered innocently, so innocently that Dilsey looked down at him, for a moment motionless, with something more than mere surprise" (*SF*, p. 266), and, furthermore, he "emerged quickly and innocently from the cellar door" (*SF*, p. 270). While Dilsey is sure that there is no innocence left in him at least whenever he is looking after his mysterious business in the cellar: "'Huh', Dilsey said. She looked at Luster again. He met her gaze blandly, innocent and open. 'I dont know whut you up to, but you aint got no business coin hit. You jes tryin me too dis mawnin cause de others is, aint you? You git on up dar en see to Benjy, you hear?'" (*SF*, p. 271). Benjy's whole existence, in contrast, is nothing but pure innocence, whereas each of the characters surrounding him has no such innocence, including Caddy as a sexually mature woman. The lonely freshmen in Quentin's university have something of his innocence or perhaps his idiocy, which is not a real idiocy but a genuine innocence.

Note that the person who bring things back to normal, to their ordered place, in the way to which Benjy is accustomed, is Jason, an evil, sadistic character. Jason has not even one shred of innocence in him. No other character in the novel is equal to him in this respect. Yet, his cruel determination brings, this time, the wrong track to order, which calms Benjy's stormed mind. In this ending, Jason's cruelty brings things to order, the order that Benjy's innocent habit is used to. To accept even evil and cruelty, because such is the nature of some people and there is no way to get rid of it, is a vital trait of an innocent character to the extent that the author and the reader consider the situation. Benjy's final acceptance of his state is an ultimate consequence of his complete innocence.

Caddy, the most significant character in Benjy's life and his greatest loss as well, is a symbol of an innocent and unqualified love between brother and sister, a love that eventually failed, as soon as Caddy lost her virginity. She also lost then the pure, innocent smell with which Benjy had associated her—that of trees and rain. Castrated, Benjy is entirely innocent of anything sexual. The leitmotiv of innocence has a special sense in the bond that associates Benjy with the only person in his life story who bestowed upon him the love and understanding that he still desperately needs.

In the last, Fourth Chapter, the problem of innocence is artistically embodied in the portrayal of Dilsey's face: "The collapsed face that gave the impression of the bones themselves being outside the flesh, lifted into the driving day with an expression at once fatalistic and of a *child's astonished disappointment*" (*SF*, p. 264; italics added). This unique mixture of the sense of fatalism and of "a child's astonished disappointment" sums up all that she has to say—the tragic fate of the Compsons whose focal symbol is a child's astonished disappointment, which implies a loss of innocence. Yet, certainly, the devoted Dilsey is far from being innocent. She is the person who is most aware of the disintegration, degradation, and degeneration of the Compson family. Moreover, Dilsey is the literal "alma mater" (the nourishing mother[163]) of all the Compson children: The Black Madonna who raised them all, from the first one until the last one, from the beginning until the end ("I seed de first en de last . . . I seed de beginnin, en now I sees de endin" [*SF*, p. 295]). She is the Black Witness of the birth and ruin of them all.

The ending of the novel is far from being innocent. In a sense, it still is from Benjy's viewpoint but from that of the narrator it is certainly not, for

[163] This is precisely her duty in this Chapter. Mother Compson urges her to prepare breakfast for the family as usual but especially for Jason, whom Dilsey dislikes. Of course, I use here "alma mater" in its literal sense the nourishing mother and not as an allusion to one's gratitude to his or her university. Dilsey is the surrogate mother of the family as a whole, because Mother Compson does not function as a real mother, if at all. Quentin's university and the above-mentioned "guide mentor" were supposed to substitute for both his biological mother and Dilsey as well but to no avail. Hence, there was nobody to take care of him and to save him from committing suicide. The economic deterioration of the Compsons has much to do with the sale of a major part of their land to finance Quentin's study at Harvard (supposed to be his alma mater) and Caddy's marriage; both end in disaster.

nothing is in order—the decadence of the American south, the degradation of the Compson family as a whole, the loss of all the old values. All these are the opposite of innocence. The ending is thus ironic; and irony usually indicates a loss of innocence. Nevertheless, the narrator's irony discloses Benjy's innocence and reflects the lamenting of those who lost their innocence and still are longing for it. In this way, the narrator, instead of Caddy, embraces Benjy with love, sympathy, and understanding. The reader is invited to join this embrace, which is most significant not only for Benjy but also for the reader. Our dusty way of life distances us from our innocence and advances us to death.

In this chapter, I discuss the significance of Benjy's life despite his "idiocy," castration, and severe lack of communication. Significance and meaningfulness are different concepts, though related. By "significance," I mean "what makes a difference," and "difference" should be distinguished, of course, from "distinction." Meaning implies understanding and communication, and in the combination of "meaning of life"—value or worth, too. I checked the occurrence of the words "meaning," "significance," and their derivatives in *The Sound and the Fury*. My conclusion is that the use that Faulkner made of the words "meaningful" and "significance" in this novel reveals quite a lot of his idea of significant and meaningful life, including a life of an idiot or of a foreign and ugly visitor. Yet, before dwelling on this, Faulkner's survey of the history of the Compsons (in the Appendix of the 1946 edition of *SF*[164]) ends by mentioning the others: "They were black . . . They endured." Those who were not Compsons though belonging to the family were black servants who, unlike the Compsons, survived or "endured." In contrast, the Compsons, because of their deterioration, did not endure. Thus, in the eyes of the author or the narrator survival comes first in discussing the meaning of life. This is the only time that "endure" is mentioned in the novel.

In Chapter Two, narrated by Quentin, "meaningless" is first mentioned thus: "There was a bird somewhere in the woods, beyond the broken and infrequent slanting of sunlight. . . . The bird whistled again, invisible, a sound *meaningless* and profound, inflexionless, ceasing as though cut off with the blow of a knife, and again, and that sense of water swift and peaceful above secret places, felt, not seen not heard" (*SF*, p. 136; italics added). Quentin pays special attention to this meaningless whistle, and equally to the felt secrecy, the profoundness, the invisibility, swiftness, and peacefulness that are ample in meanings, though the sudden cutting off of the bird's whistle is meaningless, like death. This may remind the

[164] First published in *The Portable Faulkner* (New York: Viking Press, 1946).

reader of Benjy's castration and weeping because of it. The castration was a horrible, meaningless punishment for no justification.

The words "meaningless" and "profound" appear next in Chapter Four, in a passage concerning Luster and Benjy. It reads as follows:

> The clock tick-tocked, solemn and *profound*. It might have been the dry pulse of the decaying house itself, after a while it whirred and cleared its throat and struck six times. Ben looked up at it, then he looked at the bullet-like silhouette of Luster's head in the window and he begun to bob his head again, drooling. He whimpered. 'Hush up, looney,' Luster said . . . But Ben sat in the chair, his big soft hands dangling between his knees, moaning faintly. Suddenly he wept, a slow bellowing sound, *meaningless* and sustained" (*SF*, p. 285; italics added).

This time, the sound of Benjy's weeping is perceived as meaningless, while the softness of his hands and the faintness of his moan are certainly meaningful as is the gloomy description of the atmosphere in the Compsons' house. The decayed Compson family as a whole is like a sick person, whose heart functions quite insufficiently (symbolized by a broken tick-tock, a colloquial word for both a heart and a clock). This tragic bellowing sound of Benjy is simply meaningless for Luster, who considers Benjy as a burden only, a looney whose care Luster is doomed to take, like carrying a heavy cross, because of the harsh commands of his grandmother, Dilsey (her two other sons also took care of Benjy). All these caretakers do not understand Benjy's sounds and for all of them they are simply meaningless.

It was only Caddy who understood Benjy's state of mind and moods. Only she could translate his helpless sounds into words.[165] As the reader realizes, nothing in this novel is narrated from her point of view (which is left quite mysterious), but, in fact, as much as Faulkner puts words in the mouth of the mute idiot, so does she. Though she is not an artist at all, she is the only person in the novel (except for the author of the First Chapter and the narrator of the Fourth) who can communicate, however imperfectly, Benjy's inner world to the reader. This can be achieved only by a great psychological insight using words in a special and accurate way.

Giving words to the narration of the inner monologues of Benjy, Quentin, Jason, and of Dilsey's viewpoint means to endow the narrated

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[165] "No one after Caddy attempts to understand and to translate his [Benjy's] sounds. . . . Caddy makes the necessary connection for Benjy between words and actions." See Judith Lockyer, *Ordered by Words: Language and Narration in the Novels of William Faulkner* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press), p. 54.

occurrences with significance (distinctions making a difference) and with meaningfulness (or communication). Caddy, in her age of innocence, before she discovers the joys of sex, can translate Benjy's sounds and furies into meaningful, communicating words only because he is so significant and meaningful for her. This is precisely what the author and the narrator (of the Fourth Chapter) do. Only those for whom Benjy is significant—whose existence and life make a major different for them—can understand him and translate his sounds into words. The reader takes part in this communication achieved by means of words only, and hence Benjy's existence and life are highly significant for the reader, as they are for Caddy as an innocent virgin and for the author as well. Innocence is shared both by her and Benjy, whereas the narrator of the Fourth Chapter and the author of the book as a whole are far from being innocent, and irony accompanies their words. Nevertheless, Caddy, that narrator, and the author share together a deep affection for Benjy. This great care is associated with a major significance.

The novel as a whole challenges the idea that the sounds and the furies of the Compson family especially of Benjy's tragic life are meaningless. On the contrary—they are rich in meaningfulness, even if Benjy's narration appears to be incomprehensible or incommunicable (which is simply an appearance, while the reader's efforts reveal quite a different picture and message) and even if Jason's cruelty is arbitrary, senseless, and unjustifiable. If a life of an idiot is so significant and thus meaningful, so heart-moving, all the more so must be lives of "ordinary" human beings, or, following the Christian sense of the novel (from Dilsey's viewpoint and that of the narrator in the Fourth Chapter), all miserable people pertain to the kingdom of God, and Benjy, as a mute and castrated idiot, is a Lamb of God. Be that as it may, Benjy's life, his sound and fury, are meaningful and certainly significant. This life makes a great, major difference, at least for the reader who eventually has read the whole novel, from the First Chapter until the ending. Even if, at various moments in the reading, we do not understand Benjy and we cannot communicate with his narration, it eventually becomes most meaningful and significant. This may change the reader's life. Indeed, my life after reading *The Sound and the Fury* has become different from my life before it. Intellectuals, who deem intellect so highly, while thinking about this novel, should realize how an idiot's life, devoid of intelligence and anything intellectual or abstract, is a meaningful life. Moreover, Quentin, as an intellectual, as if along Schopenhauerian lines, deserts life, which he deems insignificant and meaningless, and thus commits suicide. The simple lesson is that intellect or intellectualism is not sufficient (if at all) to render life meaningful and significant. On the other hand, lack of intelligence does not render a person's life less human or less significant, and the portrayal of Benjy in this novel shows this in so many words especially against the background of the life of the Compson family as a whole. Faulkner's words overcome the isolation and separation of Benjy; overcome also his muteness and idiocy. They communicate his character to us.

As for the words "significance," "significant," or "signify," the first time that any of them is mentioned occurs in Quentin's soliloquy in Chapter Two, on the last day of his life before (or after[166]) committing suicide: ". . . Seemed to be lying neither asleep nor awake looking down a long corridor of gray half-light where all stable things had become shadowy paradoxical all I had done shadows all I had felt suffered taking visible form antic and perverse mocking without relevance inherent themselves with the denial of the *significance* they should have affirmed thinking I was I was not who was not was not who" (*SF*, p. 170; italics added). It is a paradigm-case of a moment in this whole day (June 2, 1910) and it is a fragmented moment of life whose narration by Quentin becomes an insignificant, signifying nothing, incoherent, fragmented, and dissolved story of life terminated by a suicide. While Benjy's life is meaningful and significant, Quentin's suicide signifies rendering his life insignificant and meaningless. Life, even one told by an idiot, not deserting it, and even as a mere survival, is meaningful and significant according to this novel. And so is nature, any detail in it, the secrecy of water, the sound of an idiot or a bird —all are meaningful and significant even if, occasionally, we are not aware of this.

In the most significant ceremony, that of the first day of Easter, at the church in Chapter Four, focusing on Reverend Shegog, Dilsey, and Benjy, the words "insignificant" and "insignificance" appears demonstratively:

> they watched the *insignificant* looking man sitting dwarfed and countrified by the minister's imposing bulk, with something like consternation. They were still looking at him with consternation and unbelief when the minister rose and introduced him in rich, rolling tones whose very unction served to increase the visitor's *insignificance*. (*SF*, p. 293; italics added)

166 This obviously sounds strange if not absurd. Nevertheless, Quentin's narration is clearly anachronistic, namely, it exchanges the future for the present, before for after. For instance, in the middle of his soliloquy, a thought from the future interferes thus: **"but now I know I'm dead I tell you"** (*SF*, p. 124). In the Second Chapter, there are more indications that Quentin informs us about his suicide ***after*** his death, paradoxical as it may sound.

At this dramatic point, it is simply the strangeness or unfamiliarity of the visiting clergyman—Reverend Shegog—as well as his wretched appearance and monkey's face that render him as if insignificant in the eyes of the congregation. Such a monkey's face, like the simile of a "trained bear" that the narrator ascribed to Benjy's shambling gait (*SF*, p. 274), emphasizes a dehumanized insignificance in the appearance of Reverend Shegog and Benjy respectively. This is what meets the eye, but such are, of course, not the real persons. Eventually, Shegog is endowed with a distinct honor at the ceremony itself. As devoted Christians, the congregation should realize, as much as those who are familiar with Benjy should, that the foreigner is far from being insignificant. In the end, the sermon conducted by Reverend Shegog turns out to be the most significant event for the whole congregation at that Easter:

> When the visitor rose to speak he sounded like a white man. His voice was level and cold. It sounded too big to have come from him and they listened at first through curiosity, as they would have to a monkey talking. They began to watch him as they would a man on a tight rope. They even forgot his *insignificant* appearance in the virtuosity with which he ran and poised and swooped upon the cold inflectionless wire of his voice, so that at last, . . . the congregation sighed as if it waked from a collective dream and moved a little in its seats. . . . And the congregation seemed to watch with its own eyes while the voice consumed him, until he was nothing and they were nothing and there was not even a voice but instead their hearts were speaking to one another in chanting measures beyond the need for words, so that when he came to rest against the reading desk, his monkey face lifted and his whole attitude that of a serene, tortured crucifix that transcended its shabbiness and *insignificance* and made it of no moment, a long moaning expulsion of breath rose from them . . . Dilsey sat bolt upright, her hand on Ben's knee. Two tears slid down her fallen cheeks, in and out of the myriad. . . . In the midst of the voices and the hands Ben sat, rapt in his sweet blue gaze. Dilsey sat bolt upright beside, crying rigidly and quietly in the annealment and the blood of the remembered Lamb. . . . As they walked through the bright noon, up the sandy road with the dispersing congregation talking easily again group to group, she continued to weep, unmindful of the talk. (SF, pp. 293 297; italics added)

It becomes significant especially for Dilsey. The apparently "insignificant" preacher finally endowed her with an epiphany, and, of course, his "insignificant" appearance turns to be the most significant event of this special day for her. Shegog is portrayed as "a serene, tortured crucifix that transcended its shabbiness and *insignificance*." And so is Benjy in the reader's eye, because the text concentrates at this moment on him. To trust Dilsey's claims—"Tell um de good Lawd dont keer whether he bright er not. Dont nobody but white trash keer dat" (*SF*, p. 288)—she, contrary to all the others, especially white people, is not blind to or unmindful of the significance of Benjy. Benjy, to whose "sweet blue gaze" the narrator refers, is the Lamb of God, about whom, in fact, the "insignificant" preacher unknowingly talks. Dilsey cries over Benjy's deterioration as over that of the whole Compson family, while her hand rests on Benjy's knee (consciously, she, at that moment, cries because of the Lamb of God and not because of him). From such a Christian viewpoint, Benjy is a most significant human being though wordless, mutilated, and, after all, an idiot. The preacher turns him, in fact, into the Lamb of God. No one in this scene is aware of this fact, which the narrator reveals to the reader. Like Prince Mishkin (another representative of Jesus Christ) in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*, Benjy's idiocy does not mean a lack of human mind but, rather, it means *idiosyncrasy, uniqueness, or singularity*. The singularity of each human being must make his or her life universally significant.[167] Faulkner's art of writing depicts this loud and clear (though Faulkner himself considered the writing of this novel as a failure[168]). To reveal the significance of what appears insignificant is the profound aim of real art.

Reverend Shegog suggests a salvation by words.[169] His eloquence—which stands in stark contrast with Benjy's muteness, broken words, actually mere sounds[170]—does the miracle of turning his insignificant appearance into a most significant event of that Easter ceremony. Benjy's

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167 See Amihud Gilead, "Personal Singularity and the Significance of Life," *Philosophia* 44 (2016), pp. 775 786.

168 See F. L. Gwynn and J. L. Blotner (eds.), *Faulkner at the University* (The University of Virginia Press, 1995), p. 1.

169 Cf.: "The sermon is the retelling of an old story, a celebration of the memory of suffering and salvation translated into a familiar language . . . The sermon is also of the story of a man who becomes his voice and in the becoming touched others. Shegog speaks the language of his audience and he delivers the Word, which 'passes beyond the need for words' . . . Shegog transforms the Word of God, the ultimate authoritative discourse, into words his congregation then speaks its own. . . . Shegog's words ignite wordless communication among kindred hearts because the words are familiar. Finally, the sermon itself is a medium between the congregation and its collective experience and identification with the Easter myth." See Judith Lockyer, *Ordered by Words*, p. 59. As a contrast to this eloquence, Lockyer well emphasizes Benjy's "trauma of inarticulation" (op. cit., p. 53), his "prelinguistic mind" (ibid.), "an idiot who can only bellow and moan to make himself known" (ibid.).

170 See: "Then Ben wailed again, hopeless and prolonged. It was nothing. Just sound. It might have been all time and injustice and sorrow become vocal for an instant by a conjunction of planets" (*SF*, p. 286).

significance depends not on words or deeds; instead, it depends on being, on surviving, even in a most wretched state. Sitting beside him and most faithfully and devotedly taking care of him, Dilsey needs no word from him or from anyone else. She knows, with no hesitation or doubt, the significance of his being in her solid humane world. For her, in fact (yet not consciously), Benjy is a mute Lamb of God, simply being there with his sweet blue gaze. Such is the significance of a human flower, of a human cornflower.

Like a Black Madonna in a Pieta scene, she hushes the mute, wordless Benjy thus: "Dilsey led Ben to the bed and drew him down beside her and she held him, rocking back and forth, wiping his drooling mouth upon the hem of her skirt. 'Hush, now', she said, stroking his head. 'Hush. Dilsey got you'. But he bellowed slowly, abjectly, without tears; the grave hopeless sound of all voiceless misery under the sun" (*SF*, p. 314). Dilsey's Christian faith and humanism both open her eyes to consider and to treat Benjy differently from other people and make her acknowledge and respect his significance. Caddy[171] and the narrator, especially in Chapter Four, endow Benjy's bellows, sounds, and fury with words and thus reveal their profoundest meaning and significance.

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[171] See: "Without language, Benjy is at the mercy of those around him. They react to his meaning, but no one after Caddy attempts to understand and to translate his sounds" (Lockyer, *Ordered by Words*, p. 54).

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this book, I have attempted to show that my original metaphysics—panenmentalism—which is realistic about individual pure possibilities, throws a clear light upon some major philosophical issues concerning literature and fiction. Such issues are: The ontology and epistemology of fiction, necessity that is exempt from any concept of possible world, mathematical necessity in comparison with literary necessity, imitation and actualization, psychical reality and states, and many others.

Individual pure possibilities are the primary entities of which all that exists is made of, whereas actualities, namely, actual or physical entities, are these possibilities *as* spatiotemporally and causally confined and conditioned. Thus, actualities are limited parts of individual pure possibilities and, as such, are comprised in these possibilities.

Our epistemic accessibility to these possibilities rests upon our imagination and intellect, which are *a priori* sources of truth and knowledge, whereas our epistemic accessibility to actualities rests exclusively upon empirical means, namely, experience and experiments, which are *a posteriori* sources of acquaintance and knowledge.

Individual pure possibilities also play a vital role in our knowledge of values—moral, aesthetic, and otherwise—which are independent of actual reality or actual behavior.

Hence, the relationship between art or literature and actual reality strongly depend upon the relationship between individual pure possibilities and their actualities. Actualities are necessarily united with, namely, inseparable from, their individual pure possibilities, whereas such possibilities exist independently of their actualities and, hence, are separable from these actualities. As distinct from identity, union or unity is a necessary, inseparable connection, which excludes reduction. The psychophysical unity (or inseparability) is the best example of the unity of individual pure possibility (mind) and its actuality (body). Such a unity rejects any psychophysical reduction and keeps reality as ample and multifarious as it truly is. The same holds true for the indispensability of individual pure possibilities for art, literature, and their relation with actual reality.

A major issue in the philosophy of science is the vital role that fiction and imagination play in scientific discoveries, especially in the theoretical ones, but no less in the actual ones. Fiction and fictional individual pure possibilities, thus, throw a vital epistemic light on actual reality and are thus essential for scientific progress.

It is illuminating that pure mathematics consists of individual pure possibilities, such as numbers and geometrical figures. Since Galileo's day, modern scientists have been well aware of the vital part that mathematics plays in scientific knowledge as well as in natural structures. No less than mathematics, fiction, especially literary fiction, have contributed immensely to our awareness and knowledge of actual reality or nature and of its meanings. This holds especially true for scientific knowledge.

Any great scientist is also, to begin with, a great writer, a great creator of fiction, for it is because of the scientific imagination, which is not really different from the literary one and which is similarly sensuous, that scientists can discover the relevant individual pure possibilities, first of all—the mathematical ones. This theoretical discovery precedes and makes possible the relevant empirical, actual discovery (for instance the discovery of eka-elements as chemical pure possibilities in the Periodic Table had preceded and made possible the discovery or production of the missing actual elements[172]). Individual pure possibilities are vital for the discovery, recognition, identification, and insights concerning the meanings of their relevant actualities. Following Galileo, the Book of Nature is mathematically written and, we should add, as mathematics is *a priori* and is not inferred or deduced from experience or observation, it must be written first by the scientist's imagination (as well as intellect, which, as such, fares much beyond the actual and the empirical). I argue that the Book of Nature is, first of all, made of individual pure possibilities, mathematical and theoretically physical. Pure mathematics comes first and it precedes the physically empirical findings and renders them intelligible and meaningful. Hence, pure non-Euclidean geometries were established much before their indispensable application to physics. Or, another fine example, the mathematical symmetry group SU(3) was established much before its application to the theoretical discovery independently made by Yuval Ne'eman and Murray Gell-mann of the

[172] See my "Eka-Elements as Chemical Pure Possibilities," *Foundations of Chemistry* 18 (2016), pp. 183–194.

subatomic particle, baryon, which was named “omega-minus.” The physically theoretical pure possibility of this particle made possible its actual discovery two years later.

To construct pure mathematics, a mathematician should be endowed with a creative imagination, with the capability of creating fictions in order to discover mind-independent mathematical pure possibilities. Like detectives, physicists must have, at the very beginning, assumptions and anticipations or predictions, which consist of individual pure possibilities and are not based upon observation and experiments. ●ccasionally, physicists need models, which are made of the general relations between individual pure possibilities. All these are the stuff that fiction is made of.

Another realm in which fictions and individual pure possibilities play a crucial role is the knowledge and awareness of one’s mind. Literary pure possibilities serve psychoanalysis in particular and psychology in general in providing us with essential insights for knowing and understanding our mind. They function as sensors to explore our unconsciousness. A clear example is the myth (namely, fiction) of ●edipus. The great effect of this myth on the spectators and the readers reveals the inner drama that still takes place in their unconsciousness. Without this myth and its metamorphosis in such a great play as *Hamlet*, we could not be aware or conscious of this superb and most effective drama that still takes place in our unconscious. Thus, literary individual pure possibilities are vital for our self-knowledge, which is not only a psychological end but, no less, a time-honored philosophical one.

To sum up, the importance and vitality of literary pure possibilities are not confined, then, to literary fictions. They teach and enlighten us much more about actual, physical reality and about our psychical life as well.