

THIS IS NOT A LOVE STORY

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AN EXEGESIS

THE USE OF CALVINO'S *MEMOS*

In my initial research proposal, I had sought to frame my work creatively and theoretically by referencing three *women of ideas*, women who wrote fiction, literary theory and philosophy, and three of their novels. After all, I am a woman, I am a novelist, I study philosophy. The criteria of gender, literary activity and philosophical activity were equally weighed in my mind. I was not, and am not, committed to any theory of gender and did not wish gender theory to frame my work, which is why when questioned at a conference presentation about the gender of the Novelist who had evolved from a female, first person narrator (someone very much like me) to an elderly male novelist, I had no response. This gender switch was merely a distancing device (think of the narrator "J. M. Coetzee" evolving into "Elizabeth Costello"), used to widen "the gap between creator and creation" (Hahn 183) as the project of discovery broadened. Moreover, I was simply reading more Coetzee than Beauvoir in those days. Still, at the beginning of the project, with the aim to jump-start the theoretical and creative task, the writers I chose to work with were Iris Murdoch and *The Philosopher's Pupil*, Simone de Beauvoir and *She Came to Stay*, and George Eliot and *Middlemarch*. However, although their writing on literary theory was very useful, I found myself less interested in their creative work. I retained the useful warnings and advice from their theoretical work because it matched what I wished to do with my writing project: from George Eliot, that novels ought to be "experiments in life" (Haight 216 vol. 6), not entertainments; from Simone de Beauvoir, that novels, if "honestly written," were

“living discover[ies]” (Fullbrook & Fullbrook, “She Came to Stay” 61) and from Iris Murdoch, that writing a philosophical novel is a “dangerous” enterprise (Murdoch, *Existentialists* 487)—an awkward and difficult one. With regard to framing my work there was relevance in their theory but not in their style. I did not wish to write like them (I found that complex plots and psychological depth of character diverted me from the task of discovery, from the subject under exploration) and I did not wish to read and re-read their novels as I would have to in order to use them to frame my work.

The novels I was reading and re-reading and the novels I wished to emulate, were the novels of *men of ideas* who did philosophical work within their fiction, not separate to it, writers who announced their presence in the work and who were more passionate about ideas and content and philosophical discovery in fiction than complicated and suspense-filled plot and complex character studies. These were J. M. Coetzee’s *Elizabeth Costello*, Italo Calvino’s *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveller*, Georges Perec’s *Life: A User’s Manual*, Milan Kundera’s *Identity*, the Samuel Beckett trilogy, Robert Musil’s *The Man Without Qualities*, to name a few. Each one of these novels altered my understanding of what fiction was able to do, both at the intellectual level—to explore ideas and contribute to one’s understanding of the world and one’s place in it—and the emotional—to engage not just in the pleasure of reading, but in the moral importance of reading. This is how I wanted to write and I would use the platform of the creative writing degree (and its access to scholarly and creative expertise and guidance) and the creative writing thesis to explore theory and to practice form as well as to interrogate my own practice as an author who wishes to write a particular type of novel and my own ability to or talent for doing this.

I began with Coetzee and then worked backwards through postmodernism to modernism and to before modernism, looking for work that would inspire me creatively and instruct me theoretically. Thus I read ancient Greek philosophical epistolary novels,

contemporary dialogue novels, postmodern experimental novels as well as the literary theory of Alain Robbe-Grillet, Calvino, and Kundera.

I read, for example, David Markson's novels, especially *The Last Novel* and *This is Not a Novel* (my title echoes his title chosen after a reviewer "dismissed" his *Reader's Block* as "not a novel" (Sims 59). These novels have no traditional plot or character, but are "emotionally satisfying, intellectually rewarding, formally distinctive, and compulsively readable all at once" (59) and this gave me hope that I could also do that. In addition, Calvino's *If* and Beckett's trilogy of novels gave me permission to be playful and to talk about the process of beginning my own work and how to go about writing it. It was by virtue of following this tangent that I came across the concept of *poioumenon* and had a name for what my novel was evolving into. It was becoming a novel in which I was mirroring, in the "distorted" way that some writers of fiction "represent" reality (Attridge, *J. M. Coetzee and the Ethics* 192-3), the production of my own novel. All of this informed Part I, "Multiplicity," which is a meditation on the work in progress, the *poioumenon*.

Next, for example, Philip Roth's dialogue novel, *Deception*, served as a stylistic model for my experiments in unattributed dialogue. I also read play scripts and experimented with writing for stage performance in an attempt to fully explore the potential for philosophical work to be done in a dialogue that was as raw and crude as spontaneous as human dialogue, the type of dialogue that might engage, excite and surprise readers. All of this informed Part II, "Visibility," which is a meditation on the work coming alive with characters who become themselves engaged and engage readers intellectually and emotionally as they begin an exploration into the nature of their love.

Finally, I read the (anonymous) *Letters of Chion*, an epistolary novel, dating back to the fourth century BCE, as a potential model for the third part of my novel, which is written as a series of letters between Woman, Man, Philosopher and Doctor. In the

ancient novel, Chion prepares to assassinate a tyrant, but before that he studies with philosophers and deliberates on the moral and philosophical issues this act raises and questions how a good man should act politically. I thought this a good model for the letters which Woman writes when, after her estrangement from Man, she prepares to meet another man, a potential lover. Before she does that, she reads philosophy and deliberates through the moral and philosophical issues her potential affair raises. I also read Barthes' *A Lover's Discourse*, for example, with thoughts of engaging in a dialogue with his definitions of the discourse of love, and all of this informs Part III, "Exactitude," which is a meditation towards a deeper understanding of the concepts of love that emerged, in crude dialogic form, in "Visibility."

This disparate reading opened a multiplicity of possibilities. I wanted to borrow from all of these voices, styles, and forms to help with this experiment which was as much about exploring, through writing, some ideas about love, as it was about me and my own work as a writer from now on. It has been a messy project and most of it revolves around process rather than story, but it gave me permission to add the story of my process to the story. It gave me all the permission I needed to be transparent and direct within the work about my mission as a writer. It followed logically that I could transpose myself, and my exegesis of my work, into the work, into the novel itself, and this would be the perfect, in fact, the essential form in which to execute my experiment. My objective was to combine a creative and theoretical tangle of disparate voices, inconsistent genres and fragmented stories as a single, albeit incomplete, work. Incompleteness is also an essential feature of the work at an epistemological level, for a single finite work cannot contain a complete story, a complete story of the truth. Thus, I needed a structure that would suit the intellectual temperament I was developing as a creative writer. So, I turned to Calvino's *Memos* (Calvino, 2009).

Being a member of Oulipo, an experimental workshop of potential literature, Calvino was concerned with constraints; some limitation, be it structural, thematic, stylistic, which would liberate the writer to create and produce something quite new. I needed some limitation to help bring everything together. I needed to impose a structure from without, for the structure within was messy. I needed to make sense of and to impose both thematic and theoretical coherence (for I had no narrative coherence) to my disparate reading and writing in order to help me articulate a clear exegetical strategy that might also account for the elements of the work as *poioumenon*, as fragmented, repetitive, and incomplete.

When invited by Harvard University in 1984 to give the Charles Norton Lectures, Calvino “settled on a scheme to organise the lectures” (i) and this scheme was to write eight memos each commenting on “certain values, qualities, or peculiarities of literature,” “things that only literature can give us, by means specific to it” (3), which would ensure its meaningful survival in a post-technology era that, for some, has threatened its very future. Writing within this context, I felt that Calvino’s meditations, both focused and digressive, and his heartfelt invitation to writers to consider these qualities, provided a foundation upon which I could build my exegetical strategy for this project and upon which I could build my identity as a writer.

Calvino had completed five memos by the evening prior to his flight to Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1985. They were: “Lightness,” that writing was a way of lightening the heavy burden of living; “Quickness,” that writing ought to be agile and mobile and digressive in order to properly make the connections between all the knowledge in the world; “Exactitude,” that writing ought to be precise and well-defined with a cold-blooded temperament towards truth; “Visibility,” that writing, in a world where images reign, ought to create new images that spring from words we read and try to imagine in the darkness of our minds; “Multiplicity,” that writing is a method of

discovery that reaches out (sometimes wildly; sometimes precisely) to grasp a knowledge of everything beyond it (not before it, thus it does not *express*, it *explores*), producing something new. Calvino was to complete a sixth memo, "Consistency," in Cambridge, but did not finish this as he died on the eve of his departure. That even his final work is unfinished fits serendipitously with my own unfinished project, not to mention the fact that I am currently writing this from a desk in a room not very far from Cambridge.

I chose three of his five memos ("Multiplicity," "Visibility," "Exactitude") because these addressed more clearly my imaginative goals (and the problems I needed to solve), although I do address the values of *lightness* and *quickness* within the work. *Lightness* by adding irony and humour to the exploration and *quickness* by virtue of writing a short novel with a fragmented plot, a lot of ellipsis, little character depth, and a digressive, "discoursing" structure. I use "Multiplicity," "Visibility," and "Exactitude" as signposts and as places of convergence for the disparate reading and disparate creative writing process in this, my experiment towards understanding love.

UNDERSTANDING LOVE

The essential relationship between form and content

And what if I am trying to understand love, “that strange unmanageable phenomenon of form of life, source at once of illumination and confusion, agony and beauty” (Nussbaum 4)? If I am a writer, that is? How should I write about love? “What words should [I] select, what forms and structures and organisation” (4)? And what if I am “pursuing understanding ... if [I am], in that sense, a philosopher? (5). My project begins here with these questions of form and content. What is love? What is falling in love? What does it mean to fall out of love? Am I morally obligated to stay in love with someone to whom I am married? Is love real? These are personal questions about love’s *particular* meaning for me, and they are universal questions about love’s *abstract* meaning beyond me.

As a reader, as a student of life and knowledge, questions such as these always lead me, like Nussbaum, “as much to works of literature as to works of admitted philosophy” (14). Similarly, Simone de Beauvoir “sought answers to her personal problems and situations through reading” (Bair 321). I have understood a lot about love through my reading about it in both philosophical and literary works, but now after a series of personal experiences in the realm of love and sex and marriage, I feel that the 2000-year-old philosophical story about love might have shifted somewhat, that there might be more to the story. But I won’t really know that unless I write the story. All I have are questions.

When one asks questions such as these (and when one is a philosopher or, at least, philosophically inclined as I am) there are, traditionally, two main ways to state the questions, two main written styles to accommodate them. One, the formal philosophical style of reason and argument, where definitions are given, truths categorised, claims

made and conclusions reached through the use of “discursive language”, the “proper medium of philosophy” (Ross 5). Two, the literary philosophical style. Which should I choose? The choice should not be made trivially for the case has already been made (Proust; James; Nussbaum) that there is an essential link between “form and content.” Could truths about love be adequately told in abstracted conventional philosophical prose or in embodied and lived literary prose? Should I write fiction or just do philosophy? I wish to do both. After Coetzee, I believe it is “more productive to live out the question than to try to answer it in abstract terms ...” That is, to continue to live out the question “not only in [my] day-to-day life but in my fiction as well” (as cited in Attridge, "Coetzee's Entanglements" 292). In fact, when the questions are about love, the fictional form is essential to the exploration.

The ancient quarrel between literature and philosophy

“To make room for love stories,” writes Nussbaum (284), “philosophy must be more literary, more closely allied to stories, and more respectful of mystery and open-endedness than it frequently is.” But philosophy has always had an “awkward relation” (Leist and Singer i) to literature. Philosophy has never been comfortable with the ambiguity that the human context adds to its reach for truth. Philosophy and literature have, in Calvino’s words, always been seen as “embattled adversaries” (*Literature Machine* 39). Where philosophers,

see through the opaqueness of the world, eliminate the flesh of it, reduce the variety of existing things to a spider’s web of relationship between ideas, and fix the rules according to which a finite number of pawns moving on a chessboard exhaust a number of combinations that may even be infinite[;] along come the writers and replace the abstract chessmen with kings and queens, knights and castles, all with a name, a particular shape, and a series of attributes royal, equine, or ecclesiastical; instead of a chessboard they roll out great dusty battlefields or stormy seas. (39-49)

Thus, literature mystifies, said Murdoch, while philosophy clarifies. Philosophy is small; literature large. Philosophy does one thing, literature many things (Magee 17). And even when there is a certain personal presence (as in the distinctive voice of Wittgenstein), philosophy “has a plain impersonal hardness none the less” (*Existentialists* 5). When Murdoch says philosophy she means the analytic tradition in which she was trained (a tradition whose methodology analyses concepts in isolation of their human context and usage in order to avoid ambiguity) and not the Continental tradition (a tradition which essentialises human ambiguity into the pursuit of truth; the tradition which produced postmodernism—philosophical and literary postmodernism—where this project finally finds its place). For this reason, Murdoch stated that Derrida was “not strictly a philosopher” (Murdoch 151) and to this day philosophical writing “is measured by professional standards ... [which] specify that, even where a text is not yet

presented in a clear, impersonal and argumentative form, it should, in principle, be translatable into one” (Mathien and Wright 3).

The underlying “presupposition” here is that “we can get clearer about what we think about a moral issue by abstracting it from the complex web of interrelated matters of fact and of valuation” (Mulhall 27). Philosophers of the analytic tradition write the “messiness of the self out of philosophical discussion” (Wood 133). But to remove the self from a discussion of love and to abstract love from its primary agent and its context, says Mulhall (borrowing him from his discussion about Coetzee’s late work) “is to ask us to think about something else altogether—something other than the issue that interested us in the first place; it is, in effect, to change the subject” (27).

I bring the conversation here to make a brief point about some of the early exegetical work I completed (and presented to a small audience at the Sixth International Iris Murdoch Conference at Kingston University, London) on my somewhat naïve attempt to *translate* into clear, impersonal and abstract form the philosophical essence in a fictional dialogue in a novel by Iris Murdoch, namely *The Philosopher’s Pupil*. The philosopher, Rozanov, seeks an interlocutor with whom to “talk philosophy” as he is “accustomed to clarifying [his] thoughts in the medium of conversation” (552). However, the dialogues between this philosopher and his chosen interlocutor, Father Bernard, seemed to clarify nothing; they are nothing like the restrained, thoughtful, clear and coherent flow of conversation that occurs in the Platonic dialogues which I then thought would be ideal models but now argue against in “Exactitude.” Murdoch’s characters, Rozanov and Father Bernard, engaged in a conversation about God, but the dialogue is full of underlying rage, for the former, and conviction, for the latter. Theirs is a crude and emotional dialogue. Where Father Bernard hotly states, “There is nothing in heaven or earth [that] can alter my duty to my neighbour,” the cold-blooded philosopher might *translate* that to the following

proposition. The absence of moral facts does not remove one's moral duty and responsibility. The concept, now rephrased impersonally, has been stripped of the emotional conviction that makes Father Bernard's moral beliefs all the more meaningful. To remove the emotional human subject from an exploration into moral obligation, for example, is indeed to "change the subject."

Some truths cannot be translated into clear and impersonal propositions. Love and betrayal can only accurately be expressed in a literary form, because of their embodied and particular nature, rather than in the form of abstract philosophy. Nussbaum writes that "the most important truths about human psychology" cannot be attained and comprehended by the intellect alone. This is because "powerful emotions have an irreducibly important cognitive role to play" (Nussbaum 7). Nussbaum suggests that if a writer chooses to write about human existence and emotion in a form that only speaks to the reader's intellect, then the writer has chosen the wrong form, because a form that speaks to the intellect rather than to the embodied and emotive human offers a different point of view. Ultimately, and especially when it comes to a phenomenon such as love, we "cannot escape from [our] own presence nor from the singular world that [our] presence reveals around [us]" (7).

The autobiographical in the philosophic experiment

Our presence, then, is central to the enquiry. Thus, I return to the personal and autobiographical in this philosophical exploration. Although “classification, definition and comparison are philosophically significant tasks ... sometimes philosophy and philosophical discussions of life can involve a more personal dimension and even a more personal mode of reflection” (Milligan 15). Milligan suggests that “deliberation about sexualised love is such a case” and that we always relate love “to our own circumstances.” Autobiographical details tend to infiltrate philosophy when love is the concept under scrutiny. Thus, Milligan introduces his wife Suzanne to his own exploration, in a series of anecdotes, in much the same way that philosophers traditionally use impersonal, hypothetical fragments of narratives to illustrate their arguments, only that being quite personal Milligan uses the terms “I” and “we” and my “wife.” Similarly, Harry Frankfurt in his *The Reasons of Love* talks about “my children” (2). Milligan takes the personal even further by very clearly acknowledging the centrality of his wife not just for illustrative purposes but as the core of the exploration itself when he tells us that “the largest debt of all is to my wife, Suzanne, without whom my understanding of love would be in every way diminished” (viii). Soren Kierkegaard began his *The Seducer’s Diary* as “a feverishly intellectual attempt to reconstruct [his] erotic failure as a pedagogic success” (Updike xiv). Stendhal began his own explorations in *Love* after his unrequited obsession with his Mathilde. Alain de Botton placed himself, or someone very much like himself, at the centre of his own exploration of love in *Essays in Love*. His narrative is orderly, logical and intellectually rigorous, but the fictive voice keeps the exploration humanistic and the reader very engaged: “One mid-morning in early December, with no thought of love or stories, I was sitting in the economy section of a British Airways jet making its way from Paris to London” (2). One can see the philosopher himself at the centre of the exploration, though this

does not mean the philosopher *is* the subject of the exploration. Botton's "I" at some point of his drafting his *Essays*, must have been very much like him, like the biographical Botton, but the exploration, by virtue of being philosophical in temperament, moves away from the autobiographical, away from memoir, and extends beyond the self to something other than and more than the self.

The late Irving Singer, who most famously dedicated his philosophical career to mapping the nature of love, sex and marriage after family members reportedly "urg[ed] him to be more affectionate" (Roberts para 1), told *The New York Times* that *The Nature of Love*, his 1,300-page, three-volume, opus magnum began "like so many philosophical works, ... as an attempt to understand [his] own inadequacies" (para 2). Addressing his students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology during his undergraduate course on the philosophical nature of love, Singer stressed that his work overall has been an attempt to

work out problems that I face as a thinker, it's not autobiographical, it's not confessional, but it all comes out of me and comes out of my life and if somebody knows the clues, the code, he can derive a good deal of my personal life, but that's not what I write about and that's not what I'm interested in disclosing. (Singer, "24.261 Philosophy of Love" Lecture 1)

It is the same for the novelists. Nussbaum reminds us that Proust's hero Marcel argued that "all love stories should be autobiographical, meaning that they should have roots in the author's own psychology and experience of suffering" (334), but the stories themselves should not be based on a "single experience" but "on the extraction" from a number of stories of a "general form or pattern" (334).

In this project, I begin with an autobiographical "me," and add to it other voices, other stories, which I have heard or observed along the way, written imaginatively in the way a novelist writes. The general forms and patterns I extracted from this process and these patterns begin to take a vague and crude form in Part II where the married

couple, Man and Woman, finally begin talking about love and falling out of love and evolve into more exact articulations in Part III.

The literary philosophical attitude and the reader's problem

This new understanding was the result of the writing being a “mode of thought,” a “writing to discover” (Gardner 109), an existential mode, and by writing I discovered something new, for me at least, about the concept of falling in love. Even in fiction, the philosophical attitude was essential to both writing style and ideas explored. Good philosophy “presents a clear, disambiguated thesis; it does so with a minimum of rhetoric” (Milligan, "Borders of Analytic" 167). Philosophical fiction can do this, too. One need only read Elizabeth Costello's arguments on animal ethics and to follow the response from the philosophical community to see how both sides can engage in debate, albeit with one fundamental difference: Coetzee's fictional voice maintains an ambiguity about truth, an open-endedness of opinion and argument (he distances himself from the argument presented), and leaves us with questions rather than answers. However, both literature and philosophy are truth-seeking pursuits, but they have “a different set of forms and different ways of writing” (Cascardi 4). For Murdoch, “philosophy is a matter of getting hold of a problem and holding on to it and being prepared to go on repeating oneself as one tries different formulations and solutions” (Murdoch, *Existentialists* 6). Surely this applies to the type of novelist, like Coetzee, whose entire oeuvre is a consistent obsession with the most fundamental philosophical questions: the questions of how we ought to live, of our relationship to truth, and of our use of language to communicate truth.

Murdoch argues, however, that the intellectual rigour of the philosophical mechanism works against the narrative devices of novels: the narrative arcs, the plot progressions and twists, the suspense, surprise, and ellipsis. This is certainly true of traditional novels, which Murdoch's were. However, this is not true of modernist and postmodernist novels, which often, and successfully, forgo traditional literary devices in favour of self-conscious philosophising and experimenting and metafictionalising; of

telling more than *showing*. Although this often proves quite exhausting for readers, and I cite, in the novel that follows, a number of reviews from both critical and common readers who bemoan such novels or question if they are even novels. However, I believe that while such novels may be ‘difficult,’ they are so only because readers approach them with certain expectations based on popular notions of what novels ought to be and ought to do for readers; that novels ought to provide readers realistic and rich experiences both familiar and surprising, with character and action and lots of *furniture*. Readers of this type of novel may not, as Coetzee has already claimed, be “comfortable with ideas.” But take Elizabeth Costello, a character so intellectually obsessed by an idea about the rights of animals, for one example, but also so emotionally devastated by the cruelty in animal factory farms. To fully appreciate the ideas espoused by Elizabeth Costello an attentive reader must also look to the emotional devastation, which Coetzee does not explain with psychology, but gives in phenomenological observation; her blue costume, the greasy hair, the stoop of her shoulders, the flabby flesh (59). The woman is not just mentally tortured by the knowledge, but physically and emotionally ill. A reader could not ask for more.

THE WORK AS *POIOUMENON*

Although it was never my intention to write this work as a *poioumenon*—it was always my intention to write the philosophical story—the work, in its current form, is as much, if not more, a work about *thinking* about writing a novel about love as it is a philosophical novel about the nature of love. Once I made the decision to intermingle the exegetical (the thinking about) with the fictive (the creative production), the form of the *poioumenon* became essential to the work. As such, the likelihood of this manuscript drawing interest from publishers seeking work for popular audiences may be small. Although academic novels are required to be of “publishable quality,” in the first instance they are written “for a very small series of readerships” (Harper 24)—for examiners, supervisors, and for the candidates themselves who write them as much to learn about the practice and theory of writing as to learn about the nature of the world. Thus, the work is also a playground or sandbox, where I, the novelist, practise and learn about how to write a philosophical novel, where I perform experiments in form—plagiarisms of exemplar authors in the “tangled mess” of “Multiplicity,” unattributed dialogue and stage performance in “Visibility,” and the epistolary in “Exactitude.” Following Calvino’s signposts, the work evolves from the “tangled mess” and false starts and repetitions of “Multiplicity” to the more dramatic exchanges between husband and wife in “Visibility” to the more distilled and refined exploration of the subject of love in “Exactitude.” The future publication of this work may take various forms. “Visibility” has already been workshopped as a play script and performed. An early draft of the Doctor chapter in “Multiplicity” has been published in an online magazine. Having come to the end of this current experiment, and having produced a work that is formally incomplete but has found its form and voice, I will continue towards fulfilling the work’s potential to explore the nature of love in a fiction.

“Writing is a concentrated form of thinking,” said DeLillo (para 9). In this project, I focused on thinking about how to write a novel about love; I focused on thinking about the questions of form and voice. Going forward, I will focus on writing as a concentrated form of thinking about the nature of love. The form and voice for the continuing work manifests itself in “Exactitude.”

CONCLUSION

In this thesis novel, I began combined a creative and exegetical exploration into the nature of love, the process of writing a novel about love, and the potential for the novel itself to help us interrogate what love is and what love means. I chose the form of the unfinished novel, the novel-in-progress, because I wanted to interrogate the notion of completeness and the idea that any project of discovery can be completed within a single work.

Like the narrator “Author”, I crossed over into the novel to explore the theme of love and the process of writing about love with my experimental selves (characters). Novelist helped with the imaginative process. Professor and Doctor gave voice to some philosophical problems and notions and, something I hadn’t expected at the beginning of this exploration, to the increasing impact of neuroscience on philosophy. This is something I wish to explore as I continue expanding the current work into its future *encyclopaedic* form. Critic allowed me to explore an exegetical voice in fictive form, again an essential characteristic of the type of novel I wish to write. Finally, Woman and Man helped me explore what it is like to think about, talk about, and write about love in a way that is both intellectually and emotionally engaging. The work, being a *poioumenon*, documents my attempts to write them into being. It also documents my experiments with unattributed dialogue and with the epistolary form proving fruitful on the imaginative level and also at the level of philosophical exploration—going from the raw and disorderly dialogue form to the more thoughtful, ordered and more exact form of writing in the letters.

Calvino's framework offered a clear exegetical strategy and accounts for the different styles and lengths of each of the three parts, with "Multiplicity" being long and meandering, "Visibility" offering a tighter, clearer view of the story, and "Exactitude" becoming (always still becoming) more precise in word choice and temperament.

In conclusion, the work explored the viability of doing philosophy and literary theory in fictional form. Because of its intrusive and disruptive nature, this required a form that did more *telling* than *showing*. I experimented with this voice by modelling/mimicking some works of the modernist and postmodernist authors who embed allegorical thinking in their work while demonstrating that such novels are both intellectually and emotionally engaging for a reader. Finally, the potential to produce a hybrid form such as this one for the popular reader is important to my project as a writer, because I wish to align myself with the growing excitement about how the humanities can bridge gaps between abstract philosophical or scientific knowledge and concrete anthropomorphic knowledge.

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ⁱ The works listed here correspond to works cited in the formal MLA style, with in-text parenthetical references, in the exegesis proper of the "Preamble" as well as in the exegetical comments on the Calvino memos which frame each part. The works also correspond to works cited in informal style in the fictive exegetical work provided by Author and Critic.