

## Thank You, Mr Wittgenstein

Dear Mr Wittgenstein,

Thank you for your interesting submission. As distinct from the telephone directory, long on character but short on plot, your piece would seem to have neither. It is true that you introduce facts, items, objects, things and states of affairs quite early in the work, but your attempts to develop them fall short of capturing our interest. We cannot sympathize with an item, unless it shows us something which we can identify as our own. Your items have no goals, no yearnings, no feelings. You could at least give them names, and some simple description.

Ludwig is a tall, pale object with a tendency to melancholy, perhaps not fully in touch with his sexual nature. Marguerite is a plump, mischievous item with a dazzling smile. Now let these items interact. "There is no object that we can imagine excluded from the possibility of combining with others." Your words, Mr Wittgenstein.

Your profound insight, that the possibilities must be inherent in a thing from the beginning, might constitute a powerful theme for your piece, but please don't tell us, show us. Ludwig and Marguerite may well combine, but the possibilities of their combination are ultimately limited by some incompatibility in their inherent qualities, their natures.

The determined fatalism of your outlook can be brought alive to the reader by some simple device. Ludwig's footsteps echo as he runs down the platform. With a gust of steam and smoke the train pulls out. Ludwig goes to the station café to wait for the next one. There is Marguerite, sipping a coffee and munching a Sacher Torte. He is instantly drawn to her. "Nothing is accidental," muses Ludwig.

Independence, expressed as the potential for dependence in different situations, is a form of dependence. This is a wonderful idea. Marguerite is on the rebound from a tragic relationship with a mentally unstable expressionist painter, and has sworn to steer clear of men, particularly tall pale ones, but finds that she cannot exist in a void. She is drawn inexorably into the vortex of Ludwig's strange attraction.

Ludwig experiences a yearning to become acquainted with Marguerite's internal properties. "Then I would truly know her, and all possibilities would be clear," he rhapsodizes.

Now, you see, Mr Wittgenstein, we have goals, and we have an action that may be expressed in a series of (ideally three) acts.

Ludwig's fatal flaw, as I'm sure you have realized, is that he does not know his own internal properties, and consequently many possibilities and states of affairs are unknown to him.

Ludwig comes to know Marguerite better, but is constantly troubled by a sense of separateness, of loneliness, even in her presence. "Each item can be the case or not the case, while everything else remains the same," he remarks to her glumly one morning over Palatschinken. Marguerite, used to his moods, does not reply immediately, but helps herself to another serving of pancakes.

But Marguerite is coming to understand that something prevents Ludwig from expressing his feelings. "What's going on?" she weeps.

"Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent," murmurs Ludwig.

On the surface so true, Mr Wittgenstein, and yet this concept is anathema to the struggle for understanding of ourselves. You are perhaps expressing a fear that introspection, that uncovering of one's own deepest secrets, may lead to disaster, to a truth with the knowledge of which one cannot exist. Overcome this fear, Mr Wittgenstein, and a vista of infinite possibility opens before you.

"Don't you want me, Ludwig?" demands Marguerite in desperation.

"The will as a phenomenon is of interest only to psychology," Ludwig replies, avoiding her eyes.

Upset and in need of respite, Marguerite goes to visit her aunt, who runs a Konditorei in Linz.

Lonely and confused, Ludwig waits for Marguerite to return. Outside the station he leans against a post, observing her approach from afar.

"There can never be surprises in logic," sobs Ludwig helplessly as Marguerite sweeps past without a glance.

"The world is all that is the case," Ludwig sighs. The echoes of his slow footsteps recede in the gathering dusk.

You see, Mr Wittgenstein? It's not so hard.

Sincerely,

Priscilla T. Cornish (Miss)