

'Pataphysics and 'Pataphors: A Dialectical Approach

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I explain the main concepts of 'pataphysics and apply them to 'pataphors. The creator of 'pataphysics, Alfred Jarry, characterizes his new science: 'Pataphysics is as far from metaphysics as metaphysics is from physics, and 'pataphysics is the science of imaginary solutions. All this must be understood before we move to 'pataphors, which represent a novel way of handling metaphors, schematically: Basis > Metaphorization > 'Pataphor. We use the newly created metaphor to describe the facts of a novel world, which form the 'pataphor in question. In this way, a 'pataphor uses a metaphorical similarity as a reality with which to base itself. I suggest that we approach 'pataphors dialectically, starting from a particular 'pataphor instead of the basis: 'Patamoment > 'Pataphor > Metaphorization > Basis. I illustrate all this by starting from the memory of a love story that leads us through its metaphorization back to the basic scene on a street corner in Turku. I explain in detail how a 'pataphor is created by means of the dialectical approach. Note, the original approach allows the basis to create an infinite number of 'pataphors while my new approach restricts them to a singleton.

Elementary Methodological Considerations

Alfred Jarry is the father of 'pataphysics. He was a poet, novelist, playwright, puppeteer, and translator. His biographer Alastair Brotchie (2015) writes, “Jarry is firmly established as one of the leading [French] figures of the artistic avant-garde.” He argues that Jarry lived a 'pataphysical life creating himself through his artistic work and destroying himself with alcohol and an irregular lifestyle. The key text on 'pataphysics is Jarry’s posthumously published *Dr. Faustroll* (1911/1996), which is a “Neo-scientific Novel.” Therefore, 'pataphysics is an eccentric combination of literature and philosophy of science — this is reflected in the

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structure of the present article, too. A 'patapaper cannot be a standard journal article but rather its parody or falsification of the genre.

The name 'pataphysics displays an apostrophe, which indicates something missing or eliminated, presumably because everybody already knows what is missing — not so in this case. When discussing cars, we know what a 'box is: gearbox. 'Pataphysics, therefore, hides something, but what? — presumably its definition. 'Pataphysics is as far from metaphysics as metaphysics is from physics. 'Pataphysics is the science of imaginary solutions and leads practitioners to novel worlds. These supplement the actual world (Brotchie, 2015; Clarke, 2018; Hugill, 2015; Jarry, 1911/1996; O'Dair, 2014). 'Pataphysics is a science of exceptions and concerns the laws that govern them. Such laws suggest generalized equivalences: everything is equal, especially inconsistencies, contradictions, and oxymorons, because everything is imaginary. 'Pataphysics is, as already said, the science of imaginary solutions. This reflects the principle of ambiguation: the meanings or contents of concepts and thoughts tend to overlap.

An epiphenomenon is a crucial notion: a secondary phenomenon, like thought as an epiphenomenon that supervenes upon brain activity. Or thought is an emergent quality of the brain. Other related and useful ideas in this context are emanation and realization. The meaning of words like epiphenomena, supervenience, emanation, emergence, and realization agree. The basic idea is that something X comes about only because of Y when X and Y are mutually non-homogeneous sets of objects.¹

'Pataphysics is as far from metaphysics as metaphysics is from physics. This platitude looks like it came from Aristotle. The term metaphysics originally means “after physics,” but only because *Metaphysics* comes after *Physics* in the traditional ordering of his books — and this is all. What metaphysics is, is a murky question in academic philosophy, and it is impossible to answer how it relates to physics. Metaphysics is a loose family resemblance term: we may specify sufficient conditions, unlike necessary ones. In modern philosophy, “metaphysics” is a market-driven trade label.

'Pataphysics is a science of exceptions, making it one of the *ideographic sciences* like history, unlike the *nomothetical sciences* like physics. The distinction is due to the Prussian neo-Kantian philosopher Wilhelm Windelband (1848–1915) — perhaps Alfred Jarry should have known this. In historical research, everything is exceptional and, as such, unpredictable. We cannot explain historical events and processes by the Hempel–Oppenheim model because we would need lawlike

¹ *Britannica* (<https://www.britannica.com/>) defines *supervenience* as follows: “In philosophy, the asymmetrical relation of ontological dependence that holds between two generically different sets of properties (e.g., mental and physical properties) if and only if every change in an object's properties belonging to the first set — the supervening properties — entails and is due to a change in properties belonging to the second set (the base properties).” Cf. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/epiphenomenalistic-materialism> about *epiphenomena*.

propositions. Instead, we read, narrate, and interpret individual events and their relations (Woodward and Ross, 2021).

What about those laws that grant exceptions? We may look at Karl Popper's falsificationist philosophy of science (Popper, 2007, 2013). As a scientist, I locate a problem and present a hypothesis to solve it. The process utilizes an educated guess and a suggested explanation, resulting in an answer to the problem. Next, I try to falsify the hypothesis. Suppose I am successful. Now I need a strange new hypothesis. I continue my falsification attempts until I fail; therefore, I accept the hypothesis and call it a (provisional) truth and a valid scientific position. However, I cannot call the hypothesis unfalsifiable because science progresses in time, unlike pseudoscience, which makes future falsification possible. We must keep in mind the distinction between unfalsified and unfalsifiable hypotheses. No meaningful empirical proposition is, in principle, unfalsifiable.

In the Popperian context, we always play with exceptions. We try to find an exception to a lawlike hypothesis. We try to falsify a potential law, which is a general proposition. In other words, we try to find an individual exception that falsifies the lawlike proposition in question. If no attempted falsification works, and we cannot imagine others, we have discovered a law covering all the potential exceptions. Popper is a 'pataphysicist. And notice that all hypotheses are imaginary solutions to scientific problems. A scientist formulates a lawlike proposition and imagines specific falsifying conditions, which he hopes do not apply. 'Pataphysics can be incorporated into the Popperian philosophy of science where it gets the new lease on life it may deserve.

Perhaps surprisingly, at this point, we also need to discuss miracles in the traditional Christian sense (Gurevitch, 1990, Ch. 2, and p. 205). Roughly, a natural event is a miracle if and only its occurrence is contrary to valid natural laws, yet it does not refute them. Let us systematize this. Suppose we recognize a natural law, L, and experience a novel natural event, A, when A is anomalous to L. What are our possible epistemic attitudes in such a situation? We can organize them as follows:

- (i) Accept A and therefore reject L. (refutation)
- (ii) Accept A and accept L. (miracle)
- (iii) Reject A and accept L. (error)
- (iv) Reject A and L. (not possible)

(i) A is now a counterexample to L, which we must reject or modify (Popper, 2007). (ii) We can accept A and L together, which means their somehow illusory mutual compatibility (miracle): *Credo quia absurdum*, or as Tertullian said: "Prorsus credibile est, quia ineptum est." (iii) We may reject A and call it an error that fails to invalidate L. Finally (iv), which may or may not represent a 'pataphoric intuition. Anyway, 'pataphysics is the science of *miracles* in case it accepts (ii): exceptions are once again more fundamental than laws.

Next, what about the principle of equivalence — or ambiguation and indifference? Hegel's logic is 'pataphysical because it accepts the dialectical unity of certain contradictions. The orthodox Marxist logic and science follow suit. The simplest and most basic Hegelian example is this: pure being (*Sein*) is being without properties, but without properties, being is nothing (*Nichts*); therefore, being becomes non-being (*Werden*) [Hegel, 1812/1986, I.1.1]. We can extend this idea to existence: existence without characteristics is nothing, and nothing means non-existence. Take a rose and eliminate all its features; you will lose the rose. The rose becomes nothing. Add enough properties to what used to be a rose, and again it is something. How many should you add? One cannot tell — which exemplifies the sorites paradox, or the paradox of the heap.

The fundamental principles here are indifference, equivocation, and ambiguity. For instance, a miracle exemplifies ambiguation: we accept an anomalous observation and the relevant law. Roman Catholic Church still plays this weird game when they canonize new saints. Saints perform miracles by default, while good people may witness them (Gurevitch, 1990, Ch. 2). Did Alfred Jarry perform miracles? The amount of alcohol he consumed is miraculous; it should have killed him (Brotchie, 2015, p. 259). Does this make him a 'patasaint?

We need not allude to the identity of opposites when we say that specific terms are so ambiguous that they do not allow separation. Love and hate may mean the same: "For each man kills the thing he loves," says Oscar Wilde. Contingency and necessity are identical, as I will show below. After all, according to Alfred Jarry, words have no fixed meanings. George Orwell's *Newspeak* (Gerovitch, 2004, Ch. 1) and Charles Dickens's *Mr. Pickwick* utilize the same idea.²

Everything said is ultimately to be accepted in some convoluted conventional manner. Another example is naming things in the Pickwickian sense. For example, no one ever came close to showing what justice means — in a way that attracts consensus. What about the concept of power? If it is not a technical term, it lacks meaning. Yet, we love to use such decorative words. Their use involves an indicator as they become indexed to the speaker and her situation. One cannot correctly understand them without this information.

I do not want to void 'pataphysics, although its standard descriptions need to be more informative. Also, the 'pataphysical supplementary world that results from 'pataphoric activity is a possible world, a familiar term, and a tool of modern logic and analytical philosophy. Consider any changes to our actual world, and you have created a novel possible world that we may call a supplementary world. Two different worlds exist, say, where I am bald or not.

² Samuel Pickwick, a character in the novel *Pickwick Papers* (1836–1837) by Charles Dickens. When we speak in the Pickwickian sense, our words may mean whatever we want. However, no general agreement on the proper meaning of this term exists — which itself is a Pickwickian and 'pataphysical point.

The second world happens to be the actual world. But notice an ambiguity: exactly how much hair loss makes me bald? It is impossible to say. The sorites paradox is typically unanswerable because we cannot provide strict criteria for a person being bald or not bald.

The actual world is, obviously, possible. Any new world that is physically accessible from the real world is also possible. A world where tailless kangaroos topple over is accessible because we know how to create such a world. A world where I am bald is also accessible from the actual world: we know how to make a man bald (use radiation). We do not know how to create an inaccessible world. We call it physically impossible, like the world where cows can fly — our natural laws repudiate it. A logically impossible world contains mutually contradictory elements and thus cannot be realized or consistently described. We do not know what such a world is like; therefore, we cannot discuss it. Only one impossible world exists because it contains all the possibilities: A and non-A logically entails B, or contradictory premises entail anything and everything. A failure to bypass such tedious facts defines a member of the “oxymoron crowd” (Clarke, 2018, p. 1). We can hear their shouts: but that is impossible; it does not make sense!

Moreover, possible worlds are imaginary solutions. They are what we imagine. Therefore, when we do 'pataphysics, we need a clean break from normal science and a novel interpretation of those fundamental principles. Facts do not restrict imagination, and new radical variations and arrangements of the world are always possible. 'Pataphors offer tantalizing possibilities. The most direct way of seeing the new science of 'pataphysics emerging is by playing the language games of 'pataphors.

'Pataphors

Here is a simple example of a 'pataphor:

Fact: John swims.

Metaphor: Seals don't swim as well as this crazy individual.

'Pataphor: John hunted seals this year in the Gulf of Finland, but in open waters, they swim too fast.

Hugill provides the following (2015, p. 51; I have modified it):

Fact: Tom and Alice stand side by side in the lunch line.

Metaphor: In the lunch line, they are three pieces on a chessboard.

'Pataphor: Tom took a step toward Alice and made a date for Friday night, checkmating. Tom wins, and all the other boys are enraged.

Hugill (2015, p. 51) then explains the '*pataphor* as follows:

'Pataphor uses the newly created metaphorical similarity as a reality with which to base itself. In going beyond mere ornamentation of the original idea, the '*pataphor* seeks to describe a new and separate world, in which an idea or aspect has taken a life of its own.

According to Clarke (2018, p. 41):

When you extend the metaphor beyond its reasonable limits until an entirely new context is created, then you have escaped into the realm of the '*pataphor*. So, start with a metaphor and then reach into the blank space that surrounds it; see what will happen next.

As my favorite '*patasource*, *Wikipedia* (“‘Pataphysics”); my italics), explains the term nicely.

[A] '*pataphor* attempts to create a figure of speech that exists as far from metaphor as metaphor exists from non-figurative [*sic*; figurative] language. Whereas a metaphor compares a real object or event to a seemingly unrelated subject to emphasize their similarities, *the 'pataphor uses the newly created metaphorical similarity as a reality to base itself on...* [A] '*pataphor* seeks to describe a new and separate world, in which an idea or aspect has taken on a life of its own.

All our sources agree, and thus we may proceed. To create a '*pataphor*, using the definitions above, one may move in the following standard manner (read the sign > “leads to”):

Factual description of a *basic scene* > Its *metaphorization* > Watching a novel '*pataphor* emerge as an alternative factual scene somehow based on the existing metaphors.

Or even mover schematically:

Basis > Metaphorization > '*Pataphor*.

The canonical method locates the facts of a basic scene, redescribes them metaphorically, and performs some verbal trickery to complete the '*pataphor* as a novel factual scene in a new possible world. This description is, of course, too sketchy. Therefore, I dialectically reverse the standard order. I call my starting point a '*patamoment*, read it as a factually described '*pataphor*, and then reach

back to the original basic scene via a ruling metaphor. In this way, I propose a dialectical deconstruction of the original 'pataphor:

'Patamoment > 'Pataphor > Metaphorization > Factual description of the basic scene.

I aim at a dialectical approach. However, applying the reverse order method alone does not make our inquiry into 'pataphors dialectical. We must use the reversed and direct methods together: we must alternate them step by step to make sense of the 'pataphor.

We need the dialectical method because the usual way of explaining a 'pataphor leads to an infinite number of 'pataphors derived from a single factual event. The metaphor used is a wholly ambiguous source of 'pataphors. This does not sound right, but I cannot discuss the problem here. My dialectical method allows us to focus on a single 'pataphor via a given 'patamoment, thus entirely focusing on the notion of an individual 'pataphor. The dialectical method individuates 'pataphors. We can therefore discover, analyze and, if we want, deconstruct a single 'pataphor in a novel way. To explain what we do *not* want:

Basis > Metaphorization > An infinite set of 'pataphors.

Indeed, we want one individual 'pataphor we can play with, and here we use the dialectical method.

When you focus on the contents of thoughts, a personal 'patamoment is a shock, alarm, and wake-up call that makes you consider a given 'pataphor in your imagination. A 'patamoment signals a new world. Next, I provide a detailed case study of a love story. I describe the 'pataphysical use of imagination, the science of exceptions, and the emergence of possible supplementary worlds. To create critical 'pataphysical elements, the style of the story tends to become grotesque and hyperbolic.

A 'patamoment indicates a 'pataphor that emerges to a person: a 'pataphor demands attention. I experienced a massive 'patamoment at home one freezing January afternoon in 2022 in Helsinki. I had come from my garage to check my Ferrari that I did not use in winter. I must drive it soon — cars are for driving, and they perish in the garage. But I was exhausted and bored. The bleak winter sun was setting behind those skeletal trees, the last remnants of rare northern daylight fading ever so slowly, leaving a blue haze reflected from the fresh white snow in its wake. I was lying on my grey sofa dozing off while listening to Mozart's opera *Magic Flute* and its stunning aria of the *Queen of the Night*. Diana Damrau's otherworldly interpretation is both sublime and grotesque. I figured out a solution to a problem that bothered me through my adult years. The reminiscence threatened to grow out of proportion in its significance until I deciphered its meaning. I understood my only hope was 'pataphysics and the deconstruction

of this 'pataphor I was now living through in my thoughts. To illustrate and analyze what I experienced on that idle January afternoon on my sofa, exhausted and half-asleep, listening to opera arias, I say this.

Here we have a 'pataphor in Helsinki. Next, we need another factual narrative that becomes the *basis* of the ruling metaphor that turns into the 'pataphor we already have. The basis explains the 'pataphor. In the fall of the late 1960s, a scene in Turku occurred when a gaggle of young men stood on a street corner opposite the Appeal Courts building. Before the great fire of 1827, it was the Old University of Turku or the Royal Academy's main building behind a small park and its threatening leafless trees. The moon was out on that cold, clear, and dark November late evening when suddenly, as if from nowhere, the most beautiful young blond woman I had ever seen emerged — or one of them. She knew my friends, posed, laughed, and talked to them for a while, her soprano tingling in the icy air, only to disappear into the night.

I did not speak to her as I only admired her demeanor; then I asked my buddy Ariel, who she was, as I wondered how such a perfect human being is possible. Ariel's answer was: she was Adina, whom the boys knew because they all were members of the Turku Jewish congregation. He said she knows how gorgeous she is, and thus none of them ever had or will have a chance of dating her. For all of us, she was a dream object. For me, at that very moment, she was a symbol of otherworldly beauty of the kind I will never again see. She was not only beautiful, but she was sublime. She was not from this planet — she could have emerged from the unfathomable depths of outer space. She represented a possible supplementary world and its unreal epiphenomena. Indeed, I never saw her again. I was twenty years old. As I am no poet or troubadour, this is all I can say.

I ask in vain what became of her. What happened to her? Did her beauty last? Did the subsequent events of her life justify her proud attitude? How did life treat her? So many questions I could never answer. Why was I asking? Why bother? I do not know, but something must be said about this strange incident — indeed, it was a life-changing event, as I now realize. At least I can try to figure out its 'pataphysics because here we have a glaring exception to life's common ways or a unique event. In Helsinki, this was a 'patamoment: I had fallen in love, not with her, but with her beauty. While reasonable, all these questions concerning her future life are naïve and, strictly speaking, illegitimate, as we will see. Yet, they demand answers.

'Pataphysics of Chance and Determinism

Ariel told me the following story. A friend asked Adina's father how he dared to let such a rare beauty go alone and unguarded at night in the city jungle. His answer in plain Finnish flows nicely, "Kuule, vittua ei voi vartioida," or in English: "Listen, you cannot guard the pussy." You must not garage a young beauty like you

garage your Ferrari like the friend was suggesting. It is there to be used, whereas the woman opens all the doors herself. Ferrari does not escape, unlike an independent woman. Indeed, much can happen in the morning hours before noon. People commit great sins before lunch. The enlightened exchange between the father and the friend is ambiguous and is the first of many we will encounter. Strangers may threaten the young beauty or, alternatively, she may ruin her life with irresponsible behavior. Indeed, the two possible ways of personal destruction look distinct and different. But one can wonder whether this is true. All we need is to ask, what does it matter what ruins one's life; what matters are the ruins themselves, and that is all.

'Pataphysically, we may legitimately ambiguate names of the causes of disasters because 'pataphysics respects the logical laws of identity and contradiction as little as metaphysics. The key is the positive attitude towards oxymorons — or their acceptance. 'Pataphysics is the science of exemptions, and Adina is such an exemption. Also, the moral ambiguity of her father's answer is an exemption. Fathers are not supposed to say what he said, yet he makes perfect sense. He did not want to lock her up.

In the cosmic context, the terms fate and freedom, necessity and contingency, or determinism and chance deserve attention. I ask what happened to the young and lovely Adina during the decades I have been thinking of her. How did she manage that night in Turku or any other night? Was she happy? Was her life good? I do not know, yet I realize that her fate could have been miserable or wonderful. It all depends — but on what? Her life was, of course, formed by numerous random events and chance incidents at every turn. Or her life was determined by rigid causes that explain its course and allow us to speak of necessity, destiny, and fate. When she is old and her life fully formed, we can see that all that happened was necessary, as if the course of her life had a predetermined purpose. Or we can admire the random play of contingent influences and events, marveling at their interplay that produced the given result at the end of her life. Or perhaps her life was brief?

My point is that necessity and contingency apply equally to her life's course and end-state. Therefore, chance and determinism, luck and fate, are the same. She, in the end, was a product of blind chance and iron causality, as shown by the end-state of her life, whatever it was. Something happened, and there she is now. What happened, happened to create the older woman she is — if she survives? Fate and chance mean, in the end, the same, the realization of which is a decisive 'pataphysical truth.

Her beauty was an exception among human beings, and her life was also bound to be exceptional. However, Adina is now an emergent epiphenomenon of my mind at home in Helsinki on that cold January afternoon. Here I have a celestial imaginary love object representing the Adina I glimpsed once in Turku. She is, for me, a being without history, life, and fate — an emergent contingent epiphenomenon lifted from my imagination. My anxious reflections concerning

her life and its explanation by contingency and necessity are superfluous. Everything that matters is my thought of her in Turku at that very moment.

For me, now in Helsinki, Adina, forever gone but not forgotten, is a celestial epiphenomenon and the sole result of the metaphorization of those memorable events in Turku. And celestial epiphenomena exist only in cosmic contexts — in the strangest possible worlds. Her otherworldly beauty necessitates a cosmic approach, as I refuse to consider her a historical being. What appeared to me in Turku now has no history. All you need is love, and true, persevering love has no history. The rule is that unique events have no history because they no longer exist. They live only in one's feverish imagination.

The Quest for Metaphors

I have narrated my 'pataphoric moment in Helsinki based on what happened in Turku. Next, we must find the relevant metaphors of the Turku event that will transform into the given 'pataphor in Helsinki. A 'pataphor emanates from the metaphoric development of its basis. What are the metaphors of Adina? Metonyms are a type of metaphor. Think of the above 'pataphysical context of fate and chance. We see that these two terms indeed are metonyms. Consider the following proposition:

Various chance events formed Adina's later life.

We can write as follows without changing the message:

Rigorous causal processes formed Adina's later life.

Their meanings are different, but their rhetorical message remains the same, just like in the following case borrowed from Alfred Jarry's life:

I need to get drunk; now give me the bottle.

And,

I need to get drunk; now give me the absinthe.

Here the words "bottle" and "absinthe" are metonyms because the two independently meaningful terms are fully interchangeable. The same applies to Adina and her celestial beauty. I glimpsed the Platonic idea (form, ideal, essence) of beauty I saw in a flash outside the dark Cave. Adina is a true exemplification of the idea of beauty. In this sense, the concepts of Adina and beauty are metonyms: show me Adina, and you show me the idea of beauty. Ultimately, she is beauty itself.

But Adina — what is the relevant metaphor in her case? We need a metaphor to realize the relevant 'pataphor. How do we find and create the relevant figurative meaning? Her exceptionality requires an answer regarding a metaphor turned into a 'pataphor, and thus we progress.

What is the crucial metaphor? Let's provide the foundations that we will discuss later. Adina is the Queen of the Night, a cosmic beauty, transcendental illumination, an escapee from Plato's Cave — as fascinating as she is terrifying. She is sublime in the old sense, at the same time beautiful and awesome, even frightening (Burke, 1757/1998). Adina belongs to the cosmic night yet illuminates her surroundings. She is, simultaneously and metonymically, light and night.

'Pataphors give metaphoric elements a new life. The figurativeness of metaphors must re-emerge as fundamental elements of the novel factual 'pataphor. Suppose I say this boy has a sharp mind. The idea of sharpness moves the case into a symbolic realm that loses its direct contact with reality. Now, the standard 'pataorder of things moves from figurative sharpness over to a supplementary but imaginary world of facts. A 'pataphor emerges when we say: "I have lost my mind sharpener, but I heard they are for sale somewhere, perhaps where they also sell debraining machines." The words "sharp" and "mind" are retained but now located in a novel scene and possible world that jokingly alludes to Alfred Jarry's play *King Ubu* (Jarry, 1896/2007, 1896/2014). Ubu is fond of debraining his victims.

Adina's stunning beauty left me dumbfounded and forever lonely. We find several metaphors here. Adina, in my dreams, represents female beauty and attractiveness; also, we see a metonymic pair of Adina and ideal beauty. These two terms are freely exchangeable throughout the erotic contexts. But the above sentence also contains another metaphor, "stunning," admittedly a dead one. How could we turn such a context into a 'pataphor?

Now, all this is simplistic. A good 'pataphor cannot tolerate dead metaphors. We need the fresh fruit of fertile poetic imagination. So, we unpack the metaphor that applies to Adina on that fateful evening in Turku. What is the 'patarelevant key metaphor that represents Adina and her celestial beauty? To see Adina's metaphoric place in the universe, we go from the mundane to the loftiest of visions and consider a proper metaphysical context translating into 'pataphysical language. I discuss Sigmund Freud, H. P. Lovecraft, and Franz Kafka on their heavenly apparitions that will explain the place of Adina and the ideal beauty in a possible supplementary universe.

First, Sigmund Freud tells in his classic *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930/1961, p. 11) about his unnamed friend (in what follows, Friend is a proper name) who explained his religious feelings' uniquely cosmic nature. Other interpretations are possible, but here is Freud's report given as someone who is blind and fails to see:

[H]e was sorry I had not properly appreciated the true source of religious sentiments. This, he says, consists in a peculiar feeling, which he himself is never without, which he finds confirmed by many others, and which he may suppose is present in millions of people. It is a feeling which he would like to call a sensation of “eternity,” a feeling as of something limitless, unbounded — as it were, “oceanic.” This feeling, he adds, is a purely subjective fact, not an article of faith; it brings with it no assurance of personal immortality, but it is the source of the religious energy which is seized upon by the various Churches and religious systems, directed by them into particular channels, and doubtless also exhausted by them. One may, he thinks, rightly call oneself religious on the ground of this oceanic feeling alone, even if one rejects every belief and every illusion.

Freud finds all this intriguing, but he confesses he has no way of commenting — neither do I. Why call this black cosmic energy a source of religious sentiment in the void? Why not call it pure nightmarish horror? You may call it anything you like — why not call it a metaphor for the Friend’s lack of a soul? Of course, a holy reading is possible, mainly when one focuses on the Old Testament but less convincingly on the New Testament, which lacks all cosmicism. He may have misread his fundamental vision — no wonder Freud could not follow him. Christian lore has Friend blinded.

Lovecraft (1935/1963, Epigraph) exhibits his sentiments of cosmic horror: he describes the universe in the Gothic style, even displaying the characteristic m-dash (Milbank, 2021, p. 166ff.), as if from an insider’s immanent point of view. He thinks as if he was there:

I have seen the dark universe yawning,
Where the black planets roll without aim—
Where they roll in their horror unheeded,
Without knowledge or lustre or name.

Lovecraft is an atheist who believes in science but is open to metaphysical cosmicism in the same sense as Freud’s friend. Yet, his interpretation is artistic and Gothic; Friend, on the contrary, is a conventional religious seer. They choose the reading that suits their temperament, background beliefs, and religious convictions. Regardless, they both see the infinite universe opening before them as if they were there, Friend anticipating God and Lovecraft seeing physical objects in a gothic context.

Franz Kafka (1913/2021) offers a third version of cosmicism in his unduly neglected novel *Amerika*. Karl Rossmann wanders around Mr. Pollunder’s huge mansion at night until he gets lost. The narrative style is surrealistic, and the point of view is external to the yawning, empty universe.

Karl came by a great stretch of wall entirely without doors, you couldn’t imagine what was behind it. Then came again door after door, he tried to open several,

they were blocked and the rooms apparently unlive in.... And here so many rooms stood empty, just so you could hear a hollow sound when you knocked on the door.... Suddenly the wall on one side of the hallway stopped and an ice-cold marble railing stood in its place. Karl put the candle down on it and leaned over carefully. *Dark emptiness blew against him.* If this was the main lobby of the house — in the shimmer of the candle, a vaulted, arching ceiling appeared — why wasn't anyone walking through this lobby? What purpose did this great, deep room serve? You stood here in the open, as in the gallery of a church.... The railing wasn't long and soon Karl was taken into another enclosed hallway again. When the hallway suddenly turned Karl knocked into a wall with his whole force and only the uninterrupted care with which he desperately held the candle protected it, luckily, from falling and going out. Since the hallway didn't want to end, there were no windows to look out of, nothing moved, neither high nor low, Karl was already thinking that if he kept on walking forward through the same circle of intersections he could hope maybe to find the door to his room again, but neither it nor the balustrade returned again. Up to now Karl had kept himself from any loud shouting, because he didn't want to make any noises in a strange house at such a late hour, but he realized that this wasn't a bad thing to do in an unlit house and right away he began to scream a loud hallo down both sides of the hallway, when he noticed, in the direction he had come from, a small approaching light.... [A]n old servant was coming with a lantern to show him the right way. "Who are you?" (my italics)

Here we have an extended metaphor or allegorically developed narrative. The house is America, an endless labyrinthine world wrapped in empty cosmic nothingness. Karl is lost, wandering through this vast structure, wondering what it is and where he is. He leans on the "ice-cold marble railing," reaching over, and "dark emptiness blew against him." He has gone to the *limes* understood in its two Latin meanings: a borderline and a long road leading to a hostile land. The railing is the border, and the eternal darkness of hostile realms looms beyond, toward which Karl staggers carrying his candle. The world and the yawning nothingness wait for him. But when he screams, a servant, a savior carrying a lantern, like some latter-day Diogenes, comes to fetch him. Mock religious allusions tint Kafka's literary cosmicism.

In his cosmic poetry, Lovecraft says what Friend and Kafka refuse to say: here we have a possible world where nothing is real and real is nothing. The 'pataphoric technique can achieve this, too. We start from a metaphor and develop it until it applies to and represents a possible world unrelated to the world that grounded the original metaphor. We then find a world that opens towards the void and its nothingness (according to Freud's friend), which, for him, paradoxically entails God's presence. Therefore, Karl's observation of the void is incomplete, as Lovecraft's grand vision proves. A cosmic allegory emerges as a symbolic vision, or lack of it, in which the void is not void but a plenum (Lovecraft). What was originally a metonymic relation between nothing and real — nothing is real and real is nothing — now depicts a new possible world.

Friend and Karl access the void from the railing, the border between the plenum and its nothingness. Lovecraft, on the contrary, immerses himself in the cosmic emptiness and its nothingness. When he does so, he can show the contents of the void; paradoxically, nothing becomes something. All this is perfectly 'pataphysical: one can describe and make sense of what looks empty but is full, or nothing is something. What is nothing is something, that is — and *vice versa*. You reach the limit and lean over its railing to see it all. The trick is to use the proper language frameworks: religion, Gothic imagination, and fictional narrative. Together they do the work no standard science can do.

The Queen of the Cosmic Night

My account of the primary scene in Turku is true. Adina comes; she shines and goes, leaving us boys alone and lonely. We can then ask what Adina represents here. Or we use more 'pataphysical language and make her an epiphenomenon. Once we have done so, we must formulate a metaphoric account of the basic scene and Adina's role there. Once we have the metaphor, we can construct the corresponding 'pataphor, which is now me in Helsinki listening to Mozart and trying to solve the riddle that is Adina. To put it schematically:

The basic scene in Turku > Adina as an epiphenomenon, or representation > Metaphoric description > 'Pataphor.

Or,

Boys on a street corner in Turku > Adina arrives > Adina as something > Metaphoric account of this > Timo on his sofa partaking in a 'pataphor.

We start unpacking all this by jumping Kafka's marble railing in a Lovecraftian manner. We see Adina's entirely moral perfection and her otherworldly nature in the vast, dark emptiness surrounding us at that unique moment outside all time and place. She is a perfect epiphenomenon of a simple schema. Hence, I say Adina and her celestial beauty represent a Lovecraftian view of the Queen of the Cosmic Night. We boys hang on Kafka's marble rail to see what that dark empty nothingness contains and ultimately reveals. Can we get it? Of course. Beauty and love blend with awe and horror in all their sublimity.

Adina is the Queen of the Cosmic Night — the Celestial Beauty. In their alchemical role, the Queen and the King form a chemical couple, who have intercourse, lay in the royal bed, die, and putrefy only to rise again cleaner and better than ever before (Abraham, 2003, p. 113, "King"; Roob, 2005, p. 76ff).³ This

³Roob (2005) displays the pictorial heritage and glory of the alchemical lore. Pictures substituted the language fatally corrupted in the fall of the Tower of Babel in Babylon (p. 9). Today science is done with numbers.

allegory of the chemical process brings about something new from its blended but straightforward elements. The Queen is the Moon, silvery, calm, cool, and moist, while the King is the Sun, golden, hot, arid, violent, and bright. Adina is the Queen searching for her King to die with him — what could be more 'pataphysical than alchemy and its philosopher's stone? Of course, we Turku boys did not qualify in this search for syzygy or the discovery of contradictory and universal conjunction (Hugill, 2015, p. 14). We would never be eligible as the chemical King for the Queen.

Adina that night was no longer a flesh-and-blood young woman tied to the historical space and time. As the Queen, she was an emergent entity straight from the Lovecraftian cosmic night of the planets, an epiphenomenon of the different reality of eternal values and virtues, a representation of everything sublime — and the Burkean sublime means both beauty and horror, as Lovecraft's little poem hints. She was the chemical Queen, the Moon, and a Platonic emanation of beauty outside the Cave. When her father said no one could guard her, he was right. She was a free, pure, cool, transient light and a flashing silvery agency. We were lucky she left so soon, like a heavenly planet on her course. How could we bear more of her presence? She, behind locked doors, under guard and constraints — how do you dare to think of such a blatantly unreal possible world?

In Turku, Adina had arrived and gone without us recognizing any metaphorical import. But because I must explain the 'pataphoric Helsinki moment on my gray sofa, we need the crucial metaphor that alludes to the non-figuratively expressed 'pataphor. This metaphor brings about the related factual 'pataphor in a supplementary world. According to that 'pataphor, in Helsinki, we have operatic music, a gray sofa, a sleepy and confused person, night, light, darkness, trees, snow, garaged Ferrari, and other elements the mundane environment of my home contains. And we have that sublime opera aria from *Magic Flute* where the Queen appears so forcibly. And this Queen is liberated and free; this Queen is born to dazzle and circulate “when the stars are right” (Lovecraft). Father knows best. The relevant 'pataphor must somehow recreate these elements and at the same time present an account of Adina as the Queen and the boys as impotent spectators on that street corner in Turku.

Fernando Pessoa writes: “In my own way I sleep, without slumber or repose, this vegetative life of imagining, and the distant reflection of the silent street lamps, like the quiet foam of a dirty sea, hovers behind my restless eyebrows” (Pessoa, 2015, p. 155). Here is another metaphorization of my situation in Helsinki on my sofa on that cold January night. But we need a connection to that street scene in Turku. The key image is Pessoa's “the distant reflection of the streetlamps, like the quiet foam of a dirty sea.” I return to Turku when I re-imagine this: the distant glare of unknown planets, like the inert foam of the dirty universe. And the sublime horror of “Where the black planets roll without aim” connects it all to the epiphenomenal Queen of the Night.

The following two alternative allegories illustrate my Helsinki 'patamoment and the memory of Adina:

“Be sure of this, uncle,” replied Hector in a more serious voice, “Clotilde will never love me, and besides,” he added, relapsing into gaiety once more, “I don’t like to succeed to another; I agree with Mademoiselle de Scuderi, that, in love, *those queens are the happiest who create kingdoms for themselves in undiscovered lands.*” (my italics)

Next, we have an allusion to the chemical King straight out of the furnace:

Yet out of the fiery trial, this King became a hero; his queen, whose pride and wasteful vanity had done its full share in bringing the country to the verge of ruin, became the *idol of the nation.*⁴

The crucial point is the metaphors and allegories we use must apply both to the factual Helsinki 'pataphor and the basic Turku scene where it all starts: the metaphors tie together the basic scene and the 'pataphor. They ambiguate Turku and Helsinki.

On my sofa in Helsinki, I replicate the events in Turku. I leave the trivial but tedious task of proving this to the reader because the job is so subjective. Interpretation permits no truth, and even a mutual agreement between readers may be exceptional. But when one understands Adina as an emerging epiphenomenon of the sublime Queen of the Cosmic Night, her celestial beauty’s horror becomes obvious. And its concrete manifestations in Helsinki are Mozart, me as an older man, my sofa, the darkness, the cold night, and my love of beauty. How can we incorporate the music into those relevant metaphors? We have beautiful Adina as the Queen of the Night (a metaphor), but now Mozart’s Queen of the Night appears to me on my sofa in my thoughts (a fact). Or perhaps the following is appropriate: the Queen’s silvery cool moonshine is like the soothing music of the spheres to her unfortunate victims of restless love. I read this with ever-increasing dread:

Xenocrates, as Martianus Capella further informs us, employed the sound of instruments in the cure of maniacs; and Apollonius Dyscolus, in his fabulous history (*Historia Commentitia*) tells us, from Theophrastus’s *Treatise upon Enthusiasm*, that music is a sovereign remedy for a dejection of spirits, and disordered mind; and that the sound of the flute will cure epilepsy and sciatic gout. (The Oxonian, 1835/2003, Ch. 14)

The 'pataphor we have discussed concerns my thought of Adina’s sublime beauty in Turku. Like Mozart’s Queen, she is simultaneously fascinating and scary in all

⁴ Both in *Online English Collocation Dictionary*; <https://inspirasson.com/en/metaphor/queen>. I have slightly modified both. My italics.

her sublimity. Adina is the Queen of the Night — this is our needed metaphor. It must emanate from the factual basis and bring about my Helsinki 'pataphor. It does because now we have the relevant metaphor of Adina's beauty, the Queen of the Night, and Mozart's aria *The Queen of the Night* as music that I, in fact, played, listened to, and thought about on my gray sofa in Helsinki. A basic fact (in Turku) becomes a metaphor, and again this metaphor becomes a fact (in Helsinki). The figurative expression "Queen of the Night" applied to Adina in Turku now has two or three unrelated epiphenomenal guises in Helsinki: a name for a piece of music and the thought of the free-roaming female beauty. This proves that I have, according to its own rules, indeed created a legitimate 'pataphor.

King Ubu Triumphant

Think of the proofs of the existence of God. I presume that the idea of God entails no contradiction, so he must be genuine in certain possible supplementary worlds. But scandalously, his world need not include our present actual world. He may live forever alone in his lonely kingdom in heaven, as a deist says. 'Pataphysically, we may also assume a world where God is the world, and our world is in him, and therefore we humans become gods.

God is everything, and therefore he is nothing, but what is nothing is real, otherwise it could not be anything; thus, he is real. All these conclusions are evident. 'Pataphysically, "God is the tangential point between zero and infinity" (Jarry, 1911/1996, Ch. 41). God is identical to Ubu the King, who has nothing and everything. Jarry's early play *Ubu Roy* (first performed in Paris on December 10, 1896) is still a prominent example of the theatre of the absurd, along with the plays of Eugene Ionesco and Samuel Becket. Ubu is a puppet from puppet theatre, and his creator Alfred Jarry was an expert puppeteer. In the end, he is a universal symbol of — what? The puppet Ubu looks like a sweet potato. We see a large spiral on his belly, which may represent a labyrinth and a warning: mess with this fellow and you'll be lost forever. Or it says: I am a labyrinth. As Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14), which carries the same message as Ubu's labyrinth — at least when we assume the 'pataphysical perspective. Ubu talks like a mechanical doll, and the dialogue moves along jerking and twitching to suggest puppet theatre.

The artistic effect is artificial and mechanical, devoid of human-like feeling, understanding, and compassion — pure satire. Père Ubu's literary characterizations never lend him any realistic outlook. He is the epitome of the Other, yet strangely, his peculiarities are lamentably familiar, universal human vices and weaknesses, like cruelty and cowardice, as well as greed for food and power. He is fat, fierce, and heedless. He has no moral consciousness, fellow feeling, or vicarious sensibilities. His approach to the world is consumerist: he aims at devouring it all. Here is Nietzsche's new superman.

Ubu's favorite way of treating his victims is to debrain them. For this reason, he has a debraining machine in the cellar. But he also threatens to remove your brain through the heel, which sounds scary enough. Perhaps when you read the play, the message will debrain you, the reader, as if you were one of Ubu's victims.

Ubu can also represent an everyman, an archetypal despotic ruler we all want to be, any ruler, a greedy God, and finally, any god. If we treat this series of epithets not as a line but as a circle, we get Ubu as everyman god and god everyman. In other words, Ubu is a universal characterization of us. Ubu is a socially relevant agency, and in this sense, he is universalizable. At the same time, he is nothing, or he is a kind of monad and a tangential point without independent existence in any possible world. Yet, he is more than an archetype or ideal type — this is how I see Alfred Jarry's message.⁵

As I explained above, the ultimate epiphenomenon is my Adina, the Queen of the Night whose celestial beauty suddenly emerges and again vanishes when the stars are right. She is an epiphenomenon of a traveling messenger from the universal void that is at the same time plenum. She debrains the Turku boys through their heels, which explains my initial awe. She was there to devour us all, and I felt it that afternoon on my gray sofa. I conclude that Ubu is the chemical King in bed with Adina the Queen. They will have intercourse, die, putrefy together, and rise again — thus creating a new alchemical substance, preferably gold, but in this case futile speculative thought as literature. Adina, the moon in the night, joins the sun, Ubu the King as her alchemical Queen forever.

Adina's celestial beauty is exceptional, and its memory triggered my corresponding 'patamoment. Her father's striking words to his friend actuated the divination process. Adina is a free wandering star whose emergence invites metaphorization. Therefore, my Helsinki 'pataphor contains Mozart's aria, the darkness of the evening, my longing, and all the other relevant elements. Adina is ahistorical and unique; thus, she is the Queen of the Night, eternally searching for her chemical spouse, the King, to die and putrefy with him — according to the alchemical principles of generation, birth, and creation.

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⁵ How to construct a monad, see Szönyi's (2004, p.169ff) illuminating account. 'Pataphysically Adina is a monad, but I cannot develop this idea here.

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