ANACHANTMENT[1]

An Essay on the Ontology of Moods

HANNU POUTIAINEN

> *What is literature but the expression of moods by the vehicle of symbol and incident? And are there not moods which need heaven, hell, purgatory, and faeryland for their expression, no less than this dilapidated earth?*
>
> – William Butler Yeats, *The Celtic Twilight*, 1893

> *"A whole world of pain is contained in these words." How* can *it becontained in them?—It is bound up with them. The words are like an acorn from which an* oak *tree can grow.*
>
> – Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, [1946] 1977

> *Indeed, there is a world of emotion. All emotions have this in common, that they evoke the appearance of a world, cruel, terrible, bleak, joyful, etc., but in which the relation of things to consciousness are always and exclusively magical.*
>
> – Jean-Paul Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, 1937

To disenchant the world is to bid farewell to the gods. But what is it to bid farewell to the gods? Does one leave them behind as one does a childhood illusion, surmounting them, as Freud would say, as a belief that belongs in an earlier stage of 'civilization'?[2] Or does one return *their* farewell, the farewell that they bid *us*,

2   Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", in *The Pelican Freud Library 14: Art and Literature*, trans. James Strachey, ed. Albert Dickson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), 339-376, 372.

as they withdraw at their own behest from a world progressively reigned and reined in by Christian monotheism and its techno-capitalist progeny?[3] What, in one case or the other, becomes of the *re-enchantment* that the world seems to undergo every few decades?[4] Does re-enchantment welcome the gods back into the world from which they have been banished? Or does it seek to preserve, in the now-godless world, a memory of what the young Hegel calls, in his poem "Eleusis," the "Circle of the Gods [that] has flown back to Olympus, / Fleeing from the consecrated altars / And the defiled human grave"?[5] And if the project of re-enchantment itself dis-enchants us with its perpetual unaccomplishment, may we not go beyond it and assert that the gods have always been and always will be with us, thereby giving substance to Jason Josephson-Storm's eye-catching claim in *The Myth of Disenchantment* that "we have never been disenchanted"?[6] If we do assert this, are we by that token bidding farewell to the farewell itself? And if we are, are we then bidding farewell not only to the farewell, but to everything that it implies, beginning with the assumption that the world in which the gods were present was in fact an *enchanted* one?

To ask what disenchantment means is to ask what it means to bid farewell to the gods. As the previous paragraph attests, this question is not a simple one. It opens onto several other questions, and these yet onto others that form an indisseverable chain, indeed

3   This is the gist of Max Weber's famous *Entzauberung der Welt*. See Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation", in *Max Weber's Complete Writings on Academic and Political Vocations*, trans. Gordon C. Wells & ed. John Dreijmanis (New York: Algora Publishing, 2008), 25-52.
4   Scholarly works abound that claim a re-enchantment is under way. To take just two examples that are relatively far apart in time: Peter L. Berger, *A Rumour of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural* (New York: Anchor Books, 1970); Christopher H. Partridge, *The Re-Enchantment of the West: Alternative Spiritualities, Sacralization, Popular Culture, and Occulture, Volumes I-II* (London: T & T Clark, 2004-2005).
5   I cite this translation from Jason Josephson-Storm, *The Myth of Disenchantment: Magic, Modernity, and the Birth of the Human Sciences* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), 85.
6   Josephson-Storm, *The Myth of Disenchantment*, 3. The phrase, of course, is a riff on Bruno Latour's famous dictum that "we have never been modern".

a kind of sacrificial wreath to be worn around the pondering brow: Who (or what) says farewell to whom (or to what)? What is the affect of this farewell? What is the temporality of this affect? To what world does this temporality give shape? Who inhabits this world of 'farewell'? And what is it to inhabit this world of a 'farewell' whose address, being so uncertain, wavering so strangely between 'us' and 'the gods', can always make the 'farewell' double upon itself, thereby obliging us to heed everything that Jacques Derrida says of the 'farewell to farewell' in his preface to Catherine Malabou's *The Future of Hegel*, and, beyond that, everything in Hegel to which this 'farewell to farewell' relates?[7] Taking this wreath upon its brow, the present essay cannot do more than seek to answer only some of these questions, counting them like beads on a rosary or an abacus, moving them along the thread or wire formed by the three epigraphs above.

Thematically, the essay concerns what may be called the *inherent metaphysics* of the word 'enchantment' and the prefixes 'dis' and 're' that are used to qualify its historical presence. Methodologically, it submits this inherent metaphysics to a mode of scrutiny that I have elsewhere proposed to call a *speculative philology*: an approach to linguistic objects which scans and sifts their various details for any ontological implications that may lie concealed within them.[8] For speculative philology, every smallest shard and shred of language is seen as capable of making its distinct claim on being, and the task of the speculative philologist is to address this claim and to examine its implications in a philosophically rigorous manner. For this essay, I have chosen as my object of philological

7   See Jacques Derrida: "A Time for Farewells: Heidegger (read by) Hegel (read by) Malabou", trans. Joseph D. Cohen, in Catherine Malabou, *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality, and Dialectic*, trans. Lisbeth During (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), vii-xlvii.

8   The term *speculative philology* was first coined in my essay "The Logic of Romantic Epithets: An Essay towards a Speculative Philology", *Journal of Romanticism* 3, (2018): 57-78. However, though it was not named as such before that, the work leading up to it extends back almost a decade. Its central philosophical claims are most comprehensively set out in "Additions, Subtractions, Iterations: Deconstruction and the Actuality of Context", *Journal of Literary Theory*, 8.1 (2014): 178–198.

speculation a work of literary fiction that has much to teach us about the question of enchantment: John Crowley's *Little, Big*—a narratively elaborate, philosophically erudite, and emotionally powerful novel revolving around the presence of faery in the human world—will be read here as constituting a 'farewell to the gods' of the most inimitable kind.

The essay will proceed in three movements. Section I will lay out the basic ideas of speculative philology. Section II will consist in a reading of *Little, Big* whose conclusions about enchantment will be developed further in Section III. There, I will encapsulate the preceding reflections into a neologism whose purpose is to throw the discourse of enchantment onto a new track: *anachantment*, a term structurally analogous to the *anatheism* coined by Richard Kearney,[9] where the Greek prefix *ana-* is meant to suggest the return of enchantment in the era of its putative impossibility. Finally, in the Conclusion, I will offer a very brief restatement of what anachantment means and what may be hoped of it in terms of 'worldview'.

Stated analytically, without reference to ontological considerations, the argument put forward here is that the word 'enchantment' does not only denote a situation where a subjective affect bleeds into a neutral object and animates it with its own power. Rather, and this is true even with dis-enchantment, the word *enacts* the situation it denotes. When we speak of enchantment, whether it is to affirm or deny it, to lament or hasten its disappearance from the world, to undo its religious ties and reclaim it for secular ends, we are not comparing the external world to an idea of enchantment in order to see whether it fits this idea or not. We are, rather, using a picture of reality to establish canons of feeling which dictate how affect and object ought to be calibrated: *as reality is, so one must feel about it*—enchanted if it is enchanted, disenchanted if disenchanted, re-enchantment being an option that can be pursued on either front. Such calibrations are very mercurial and difficult to maintain, nevertheless, once established, it is no great leap to

9   Richard Kearney, *Anatheism: Returning to God after God* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

convert a canon of feeling into a canon of perceiving: *as one feels about reality, so must it be*—leading to compulsive efforts to transform an emotional predilection into the one true vision of the world. The reason for this is that affect will bleed into object for as long as we continue to speak of enchantment: that is a direct consequence of using words that cast objects in emotional terms. Yet this, I believe, is not a matter to be bemoaned. For what this suggests, on the side of objects other than humans and nonhuman animals, is an independent ontological possibility that far exceeds the question whether the world is 'enchanted' or 'disenchanted': *the existence in nonhuman reality of an inherently affective zone*. In other words, from the ontological perspective that speculative philology seeks to open, the very existence of the notion of enchantment implies that there exists some dimension of nonhuman reality that advances and recedes in our view, expands into and retracts from the bounds of our being, according to the emotional valence that we grant it, each the systole to the other's diastole.

But what is this dimension? That is the question that will be pursued under the rubric of the 'farewell of the gods'. If the farewell is the affect, the gods are its zone; and yet this zone extends only as far as the farewell can be heard. It is the task of speculative philology to hear this farewell with as keen an ear as possible. How it will set about this task is the question that must now be clarified.

I

What is speculative philology? The first thing to be addressed is its underlying ontology. For a more detailed exposition of it, I will take the liberty of referring the reader to my previous writings, where I have combined elements of Husserlian phenomenology, Derridean deconstruction, and certain analytical interpretations of the so-called alethic modalities (possibility, necessity, and impossibility) in order to formulate what I call an *ontology of substitution*. Stated briefly, this ontology begins from the understanding that all reality is structured by two minimal principles. The first is the *prin-*

ciple of substitutability, according to which all things that are similar in some respect are to that extent substitutable for one another (we can substitute one cup for another, a red cup for a red mug, a red mug for a red flag, and so on and so forth). The second is the *principle of nonsubstitutability*, which states that, since no two separate things are similar in all respects, a singular existent is never fully substitutable for another (a cup can never exist in another's place).[10] These two principles are understood not only as constitutive but as generative of all possible objects. However, what they

10   These two principles may also be stated by drawing a parallel with the philosophy of logic and defining the first as substitution *salva congruitate* (preserving congruity) and the second as substitution *salva veritate* (preserving truth). Thus formulated, the former principle would state that any two non-identical entities are substitutable when the substitution of one for the other preserves the "syntax" of the situation (one might, for instance, use a boot instead of a hammer for driving nails into the wall, in which case the boot is substitutable for the hammer as long as one's intention is not to go hiking or to pose for a faux-Soviet portrait, but rather to drive nails into the wall), whereas the latter principle would be synonymous with Leibniz's *principium identitatis indiscernibilium*, according to which two entities whose properties coincided perfectly would be one entity rather than two. Framed in this way, only the first principle would involve *actual* substitution, whereas the latter would simply amount to a principle of self-identity (in which "self-identity" and "self-substitutability" are identical and therefore substitutable formulations for one and the same relation). However, rather than undermine the notion of substitution, this discrepancy between the two principles only foregrounds the necessity that, if substitution is to be real rather than merely formal, it must also have a temporal aspect. As will be seen below, this has the consequence that when substitution is understood temporally, it gives rise to a third principle that we may define—with, one should hope, only the appearance of paradox—as a *principium identitatis discernibilium*. On the principle of the identity of indiscernibles, see e.g. G. W. Leibniz, "Discourse on Metaphysics", in *Philosophical Essays*, trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis & Cambridge: Hackett, 1989), 35-68. For a cogent discussion of the *salva congruitate—salva veritate* distinction, which was reintroduced into modern philosophy by Peter Geach in *Reference and Generality: An Examination of Some Medieval and Modern Theories* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1980), see Crispin Wright, "Why Frege Does Not Deserve His Grain of Salt: A Note on the Paradox of 'The Concept Horse' and the Ascription of *Bedeutungen* to Predicates", in Bob Hale & Crispin Wright, *The Reason's Proper Study: Essays Towards a Neo-Fregean Philosophy of Mathematics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 72-90.

also generate is a tension between categoriality and singularity that simultaneously divides all objects within themselves and sets them apart from all others. On the one hand, to exist is to fall within the category of a certain kind of thing; on the other hand, to exist is to be singular and thus to fall outside of all categories.[11] However, since this is a purely synchronous description of a structure that purports to be universal, it must be supplemented with a diachronic aspect which configures the two principles on the axis of time. This involves a major shift, because the substitutability in question is no longer a purely formal matter of structural identity. It is now also a matter of concrete existence. First, the principle of nonsubstitutability may be seen as structuring the present: if two things exist concurrently, they are substitutable only formally, with respect to some categorial act, but never insofar as their singular existence is concerned. The present, in other words, is always formal, and formal considerations take place in a structural present. Conversely, therefore, the principle of substitutability must be seen as structuring the past and the future: if one thing is to substitute for another, not only formally but materially, it cannot do this except through a temporal passage in which a thing *comes to exist in place of another that ceases to exist* with respect to the aspect of its substitution. Evidently, this mode of substitution does not cease to be formal, because there must still be some point of similarity with respect to which the past thing and future thing are substitutable; but the formality at issue here is a very strange one, because this

---

11   At bottom the singular is congruous only with itself: nothing, not even its essence, can be substituted for it. Whether it follows from this that singularity undermines categoriality—thereby destroying the tension between the two—depends in great part on the nature of the criterion by which a category is defined. In his discussion of substitution *salva congruitate*, Willard Van Orman Quine observes that when "fortuitous occurrences are counted in", e.g. purely phonemic relations in the case of assertive sentences, our categories "threaten to end up with one [member] apiece". W. V. Quine, *Philosophy of Logic, 2ⁿᵈ Edition* (Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1986), 18. In this sense, it might be suggested that fortuity, as a factor tending towards singularization, is also a *principium individuationis*: what *chances to happen* to this thing—just this thing and no other—or, in the case of substitution, to just *these* things and no others—is what distinguishes and sets it apart from other things.

point of similarity has no concrete existence beyond the *present of substitution* where past and future may be seen to change places. It is here that the really interesting complications begin. Before elaborating what is specifically philological about the method, it will be useful to illustrate by means of an example what happens when past and future are substituted one for the other.

The example I have in mind is an object on display at London's Natural History Museum: a round block of wood that has been transformed, during the 2,300 years it has spent lying in a copper mine, into a solid piece of metal that has retained not only the shape but the very grain of the original wood. In other words, where there once existed a block of wood, with qualities pertaining solely to its being a block of wood, there now exists a block of copper that has distinctly and tantalizingly wood-like qualities—which it would not have if the block of wood had not existed before it. A paradoxical entity: since it is not a block of wood, its possession of those qualities is not a result of what it itself is, and yet it *has* those qualities—which, it is essential to note, cannot be accidental qualities, because they are necessary to its existence. Therefore, unless we are prepared to dismiss the whole object as accidental, we must ask whether our ontology has a place—and therefore an explanation—for this apparently fortuitous necessity.

Natural science, for its own part, will have no difficulty in despatching the question. As the organic materials decayed, the copper atoms that were so abundant in the surroundings took their place, and this happened so gradually that the shape of the object was permitted to remain intact. However, since the shape itself is accidental, there is no natural kind to which both blocks might be said to belong: that there is first one thing and then a second thing that have the same shape is simply a quirk—causally precipitated but devoid of all necessity—of the material world.

Natural science is therefore eminently able to conclude that there is no essential connection between the block of wood *qua* block of wood and the block of copper *qua* block of copper. Nor does the question seem to present any particular challenge to classical metaphysics, as we may infer from a strikingly similar exam-

ple to be found in Leibniz's *New Essays on Human Understanding*. In §4 of Chapter xxviii, Theophilus (i.e. Leibniz himself), replying to Philalethes' (i.e. Locke's) claim that the unity of a thing is a function of the organization of its parts, refutes this claim by appeal to the 'monad' as the substantial unity that underlies and persists through all surface-level alterations. As Leibniz writes:

> Organization or configuration alone, without an enduring principle of life which I call 'monad', would not suffice to make something remain numerically the same, i.e. the same individual. For the configuration can continue specifically without continuing individually. When an iron horse-shoe changes to copper in a certain mineral water from Hungary, the same kind of shape remains but not the same individual: the iron dissolves, and the copper, with which the water is impregnated, is precipitated and imperceptibly replaces it. But the shape is an accident, which does not pass from one subject to another (*de subjecto in subjectum*).[12]

My hypothetical scientist would thus agree with Leibniz on the essential tenuity of the proposed connection. If the two objects are linked only by shape—which in both cases, mine and Leibniz's, must be admitted to be accidental—nothing can be concluded from their succession that would have either scientific or metaphysical pertinence. The scientist and the metaphysician both allow that a replacement has taken place. But this replacement has in no way altered the essential being of either the anterior or the subsequent entity (assuming, that is, that the latter has any essential being). It is an unassailable objection: the block of copper, like the copper horse-shoe, is simply another individual, not indeed a real individual but a mere simulacrum, related only *per accidens* and not *per essentiam* to the individual in whose place it has come to exist.

And yet *it* exists and *not* the other. That is what calls for explanation; and that is what goes unexplained—or is explained only circumstantially—in the two accounts. In response to the double objection, therefore, it must be observed, first of all, that the two

---

12   G. W. Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, trans. and ed. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 232.

objects are not linked only by shape. Existing successively, they are also linked by time. And time, in this context, is primary with respect to shape, because it is only by virtue of time that shape obtains the capacity to connect a prior entity to a subsequent one. Yet it is not time alone that is primary, for what is also needed, in addition to a passive potential in the one and the active potential in the other, is an *essence*: a generic form—of which a shape is only a relatively superficial kind—which can be instantiated by several things either simultaneously or successively.[13] Or, as is the case with actual substitutions, *both* simultaneously *and* successively *at one and the same time*, which is precisely what is to be accounted for.

Therefore, when we turn to ask what it is for some thing to take the place of another, an account cannot be expected either from physics or from classical metaphysics. This is because, being governed by the principle of nonsubstitutability, which states that no entity can formally exist in place of another, both natural science and classical metaphysics carry out a reduction of the time of substitution. And since it is only in time that substitution can take place, since substitution cannot take place except in the erasure and replacement of one thing by another, any ontology that wishes to take the block of copper seriously and grant it ontological value must necessarily turn on the temporality of the substitution—in other words on the pastness and futurity of the things involved. There is a past thing and a future thing; the future thing takes the place of the past thing; and each gains from the other either its past or its future. In other words, when the block of wood is substituted by the block of copper, it is substituted by *the thing that is its future*: it will thereafter have its existence in the block of copper. Likewise, when the block of copper substitutes the block of wood, what it substitutes is *the thing that is its past*: it has no existence except the one given it by the block of wood. It is this curious double ex-

---

13   Leibniz partially acknowledges this in allowing that the configuration may continue *specifically* rather than *individually*. Here, "specifically" translates "*spécifiquement*"; as the translators note, this is "cognate with *espèce* which in this context is rendered by 'kind'" (Leibniz, *Essay*, 232n2). The shape is a kind; therefore, whether or not it can also be an essential kind, it cannot be denied at least some degree of individual reality.

change of past and future that characterizes temporal substitution, which is also the only substitution that can be called actual or existential, and it may be summed up in the following phrase: *each remains what it never was*. The phrase may appear paradoxical, but it is not intended as such. What it in turn furnishes is a third principle which accords to being and time themselves a substitutive origin. This principle of transformation states that, given the continuity between past and future, no object is completely destroyed as the object that it is: nothing is ever completely erased and replaced— not even the nothing that was primordially erased by the something that usurped its place. Nothing rather than something as the past of something, something rather than nothing as the future of nothing: *each remains what it never was*.

But these ventures into first philosophy cannot be continued without raising some rather formidable philosophical spectres. For one thing, a reader of Hegel would be almost entirely correct to claim that "each remains what it never was" is a speculative proposition (*spekulative Satz*)[14]; for another, it may seem like an attempt to reinvent the 'supplement of invention' which Derrida identifies in Schelling's *Einbildungskraft* and its capacity to make the totality absolutely manifest in the invention of the new;[15] and it would not be impossible to see in this principle of transformation, which seeks to account for the emergence of novelty while abiding by the law of non-contradiction, something akin to Quentin Meillassoux's notion of necessary contingency[16]. However, if speculative

14   A further resemblance may be discerned in the close parallelism between my substitutive derivation of something from nothing, i.e. of being from non-being, and Hegel's dialectical derivation or deduction of being from non-being in his brief remark on the classical dictum *Ex nihilo, nihil fit*. See G. W. F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 61-62. In this context, I am content simply to note this parallelism, the fate of which may be separately deduced from the equilibrium that my argument establishes here vis-à-vis the dialectic.

15   See Jacques Derrida: *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume 1*, trans. Peggy Kamuf et al, ed. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press 2007), 41-43.

16   For Meillassoux on non-contradiction, see his *After Finitude*, trans. Ray

philology has any claim to originality, this claim lies less in identifying these ontological problematics than in bringing a specifically philological perspective to bear on them. In other words, while it does expend a great deal of energy on metaphysical inquiry, its driving impulse is to find in linguistic objects, which are subject to the same principles as all other objects, events of substitution that are equally consequential for the part of reality that those linguistic objects adumbrate.

But if this is its driving impulse, how does that impulse work? I will facilitate my answer by drawing on Werner Hamacher's essay "95 Theses on Philology", which suggests that a philology worthy of its name is always an alternative to philosophy even as it contributes to the pursuit of philosophical goals. Thesis 10a states this view as follows:

> In contrast to philosophy, which claims to make statements about that which itself is supposed to have the structure of statements, philology appeals only to another language and only towards this other language. It addresses it and confers itself to it. It does not proceed from the givenness of a common language, but gives itself to a language that is unknown to it. Since it does this without heed and à corps perdu, it can remain unknown to itself; since it seeks a hold in the other language, in the one that appeals to philology, it can assume that it recognizes itself in this language. Out of a language of unknowing, it springs into a form of knowing. It defines itself as the mediation of nonknowing and know-

Brassier (London: Continuum, 2008), 67-71. Here, the resemblance lies in the fact that, somewhat like Meillassoux, I am attempting to construct an argument in which the facticity of what exists—i.e. "everything's capacity-to-be-other or capacity-not-to-be" (Ibid., 62)—does not require a transgression of logical laws or their subordination to another, more profound "logic", such as Hegelian dialectics. In other words, while it is true that the sentence "each remains what it never was" appears dialectical, my aim is to render this contradictory-seeming sentence a non-contradictory one that nevertheless retains its speculative character. On how this relates to Derridean deconstruction, which remains the basis on which my argument is formulated, see my "consistency-oriented" interpretation of Derrida's notion of iterability in "Iteration and Truth: A Fifth Orientation of Thought", *Cosmos & History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy*, 9.1 (2013): 161-182.

ing; determines itself as the bearer of the speech of the same to the same; becomes the methodical procedure of the securing of epistemic orders; and furthers—against itself—their hegemony. Philology loves and in the beloved forgets love.[17]

Here, philology is understood not as study but as *philia* of language. What Hamacher means by this is not a subjective desire for an external object, the mere penchant of an individual for this thing called language, but an understanding of language as what loves itself. Drawing on a distinction made by Aristotle, Hamacher explicates this self-loving of language by contrasting the propositional *logos apophantikos* with "another *logos*, one that does not say something about something and therefore can be neither true nor false"[18]. In this other *logos*, for which Aristotle finds no other example than prayer (*euchē*: plea, prayer, bidding[19]), Hamacher sees the properly philological "inclination of language to a language that is, for its own part, inclination towards it or another."[20] Language loves itself, because it loves the other in itself. Or, more precisely, language loves language, addresses its *euchē* to language, because the language which it addresses is not itself but another language.

Where speculative philology differs from the philology envisioned by Hamacher is in the other that it loves. For Hamacher, the concern with ontology is only one half of language and has to be supplemented by a concern with the "an-ontological".[21] Conversely, in speculative philology this concern with ontology is retained and kept at the forefront. As a philologization of being, it is at heart a philology that loves ontology. However, if it is to remain a philology, it must try not to forget that the being that it loves is philologized being. But how does it succeed in this? How does it avoid surrendering its ontophilia to the jurisdiction of philoso-

17   Werner Hamacher, "95 Theses on Philology", trans. Catherine Diehl, *Diacritics*, 39.1 (2009): 26.
18   Ibid., 26.
19   "There is not truth or falsity in all sentences: a prayer [*euchē*] is a sentence but is neither true nor false". Aristotle, *Categories* and *De Interpretatione*, trans. J. L. Ackrill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963/2002), 16b33, 45-46.
20   Hamacher, "95 Theses", 29.
21   Ibid., 30.

phy? More straightforwardly put: How can one pursue ontological questions by strictly philological means?

The strategy that speculative philology must follow in order to achieve this goal consists of two steps. The first step takes place within language: it is to affirm Hamacher's view that philology addresses language otherwise than as propositions. "If all propositions", he writes in Thesis 10b, "are not only capable of addition but in want of it—be it only in their demand to be heard, understood, answered—then propositions belong to a language that for its own part is not structured as proposition, but as claim, as plea, wish, or desire."[22] In other words, as Thesis 2 states, the "elements of language explicate one another: they offer additions to what has been said, speak for one another as witnesses, as advocates, and as translators which open that which *has been said* onto that which *is to be said*: the elements of language relate to one another as languages."[23] I emphasize the 'has been said' and 'is to be said', because the additive character of their relationship leads us to the second necessary step: to pair this addition of language to language with the addition of the future to the past—and thus to make of language a place where the substitution of a past thing by a future thing may be seen as taking place. To return to my previous example, there would be a language for the block of wood and a language for the block of copper, and the moments that speculative philology aims for are ones in which the same existential substitution is undergone on both strata. At such a moment, it is as if all four elements—the wood, the copper, and their respective languages—conspired *in the very being of the block* to give birth to something absolutely new: a reality and a language that find themselves broken up and rearranged, destroyed and created anew, by the introduction of an unforeseen element.[24]

---

22   Ibid., 27.
23   Ibid., 6, my emphases.
24   One way to characterize this element would be to treat it as analogous with Gilles Deleuze's notion of sense (*sens*). On the one hand, Deleuze notes, sense "does not exist outside the proposition which expresses it", while on the other hand "it is not at all the attribute of the proposition—it is rather the attribute of the thing or state of affairs" (Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans.

Speculative philology can thus be defined as a strategy for discovering such moments as they emerge in a particular context. In these moments, it may be said of all four elements that "each remains what it never was". Interpreted as an ontological *euchē*, it is no longer a proposition either of the identical or the speculative variety, but rather expresses the plea, prayer, or desire on the part of being itself that it might persist in the being that will come to supplant it.

II

What might this ontological *euchē* entail for the question of en-chantment? The answer to this question begins by going back to Wittgenstein's remark, the second of my three epigraphs. In that fragment, Wittgenstein reflects on the sentence, "A whole world of pain is contained in these words" and goes on to ask: "How *can* it be contained in them?—It is bound up with them. The words are like an acorn from which an *oak* tree can grow."[25] In German the last sentence reads as follows: "*Die Worte sind wie die Eichel, aus der ein Eichbaum wachsen kann.*"[26] Between the original and Peter Winch's translation (in all respects an able and faithful one) there is one interesting difference that may be of consequence to the argument

Mark Lester [London: The Athlone Press, 1990], 21). However, unlike sense, which Deleuze proposes should be added, alongside denotation, manifestation, and signification, as a *fourth dimension* of the proposition (ibid., 17-19), this un-foreseen element is not itself a dimension of the proposition at all. Rather, it is another *thing*, precisely as the block of copper *is* a new thing, which has both the proposition (that "each remains what it never was") and the state of affairs (that each remains what it never was) as two further dimensions in which it actuates itself. As such, therefore, it would not be erroneous, following another Deleuz-ian thread, to construe the block of copper as resembling the "dark precursor" that precedes and prepares the path for the coupling and resonance of disparate series. See Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 119-120.

25   Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, trans. Peter Winch (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 52e.

26   Ibid., 52.

pursued here. The difference is that, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'acorn' and 'oak' are etymologically unrelated, despite a long tradition of folk etymology claiming otherwise, whereas *Eichel* is a derivative of *Eiche*, the latter used here by Wittgenstein as the compound *Eichbaum*. 'Acorn', in other words, does not grow from 'oak' as the oak grows from the acorn or '*Eichel*' grows from '*Eiche*,' thereby falling out of the loop that persists in the German: the generation of words proceeds in inverse order from the generation of objects that they denote. And this leads the speculative philologist to ask the following question: If a whole world of pain can be contained in certain words, if this world can be bound up with them ("*mit ihnen zusammenhängen*"), might it not be the case that it is contained in them as the past *Eichel* is in the future *Eichbaum*? Might it be not simply the world of pain that grows from the words but also the words that grow from the world of pain—in which case it would be at one and the same time a *languaging of pain* and a *paining of language*?

A languaging of pain and a paining of language: that would be one apt way of describing John Crowley's novel *Little, Big*.[27] Yet only one, for what the novel brings to bear on language by means of language is much more than pain: what suffuses it is a feeling of hope mixed with longing, an aching wish or yearning always less than half articulate and never more than half fulfilled, spread out evenly across past, present, and future. The plot of the novel is as complex as its culture is rich, extending its hermetically and alchemically informed story arc through four generations of a family in upstate New York whose fate is bound by an inheritance of picture cards to the fate of faerie in the human world, and the little summary I will be able to give of it must abide by the dictates of my theme: anachantment as the substitution of a certain past by a certain future. Yet the smallness of my summary does not ultimately matter much, because, as I will endeavour to show, this theme is nothing other than the oak tree for which the novel is the acorn: the 'farewell' which binds the human world to the world of

27   John Crowley, *Little, Big* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney: HarperPerennial, 2006).

the gods—even as it remains unclear who is the subject and who the object of this farewell.

Not knowing how to begin, I begin. The place is called Edgewood, the rural estate that callow and well-read Smoky Barnable moves into as he joins the Drinkwater family, having fallen in love with and soon thereafter espoused Daily Alice, the older of Dr. Drinkwater's two daughters, whose qualities of far sight and deep humour have the virtue of dispelling the cloud of deep anonymity that had cloaked him since childhood. And yet, though the prophesied union of Barnable and Drinkwater effects a deep change in the man, as Daily Alice had long since learned from Grandfather Trout that it would, and though the nuptials themselves are celebrated in ways that strike Smoky as not altogether of this world, he remains, perhaps for reasons greater than any of them comprehends, as unconvinced of the family Tale as he is integral to it: for the Tale—which, like the word Somehow, is always capitalised on account of its importance, and, who knows, of its agency—seems to lay no greater store by belief than by disbelief in its literal truth. As if, that is, it were in any case a matter of literal truth, spending as they do, this population of card readers and dreamers of prophetic dreams, much of their time in the sniffing out of clues and mood-borne stirrings as to what it is all about: this life of theirs that somehow—Somehow—is also the life of the faeries, coiled around it as around an inner turn of a spiral, never quite sure where one world, the big one, ends and the other, the little, begins.

But I have spent enough time mimicking the book in a vain attempt to convey something of its air; better to let the book speak for itself. This is what Smoky thinks to himself, soon after his wedding to Daily Alice, when the true extent of the Tale, of its sway over Edgewood's denizens, begins its very slow taking of shape in his mind:

> He had been taken in here, adopted, it seemed not an issue that he would ever leave. Since nothing had before been said about their future together, he hadn't thought about it himself: he was unaccustomed to having a future is what it was, since his present

had always been so ill-defined.

But now, anonymous no more, he must make a decision. He put his hands behind his head, carefully so as not to disturb her still-fresh sleep. What sort of a person was he, if he was now a sort of a person? Anonymous, he had been as well everything as nothing; now he would grow qualities, a character, likes and dislikes. And did he like or dislike the idea of living in this house, teaching at their school, being—well, religious he supposed was how they would put it? Did it suit his character?

He looked at the dim range of snowy mountains which Daily Alice made beside him. If he was a character, he was probably a minor one: a minor character in someone else's story, this tall story he had got himself into. He would have his entrances and exits, contribute a line of dialogue now and then. Whether the character would be crabby schoolmaster or something else didn't seem to matter much, and would be decided along the way. Well then.

He examined himself carefully for feelings of resentment at this. He did feel a certain nostalgia for his vanished anonymity, for the infinity of possibilities it contained; but he also felt her breathing next to him, and the house's breathing around him, and in rhythm with them he fell asleep, nothing decided.[28]

This meditation occurs no more than a sixth part into the book: the acorn has sprouted, but much more is needed for it to grow into an oak. And copiously much does seem to take place: Auberon, son of Smoky and Daily Alice, heart set on testing his literary mettle as a soap opera screenwriter, ventures into the City, a place of sprawling decay and masses of thronging solitude, only to fall swiftly and unsalvageably in love with a woman nicknamed Titania, herself soon lost in search of the Destiny her magic-working great aunt had seen in her; Sophie, sister of Daily Alice, able to raise a moderate fever to serve as alibi and cover for her endless wanderings in a dreamspace not altogether or even at all of her own making, gives birth to a child, cherished by all the family, in whose place one windy night the faeries leave a changeling, a frightful and clayish thing, that has an air of diabolical mischief

---

28   Crowley, *Little, Big*, 95-96.

and an unhealthy appetite for fire; Ariel Hawksquill, grey-bunned mage and initiate into the mysteries of the *ars memoria* who seems at once less and more aged than her many decades, does cosmically fine-tuned battle with Russell Eigenblick, *soi disant* prophet, fox-haired and fleet-eyed yet incurably boorish, who, believing himself to be the reincarnated Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, gifts himself to the nation as its president and sinks it into the mare's nest of his dream of domination. And all this striving, intellectual and expressive, in order to convey a single mood: that of a memory yet to be recollected, without it being known when and by whom, the memory being dispersed evenly into pasts and futures that extend the Tale well beyond the Tale.

And, as for myself, I cannot claim that my wish to articulate this mood has been any more than half fulfilled: the description above shows all the signs of the "mental squint" that Lewis Carroll has his speaker jocularly extol in the poem "Poeta Fit, Non Nascitur".[29] Yet perhaps my squinting has not been entirely useless, for what I hope to have shown is the way and degree in which the novel bears out the claim, desire, and exhortation that the poet William Butler Yeats expresses early on in *The Celtic Twilight*, an outwardly slim yet inwardly expansive collection of strange folk-tales noted down by Yeats during his travels in the Irish countryside. There, in the first entry, "A Teller of Tales," Yeats writes (as in the epigraph):

> What is literature but the expression of moods by the vehicle of symbol and incident? And are there not moods which need heaven, hell, purgatory, and faeryland for their expression, no less than this dilapidated earth? Nay, are there not moods which shall find no expression unless there be men who dare to mix heaven, hell, purgatory, and faeryland together, or even to set the heads of beasts to the bodies of men, or to thrust the souls of men into the heart of rocks? Let us go forth, the tellers of tales, and seize whatever prey the heart long for, and have no fear. Everything exists, everything is true, and the earth is only a little

---

29   Lewis Carroll, *Phantasmagoria and Other Poems* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1869), 119.

dust under our feet.[30]

It would be possible to read this passage as romantically yearning for some higher realm of reality that transcends the pettiness of the ordinary one. Yet from the perspective developed in the previous section it would be more illuminating to read this as expressing an ontological *euchē*. Understood in this way, what Yeats says is not a proposition about moods in relation to supernatural creatures; it is rather a plea or a prayer extended towards them, the creatures themselves, in an attempt to coax them into language in such a way as to give to the "airy nothing" of the desired mood a "local habitation and a name"[31]. Within the space opened by this *euchē*, the tale is a thing that serves as an intermediary between mood and being, between affectivity and ontology, between the microcosm of emotions and the macrocosm of nonhuman reality.

That would be the philological reading of the passage. But what would *speculative* philology have to add to this? It is evident, first of all, that the expression of moods requires more than this or that supernatural creature, as if a demon were automatically terrifying or an angel automatically charming. If this were the case, it would suffice to say "demon" or "angel" to elicit the appropriate emotion, turning the world into a gigantic prayer tent. What is required, in addition, is that the creature bring to the tale something that is necessary for what it seeks to accomplish: *an object from which the tale conjures its prevailing mood*. Where mood is, there the tale links itself up, in the very grain and weave of its telling, with the things of which it speaks: faeries, ghosts, and goblins if the tale is folkishly supernatural, eldritch tomes of abominable revelation if less folkishly so, and so on and so forth. Yet, at the same time and for the same reasons, there appears to be a surplus internal to the mood that even the most exhaustive litany of objects cannot account for: it is as if there were some other thing for which the mood itself would be the expression.

30   William Butler Yeats, *The Celtic Twilight and a Selection of Early Poems* (New York: Signet, 1962), 33-34.
31   William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London & New York: Routledge, 1990), Act V, scene I, 16-17.

I will expand on this suggestion shortly. To summarise the above, it may be concluded that mood is not a merely subjective response to certain verbal suggestions, but rather another place, something like a self-existing dimension, where the tale is nothing other than the objects of which it tells. This place, in other words, is adjacent to but separate from the propositional stratum: with respect to the mood, which is not and cannot be a function of semantics, it is a matter of indifference whether one speaks of the mood as evoked by the tale or as surrounding the creatures in the tale. Mood is its own thing—or rather *does* its own thing, since a mood is never self-contained, as if it could be put in a jar and applied at will like jam over bread, but always a mood of something. A foreboding mood forebodes a coming event, a mournful mood mourns a past event, a buoyant mood relishes in the vivacious present. Mood belongs at one and the same time to the words and their referents, to the expression and the expressed. It is an oak of two acorns, growing equally from the tale that is told and the thing that it tells of. It is, in short, a symbol as the Romantics understood it, but it differs from all known definitions of the symbol in one key respect: it is not a sign at all but rather an experience. Mood is the symbolic *as lived*.

It follows from the symbolic nature of mood that its two faces are reversible. This reversibility is at the heart of the ontology of moods. If things express moods and moods express things, this is because the 'things' in this equation are not words or objects but combinations or calibrations of the two. The list above bears this out: the coming event comes as much into being as it does into language, the past event has left its trace both in being and in language, the vivacious present is as present in the world as it is in the word. Yet what is interesting here, in the case not only of supernatural tales but imaginary objects in general, is that the thing that the mood expresses cannot be the creature that expresses the mood. The fictional entity expresses the mood, but the mood, being a mood of something, expresses something else. And what is even more interesting, and indeed highly consequential for the question of disenchantment, is that this something else that the mood

expresses is nonetheless indistinguishable from the fictional object that expresses the mood: not a ghost but something that haunts like a ghost, not a demon but something that torments like one, not the chimera of ancient myth but something equally consisting of seemingly incongruous elements.

<div align="center">

III

</div>

Little, Big is a book of moods, and the many moods that it evokes are expressed by equally many elements of a fantastic, folkloric, esoteric, or magic-working nature: the cards that are read for portents, the memory mansions that open the mind to centuries of knowledge, not to mention the talking fish, prowling faeries, and electricity-generating orreries powered by the movement of the stars. But if these moods call on such objects for their expression, what object is it that these moods express? Above all, what object is expressed by the novel's 'farewell to the gods' that is rendered in such a heart-rendingly melancholy fashion? The questions that open up from this are too expansive to be elaborated at any length here, and I must jump at an answer that would not be out of place as the answer to a riddle: *time*.

In the novel, time is memory, and memory, depending on the character involved, is either a weapon of cosmic dimensions, as it is for power-hungry Hawksquill and Eigenblick, or a maze to be lost in, as it is for members of the Drinkwater clan, in degrees that vary from Smoky's amiable befuddlement to Auberon's heartbroken disarray. Considered philosophically, the weapon and the maze are only *faces* of time, time *for* one subject or another, and as such are no more than 'inklings' of time: not time itself but only partial apprehensions of it. However, from the perspective of moods, and specifically the mood of a 'farewell to the gods' whose address is uncertain, this opposition between time *in itself* and time *for us* is no longer a barrier but rather a permeable membrane. This is because, in the novel, it is precisely in the apprehension of its inscrutability that time comes to be experienced as such, in

itself, in excess of any aspect to which it might be subjectively re-
duced. This much can be said with confidence, because this is what
the Tale ultimately means: as ineffable as it is inexorable, it takes
the measure of everything that would measure it, as Hawksquill at
the height of her endeavour seeks to do with her *ars memoria*, and
skews it faintly but fatefully out of proportion, making of even the
mightiest effort to comprehend it a mere castle of air. And this fate
awaits not only the mightiest effort, but even the most modest one,
exemplified by Smoky, who has no notion of the Tale except as an
'inkling' and is thereby made all the more sensitive to what time
feels like. A scene very late in the book finds him in the midst of
the following thought:

> Had that been the moment, Smoky wondered; had it been that
> moment, when he had turned in at those stone gateposts for the
> first time, that the charm had fallen on him, not ever after that to
> release him? The arm and hand with which he held the carpet-
> bag tingled like a warning bell, but Smoky didn't hear it.

> [...]

> On that day: the day he had first gone in at Edgewood's door and
> then in some sense never again back out.

> Perhaps: or it may have been before that, or after it, but it wasn't
> a matter of figuring out when exactly the first charm had invaded
> his life, or when he had stumbled unwittingly into it, because an-
> other had come soon after, and another, they had succeeded one
> another by a logic of their own, each one occasioned by the last
> and none removable; even to try to disentangle them would only
> be the occasion for further charms, and anyway they had never
> been a causal chain but a series of removes, Chinese boxes one
> inside the other, the further in you went the bigger it got. And it
> didn't end now: he was about to step into a new series, endless,
> infundibular, utter. Appalled by a prospect of endless variation,
> he was only glad that some things had remained constant: Alice's
> love chief among them. It was toward them that he journeyed,
> the only thing that could draw him; and yet he felt that he left it

behind; and still he carried it with him.[32]

We have seen this sentiment before. It is essentially the same one that Smoky is groping towards in the night-thought quoted earlier: the feeling, as much a recollection as it is an anticipation, that when the Tale has run its course and come to an end, to the final remove of a series of removes, there will be no remembering of what is utterly past, of what is lost to all possibility of memory, except in the telling of a tale that is just that—a tale, but a tale with time in it, contained, to return to Wittgenstein's simile, like an oak tree in an acorn. This time is not a theorized time, or time used as a yardstick for the measurement of worldly things, but time when felt as a warp of the Tale, as a bend or curve of the story Smoky finds himself in—and to which he is now obliged, at this final remove, to bid a 'farewell' of whose character and implications he is hardly more knowledgeable than he was at the very beginning. It is this knowledge that the last sentence quoted imparts: journeying towards the things that remain constant, he feels that they are no less in the past than they are in the future or the present.

What I have given here is itself only an inkling of the book. The only thing that remains for me here is to draw out what this 'time of a farewell' implies for the hypothesis of *an inherently affective zone in nonhuman reality*—the nonhuman reality here being time itself, considered neither as Kant's form of inner sense nor as Meillassoux's non-totalisable transfinitude of possibilities, which would amount to a betrayal of the book and the singular metaphysics that it shadows forth, but as something that can come to expression only in the form of a mood. The suggestions to be made here can only be brief, and I will restrict them to the ontological principle that in Section II emerged as the most important one for speculative philology: the existential substitution of one thing by another whereby *each remains what it never was*. In view of this principle, what I will suggest is that nonhuman time, when it is expressed by a mood, is indistinguishable from what expresses the mood—the consequence being that the substitutions to which the mood at-

---

32   Crowley, *Little, Big*, 530-531.

tests concern time as much as they do the immediate object of the mood. For example: if, as happens in *Little, Big*, death is envisioned as a long falling asleep into a vivid dream that weaves the moment of dying smoothly into itself, the mood that this envisioning evokes has implications with regard to time itself. And to expand this example further: if, as happens to members of the Drinkwater clan, to die in this semi-oneiric fashion is to pass from the world of humans to that of faery, then there may be some aspect to time itself that comes to expression only through the mood that this passage evokes.

That, in brief, is the argument, and I begin it by invoking an event of substitution in which "the world of the utilizable vanishes and the world of magic appears in its place"[33]. This quotation comes from Jean-Paul Sartre's early essay *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*. What Sartre points to here is the moment in which the subject, falling captive to an emotion, ceases to constitute the world as a stable totality of predictable and utilisable relations and transforms it instead into a world of emotions in which "the categories of the world act immediately upon the consciousness."[34] Rather than weave in and out of Sartre's argumentation, which I have examined at length in another essay,[35] I will draw a long citation that will serve as a benchmark for the reflections to follow. Sartre writes:

> [I]t is constitutive of emotion that it attributes to the object something that infinitely transcends it. Indeed, there is a world of emotion. All emotions have this in common, that they evoke the appearance of a world, cruel, terrible, bleak, joyful, etc., but in which the relations of things to consciousness are always and exclusively magical. We have to speak of a world of emotion as one speaks of a world of dreams or of worlds of madness. A

33   Jean-Paul Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, trans. Philip Mairet (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 60-61.
34   Sartre, *Sketch*, 60.
35   "Tractatus Logico-Magicus: A Definition of Magic in Three Throws of the Die", in *Correspondences: Journal for the Study of Esotericism*, 7.2, (2019): 305-337.

world—that means individual syntheses in mutual relations and possessing qualities. But no quality is conferred upon an object without passing over into the infinite. This grey, for instance, represents the units of an infinity of real and possible *abschattungen*, some of which will be grey-green, some grey seen in a certain light, black, etc. Similarly, the qualities that emotion confers upon the object and upon the world, it confers upon them *ad aeternum*. True, when I suddenly conceive an object to be horrible I do not explicitly affirm that it will remain horrible for eternity. But the mere affirmation of horribleness as a substantial quality of the object is already, in itself, a passage to the infinite. The horrible is now in the thing, at the heart of it, is its emotive texture, is constitutive of it. Thus, during emotion an overwhelming and definitive quality of the thing makes its appearance. And that is what transcends and maintains our emotion. Horribleness is not only the present state of the thing, it is a menace for the future, it is a revelation about the meaning of the world.[36]

For Sartre, magic is not a merely empirical or anthropological category of human action: it is an essential way in which consciousness can be in the world.[37] Furthermore, there is no emotion that is not magical, because all emotions effect the same transformation of the world: no longer a network of determined causes and effects, it is lived according to the belief of which the emotion is at once the bodily and the conscious expression. Drawing an in-

---

36   Sartre, *Sketch*, 53-54.
37   Here as elsewhere in his early work, Sartre's deployment of Husserlian and Heideggerian themes and motifs, not all of which are handled with the same degree of conceptual accuracy or textual fidelity (a case in point being the notorious translation of *Dasein* as '*realité-humaine,*' 'human reality'), proceeds in a rather eclectic and unsystematic manner. In the present context, the most obvious incongruity is his construal of emotion without reference to the notion of mood (*Stimmung*, 'accord') in Heidegger's *Being and Time*. This incongruity is addressed—though only partially—in the only study thus far to have been devoted solely to Sartre's notion of magic, Daniel O'Shiel's *Sartre and Magic: Being, Emotion, and Philosophy* (London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2019). Thus, given that emotion is seen here in intentional terms, with 'magic' then denoting an involuntary alteration of the structure of intentionality, the essay as a whole may be read in the context his critique of Husserl.

triguing distinction between a 'formal' quality and the 'substance' of that quality, Sartre says that in order to be truly seized by this quality "we have not only to mime it, we must be spell-bound and filled to overflowing by our own emotion, the shape and form of our behaviour must be filled with something opaque and weighty that gives it substance."[38] Or, as he says a little further on: "A consciousness becoming emotional is rather like a consciousness dropping asleep. The one, like the other, slips into another world and transforms the body as a synthetic whole so as to be able to live and to perceive this other world through it."[39] It is a truly mythical power that Sartre gives here to emotion: the power of fashioning real worlds out of irreal sensations.

This last passage from Sartre is more important than one might expect. Without it ever having been possible for him to do this intentionally, Sartre has given us the acorn in which the emotional universe of *Little, Big* is contained. In this universe, it is evidently the 'farewell' that is its dominant emotion: it gives shape and form to the behaviour of the characters. But if that is the case, what then is the opaque and weighty 'something' by which it does that? If my argument holds, it must be 'time' on the one hand and 'the gods' on the other, the latter expressing the emotion that in turn expresses the former; but in order for this argument to hold, all three aspects, the 'farewell' and the 'time' and 'the gods', must ally themselves with some world, and some body in that world, within which they may be contained. But what might that body or that world be? And by force of what belief might that body slip into that world?

There is such a belief, and it is one that we have already seen above. It is the belief that death can be a long falling asleep into a vivid dream that weaves the moment of dying smoothly into itself. And what is remarkable is that it not only modulates the parallel Sartre draws between becoming emotional and falling asleep. For beyond that, the description given of this moment of dying—Alice, having heard the story from her husband Smoky, knowing

38   Sartre, *Sketch*, 49.
39   Ibid., 51.

that she must be the one to set the Tale in motion towards its end, is relating it to her sister Sophie—bears out in extraordinary detail Sartre's account of the magical character of the world of emotion:

> "It won't be long", Alice said. That too she was sure of, or believed or hoped she was sure of; she tried, searching in herself, to find that certainty: to find the calm delight, the gratitude, the exhilaration she had felt when she had begun to understand what conclusion it was all to have, the half-scared, half-puissant sense that she had lived her whole life as a chick inside an egg, and then got too big for it, and then found a way to begin to break it, and then had broken it, and was now about to come forth into some huge, airy world she could have no inkling of, yet bearing wings to live in it that were still untried. She was sure that what she knew now, they would all come to know, and other things still more wonderful, and more wonderful yet; but in the cold old room at the dark end of night, she couldn't quite feel it alive within her. She thought of Smoky. She was afraid; as afraid as if...
>
> "Sophie," she said softly. "Do you think it's death?"
>
> Sophie had fallen asleep, her head resting against Alice's shoulder. "Hm?" she said.
>
> "Do you think that dying is what it really is?"
>
> "I don't know," Sophie said. She felt Alice trembling beside her. "I don't think so. But I don't know."
>
> "I don't think so either," Alice said.
>
> Sophie said nothing.
>
> "If it is, though," Alice said, "it isn't... what I thought."
>
> "You mean dying isn't? Or that place?"
>
> "Either." She pulled the afghan more closely around them. "Smoky told me, once, about this place, in India or China, where ages ago when somebody got the death sentence, they used to

give him this drug, like a sleeping drug, only it's a poison, but very slow-acting; and the person falls asleep at first, deep asleep, and has these very vivid dreams. He dreams a long time, he forgets he's dreaming even; he dreams for days. He dreams that he's on a journey, or that some such thing has happened to him. And then, somewhere along, the drug is so gentle and he's so fast asleep that he never notices when, he dies. But he doesn't know it. The dream changes, maybe; but he doesn't even know it's a dream, so. He just goes on. He only thinks it's another country."[40]

Alice is imagining death as another country and dying as the journey there. At first, she does not quite believe in what she feels to be true; then, having spoken of it to her sister, she not only believes it but knows she must be the first to make that journey. "And if there were now to be a migration to that land", she thinks to herself, "each emigrant would have to make the place he traveled to, make it out of himself. It was what she, pioneer, would have to do: make out of her own death, or what just now seemed like her death, a land for the rest of them to travel to. She would have to grow large enough to contain the whole world, or the whole great world turn out to be small enough after all to fit within the compass of her bosom."[41] What occurs here is a transformation of the body into a world, and of a world into a body, so that death itself might *be* a world rather than the *end* of the world. Or, more precisely, so that it might be said of life and death, each the ultimate substitute of the other, that *each remains what it never was.*

The ontological *euchē* of the novel is thus a desire for what Jacques Derrida calls *survivance*: not mere survival but *living on*.[42] Smoky and Alice, Sophie and Auberon, great-aunt Cloud and the rest of the Drinkwaters, all migrate into this country of death in which they may live on, neither mortal nor immortal but mythical, exuberant in a gladness and a gratitude that are only heightened

---

40   Crowley, *Little, Big*, 487-488.
41   Ibid., 488-489.
42   See Jacques Derrida, "Living On/Borderlines", trans. James Hulbert, in *Parages*, trans. John P. Leavey et al, ed. John P. Leavey (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011), 103-191.

by the loss, the heartbreak, and the longing that shape them. It does not detract from either the gladness or the sorrow of this survival that they are only a function of the story. "One by one", the novel begins its last paragraph, "the bulbs burned out, like long lives come to their expected ends. Then there was a dark house made once of time, made now of weather, and harder to find; impossible to find and not even as easy to dream of as when it was alight. Stories last longer: but only by becoming only stories"[43]. To have read the novel is to have read the world of pain contained in these words.

But by now the speculative philologist must have awoken to the sound of heavy questions falling. What has become of the 'anachantment' of which this essay promised to give an account? What is to be said of the 'farewell to the gods' that disenchantment was claimed to be? Has anything been said here that can answer the most burning question of all: are we or are we not disenchanted? Yes or no?

There is no doubt that the gods have flown. In the novel, the gods are the faery, and the whole Tale is the tale of their withdrawal from the human world. The cosmos of the novel is one in which there are worlds within worlds, smaller ones nested in larger ones and ever receding, and after many odd and unforeseeable gyrations the time has come for the faery to withdraw one level down. And yet this departure is not final, for the Drinkwaters who have always been bound up with them are fated to take their place: they, too, are made to take one step inwards, transporting themselves into a world where it is they who are the faery. The gods, it is true, have bidden farewell, but theirs is a farewell that is not easily recognized as one: for it is felt only in the farewell that we the readers feel within ourselves as we see the characters fall into their deathly dreams. Not only have the gods flown; the only gods we have are those who have died.

The only gods we have are those who have died. But does this mean that the world has been disenchanted? Or does it confirm the suspicion that was voiced at the start of this essay: that

43   Crowley, *Little, Big*, 538.

there has never been an *enchanted* world that might subsequently be disenchanted? If there never has been such a world, where does that leave us with respect to the gods? Are they to be understood as nothing more than images of human emotions—that they reside, as William Blake says in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, "within the human breast"?[44] And if they are to be thus understood, what are we to think of emotions that call for expression in supernatural forms so that they might be felt at the depth and with the intensity that we have found in Crowley's novel? For, having immersed ourselves in the emotional sea-changes it puts us through, it seems as though it were nearly impossible to be apprised of some very real things without the intermediary of the fantastic.

This is the mood that the word 'anachantment' is given to express. In conceptualizing this expression, the present essay has sought to draw out, both philosophically and philologically, its implications for what I called the 'inherent metaphysics' of the word 'enchantment'. But if this is the mood that is expressed, what does it express in its turn? Will the thought of anachantment be forced to enter "a series of removes, Chinese boxes one inside the other, the further in you went the bigger it got,"[45] with no end in sight? This is a question that calls for further thought, a fresh venture into the world of gods that cannot be undertaken here; yet such a venture should take its bearings from the circumstance that what *is to be said* of it does not differ much from something that *has been said*. After all, it seems that I have been trying all this while to affirm what Yeats says in "Belief and Unbelief", the text that immediately follows "A Teller of Tales":

> It is better doubtless to believe much unreason and a little truth than to deny for denial's sake truth and unreason alike, for when we do this we have not even a rush candle to guide our steps, not even a poor sowlth to dance before us on the marsh, and must needs fumble our way into the great emptiness where dwell the mis-shapen dhouls. And after all, can we come to so great evil

---

44   William Blake, *The Complete Poems*, edited by Alice Ostraker (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1977), 186.
45   Crowley, *Little, Big*, 530.

if we keep a little fire on our hearths and in our souls, and wel-
come with open hand whatever of excellent come to warm itself,
whether it be man or phantom, and do not say too fiercely, even
to the dhouls themselves, "Be ye gone"?[46]

Conclusion

Be ye gone: disenchantment not as state but as *spell*.[47] The pre-
vious pages have shown me that I was wrong: to disenchant the
world is not to bid farewell to the gods. To disenchant the world is
to utter this spell that banishes the dhouls—and along with them
everything of value that these devils might tell us of realities such
as time and death. There is no 'farewell' here but at best a 'good
riddance'. However, it is not *re-enchantment* that succeeds in coun-
teracting this banishment and uttering a true and lasting 'farewell'.
To the contrary. Struggling against having to say 'farewell', insist-
ing that the gods have neither flown nor died, re-enchantment can-
not avoid incurring against itself the spell of disenchantment. This
is because they are what I called canons of feeling and perceiving.
A canon of feeling states that as reality is, so must one feel about
it; a canon of perceiving states that as one feels about reality, so
must it be. As such canons, disenchantment and re-enchantment
are locked in an irresolvable contradiction, a dialectic without ei-
ther positive or negative issue. This is because reality is always *more*
enchanted than disenchantment claims and *less* enchanted than
re-enchantment would wish it to be.

Not so with anachantment. It *mourns* the passing of the gods.
And thus, as Derrida says of mourning, it interiorizes them, keep-

---

46   Yeats, *The Celtic Twilight*, 35.
47   I am not the first to describe disenchantment as a spell: Egil Asprem, a
scholar of esotericism, has made a similarly critical use the idea. The context of
his discussion, however, which casts a critical eye on modern attempts to "break
the spell of disenchantment" by means of a "re-enchantment of science", nei-
ther permits nor requires him to elaborate its properly philological implications.
See Egil Asprem, *The Problem of Disenchantment: Scientific Naturalism and Esoteric
Discourse* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 62-66.

ing them dead-alive within Blake's "human breast" or Crowley's "compass of her bosom"[48]. To anachant the world is to accept, even to affirm, the death of the gods; but this affirmation neither banishes nor pines after them. To *anachant* the world is to welcome the departed gods *as departed*. And this means being taught by what they leave in the wake of their departure—and this even when the teachings are painful either to our rational minds or our disenchanted hearts. Finally, if anachantment expresses a mood—if it establishes a third canon both of feeling and of perceiving—it is a mood that is much needed if the world of the gods and the godless world are not to be opposed to one another as 'secular' and 'religious' or 'buffered' and 'porous' modes of being in the world.[49] Far better, in my view, to look in the present for those elusive moments in which these two worlds find their way into our human breast, into the compass of our bosom, there to *remain*, in that image-form which I have called the symbolic as lived, *what they never were*: each the past and the future of the other, furnishing through the very chiasma of their substitution a means for humans to fulfil, "even

48   As Derrida says in his eulogy to Louis Marin: "Whatever the truth, alas, of this inevitable interiorization (the friend can no longer be but *in us*, and whatever we may believe about the afterlife, about living-on, according to all the possible forms of faith, it is *in us* that these movements might appear), this being-in-us reveals a truth *to and at death*, at the moment of death, and even before death, by everything in us that prepares itself for and awaits death, that is, in the undeniable anticipation of mourning that constitutes friendship. [...] *We are speaking of images*. What is only *in us* seems to be reducible to images, which might be memories or monuments, but which are reducible in any case to a memory that consists of *visible* scenes that are no longer anything but *images*, since the other of whom they are the images appears only as the one who has disappeared or passed away, as the one who, having passed away, leaves 'in us' only images." Jacques Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, trans. and ed. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 159.

49   The latter distinction, on which this essay may be read as an extended reflection, is drawn by Charles Taylor in his book *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

on their refractory planet, the essential function of the universe, which is a machine for the making of gods."[50]

---

50   Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. R. Ashley Audra & Cloudesley Brereton (Henry Holt and Company: New York, 1935), 306.