CHAPTER 7

Like Someone in Love: The Suspension of Belief

Like Someone in Love opens in a swanky Tokyo bar. We see a woman with bright red hair doing something on her phone; a man in a suit sitting, eating, smoking, and drinking with two women; a man in a suit standing, smoking, and talking with two women; more well-dressed men and women milling about in the background. As lounge music plays, we hear a woman's voice: "I'm not lying to you. When did I ever lie to you?" As she continues it becomes clear that the speaker is not in the frame (though we keep checking the faces of the women on screen to confirm this). When this mystery is abruptly resolved with a cut we see she is a slight young woman (played by Rin Takanashi), sitting alone at a table. Her name is Akiko, and she has been talking on her phone. She insists again on her honesty: "I swear to you I'm telling you the truth." Akiko tells her interlocutor – apparently a jealous boyfriend – that she is at Café Teo. The man orders her to go to the bathroom, where he demands she count the tiles; it seems he intends on counting the tiles at Teo himself to catch her out. Akiko is not at Café Teo but Bar Rizzo, where she works as a hostess.

After Akiko returns from the bathroom a man in a crisp white shirt joins her at her table. He wants to give her some relationship advice. He says her dishonesty will only cause her further pain and eventually destroy her ("Everything should be made clear from the beginning," he says, "so that lines are not crossed"). As they talk it becomes clear he is her boss, which is to say pimp. He has a job for her tonight. Akiko says she doesn't want it: she is too busy with exams, plus her grandmother is in Tokyo and wants to visit her before she leaves in the morning. But the man insists. He says her excuses are lousy; that there is no point spending such a short amount of time with her grandmother anyway; that the job is very important and involves a man for whom he has great respect; that considering her past refusals of work she does not have a choice in the matter; that she will not regret it. Akiko shrieks at him: "I'm not going, I told you!" It could be the film's strangest moment. Akiko is off screen for the line, which sounds so exaggerated that it hits a false note. When we cut back to Akiko, she looks demure; if it weren't

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for the shocked, staring faces of those in the background of the scene one might be forgiven for thinking that the shriek came from someone else. By placing Akiko off screen at this important and, it would seem, uncharacteristic moment (not only for our early notions of this character but also for the filmmaker himself), Kiarostami makes it a little difficult to believe it. And disturbingly, the pimp doesn't seem convinced either, calling her a cab she appears to enter willingly, without further discussion. Thus begins a long, visually stunning, and rather wrenching sequence shot mostly inside the car, where Akiko listens to five imploring voicemails from her grandmother, masochistically (and/or sadistically) asking the cabbie to drive past the waiting woman as she heads out to meet her client (which is to say john). Eventually, she falls asleep in the back of the car.

When the cabbie arrives at their destination, we see that the man (played by Tadashi Okuno) is old enough to be Akiko's grandfather. Perhaps in reference to Kurosawa's *Ikiru* – which starred Takashi Shimura as Kanji Watanabe – he is named Takashi Watanabe. Akiko heads upstairs and meets him in an apartment lined with books. As she enters, Takashi is finishing a phone conversation with a man seeking a translation from him (as will be revealed soon, he is a distinguished scholar). He lies about his plans for the night, saying he has to work. As Takashi notes down the text he is to translate, Akiko explores the room, and looks at a picture on the wall: it is a print of Chiyoji Yazaki's *Training a Parrot*, which depicts a Japanese woman in a kimono with a cockatoo on a swing, which the woman is teaching to speak. Takashi finishes his call and they get to talking, turning quickly to the painting. Akiko's uncle gave her a copy of it for her fourteenth birthday, telling her that it was a portrait he had painted of her; Akiko only worked out this was a falsehood two years ago. "My grandma used to tell me that the parrot seemed to be teaching the girl," Akiko says, adding that people used to tell her she looked like the young woman in the picture. She gets up to demonstrate, posing in front of the painting for the old man. "Now I see the resemblance," he says, as she pins her hair into a bun. "I didn't really believe it was me in the painting. My eyes are bigger, aren't they?" Now she grabs a photograph off the table next to her, suggesting the girl in it (perhaps the old man's granddaughter) resembles her. She stands and walks across the room and picks up another photograph, this time of the old man's wife. "Don't I look a bit like her?" she guilelessly asks. "Maybe," he says, before confirming he lives alone.

After directing Akiko to the bathroom, Takashi opens a bottle of wine and pours two glasses, which are sitting on a table set for dinner. When Akiko exits the bathroom, however, she does not return to him: instead she enters a bedroom. Though we cannot see her, we (along with Takashi) watch as items

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of clothing are flung into the doorway. The old man enters the room and asks what she is doing: dinner is ready and there is wine for them to drink. Akiko replies that she is sleepy. The movement of her feet beneath the covers (just visible through the doorway) confirms she is in bed. There is a shot change as the old man takes a seat: we watch him from front on, and see a nebulous reflection of Akiko in the television screen on his left. She appears to be sitting up, wearing what might be a negligee. He tries to convince her to come out for dinner, but she refuses. Her reflection shows her lying down. She asks him to join her, but he keeps insisting they head to the other room to eat, drink, and talk. The telephone rings and he steps out of the bedroom to answer it; he misses it; he peers out the window; he goes back to look at the Yazaki (Ella Fitzgerald's rendition of *Like Someone in Love* plays in the background). He snuffs out the candles he had set on the table. When the phone rings again, he ignores it and heads back into the bedroom. There is a shot of Akiko in bed, apparently asleep. Takashi unplugs the phone and switches off the bedside lamp. Now the scene changes, and we see the pair inside a car, with Takashi at the wheel and Akiko in the passenger seat. Though the previous scene ended with a shot of Akiko alone, both characters are very sleepy today. At one stage, while stopped in traffic, Takashi even nods off in the driver's seat.

After Takashi drops her outside her university, Akiko is approached by a man who grabs at her, getting up in her face. Takashi undoes his seatbelt as if to go out and confront the man, but Akiko pushes past him and enters the building. The man approaches the car and asks for a cigarette lighter. Takashi hands him the device and he steps away to smoke, as the two men warily regard each other. The younger man eventually asks Takashi who he is, inviting himself into the vehicle. He introduces himself as Noriaki, then asks Takashi about his relationship with Akiko. Takashi does not disconfirm Noriaki's suggestions that he is her grandfather. Noriaki says he is Akiko's fiancé, and Takashi ends up questioning him about his job, schooling, age, and experience in just the way a grandfather might. He also questions him about the confrontation he just witnessed. Noriaki shrugs it off, saying the pair have their altercations, before going on to explain why he wishes to marry her: "If I lose her, I won't find another like her." He complains about the previous night: how Akiko hung up on him, and refused to answer his questions. Takashi suggests that Noriaki lacks experience: "When you know you will be lied to, it's better not to ask. That's what experience teaches us." When Akiko returns to the car, she looks shocked to find Noriaki in the passenger seat, but plays along with Takashi's charade. We are over halfway through this spare film, but the basic narrative set-up is finally in place: the

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controlling Noriaki has no knowledge of the nature of Akiko's work, nor of the nature of the relationship between her and Takashi; Takashi's intentions regarding her are not entirely clear, but he seems bent on protecting her; Akiko may want to rid herself of Noriaki, but is unsure about Takashi.

Though its shocking abruptness has divided critics, I take the final scene to be the one which gives the rest of the film philosophical unity. Takashi is working in his study when he receives a call from Akiko, distressed. He drives out to pick her up. When he finds her, her lip is swollen and bleeding. We know the catalyst for this must be the event we feared all along: the abusive Noriaki has discovered the true nature of Akiko's work. When Takashi returns with Akiko to his apartment, we find Noriaki has pursued them. He rings the buzzer from the ground floor and appears on the intercom system. Takashi tries ignoring him. Noriaki starts screaming. We hear a crash, then he charges up the stairs and pounds on the apartment door. When this has no effect he stomps back down, and we hear him smashing up the professor's car (the very vehicle he fixed a few scenes earlier). He goes quiet for a moment and Takashi moves over to the double window, sheepishly looking out. After a few tense moments, the glass explodes, shattered by some object thrown up from the ground. Takashi falls to the floor as if hit and the credits roll.[1]

I contend that the double window is a metonym for the movie screen. There is its oblong shape, the fact that it appears as a rectangle of light, and how this shot positions us as looking up at it. There is the presence of the double curtains, with a layer of muslin drawn over the glass, and thicker drapes pulled out on either side. There is the fact that the smashing of the window takes place at the very end of the film, and the shockingly abrupt nature of this conclusion (which leaves so much unresolved), with the end of the window nearly coinciding with the end of the film itself (as Saeed-Vafa points out,[2] the film was originally called *The End*, which brings to mind the title cards displayed on screen at the conclusion of old movies). There was the nebulous reflection of Akiko undressing in Takashi's bedroom – a reflection that tellingly appears in a television screen (there are spectacular shots of reflections running right through the film, including the reflections of Akiko's pimp in the glass doorway of Bar Rizzo, which we see as she exits to catch the cab, and which coincide with the presentation of the establishment's neon sign, confirming beyond doubt that Akiko has been lying). The image also harks back to the final shot of *Certified Copy*, in which we are given a view out the window toward the nearby church, and where the credits rolled not from the bottom to the top of the screen but from the bottom to the top of the window frame itself, setting up that window too as a kind of screen. And of

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course, the fact that what is smashed is a window is itself important, because Kiarostami has been obsessed with windows for decades: as we have seen throughout this book, shots of characters peering out through car windows (often followed by point of view shots where the viewer takes on the peering) are one of his signatures, as are shots of characters reflected in windows and mirrors. As Nancy writes, in Kiarostami "the car window doubles the screen".[3] When someone looks out a window in a Kiarostami film, they initiate a complex mirror game with the viewer: as we view a character on a screen as they look through a screen, we are called upon to reflect on our viewing, to view our act of viewing someone viewing. When that window breaks, then, it is as if all those screens/windows have been broken too (the double window doubles the screen while doubling the windows that double the screen). Thus I read the breaking of the window here as a destructive recapitulation of all his mature works: a kind of *Aufhebung* of the gesture that found paradigmatic form in the coda of *Taste of Cherry*.

But what is the meaning of the break? It is crucial that this is a film about deception, whose tension turns on whether Noriaki will discover what Akiko does for work, and the nature of her relationship to Takashi. Consider the opening line of the film, and the thematics of the opening scene more broadly; consider the questions of identity and deception that arise regarding the Yazaki painting (which, through depicting the act of teaching a parrot to talk, itself intimates this very problem: if and when the parrot speaks, will it be really talking, or just parroting?). Takashi is engaged in deception too, having led Noriaki to believe that he is Akiko's grandfather; this same lie is not directly told but is nevertheless furthered by Akiko in her encounter with the professor's nosey neighbour, during which we also learn she resembles the man's mother very closely; there is also his lie to the colleague who called in search of a translation from him. Consider too the conversation the professor has with Noriaki about his car: Noriaki warns him about his timing belt, and how it could break at any moment. A timing belt is what synchronises the rotation of the crankshaft and the camshaft, ensuring the valves do not strike the pistons; when a timing belt breaks, it can easily destroy an engine. The threat of a broken timing belt is like the threat that Noriaki will discover the truth: both events will shatter the finely calibrated systems they support with a destructive release of energy. When the window breaks, then, it stands in for the breaking of all these deceptions. It could also be read as the metonymic shattering of the cinematic illusion itself.

That the cinema works on us in the way it does because it deceives or tricks us is intuitive. This Platonic idea is implicit in the notion that becoming absorbed in a film requires the viewer to suspend her disbelief. Coleridge was

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the first to articulate the notion in this way, when he wrote that his *Lyrical Ballads* aimed to "transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that *willing suspension of disbelief* for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith".[4] Perhaps contrary to Coleridge's own intentions, we use the phrase today not just to refer to "persons and characters supernatural"[5] but to the process apparently involved in our enjoyment of fictions in general. As Anthony Ferri writes, if perhaps with some exaggeration: "we use Coleridge's 'willing suspension of disbelief' as the quintessential phrase identifying the essence of the viewing process".[6] The idea is that the pleasure cinema affords is a function of the illusion that what is happening on screen is real.

Versions of it were crucial in psychoanalytic film theories. In *The Imaginary Signifier*, for instance, Christian Metz famously argued that in the cinema, the spectator partakes in a "scopic regime"[7] in which he is made both "absent from the screen" and "all-perceiving" – "all perceiving as one says all-powerful".[8] Further, he argues that the experience manufactured by the cinematic apparatus involves a kind of disavowal on the part of the spectator:

> Any spectator will tell you that he 'doesn't believe it,' but everything happens as if there were nonetheless someone to be deceived, someone who really would 'believe in it' . . . This credulous person is, of course, another part of ourselves, he is still seated *beneath* the incredulous one, or in his heart, it is he who continues to believe . . .[9]

Metz's idea, of course, is grounded in a notion of the unconscious: while we consciously know that what we are watching is not real, there is nevertheless an infantile, irrational part of us that is duped. Hence, for Metz, the cinema must "remove the traces of its steps",[10] working to conceal the means by which it manufactures credulity. In "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus", Jean-Louis Baudry makes a similar claim: the cinematic apparatus – "projector, darkened hall, screen" – effectively "reconstructs the situation necessary to the release of the 'mirror stage' discovered by Lacan",[11] in which the child's recognition of his body in the mirror spurs a misrecognition of himself as a coherent whole. Baudry's account of what happens during projection breakdowns is revealing:

> We should remember, moreover, the disturbing effects which result during a projection from breakdowns in the recreation of movement, when the spectator is brought abruptly back to discontinuity – that is, to the body, to the technical apparatus which he had *forgotten*.[12]

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The disquieting effect engendered when a projection breaks down is offered here as evidence for a claim about how cinema absorbs us: when a projector breaks, we are brought abruptly out of our fantasising and back to the reality we had forgotten, like dreamers rudely awakened from sleep.

These and similar theories have come under sustained attack from cognitivists such as Carroll, Gregory Currie, and Berys Gaut. They regard the idea that the cinematic apparatus leads spectators of fictional films to believe in what they see on screen to be highly implausible. After all, these scholars argue, if spectators in cinemas really believed in the reality of what they see, they would respond to cinematic images very differently from how they typically do. We might presume, for instance, that non-psychopathic viewers would not take pleasure in horror films; we would not expect the viewers of a film like *Independence Day* to sit and watch the destruction of the world around them at the hands of an alien species while nonchalantly eating popcorn. Currie puts the point in an exemplary fashion:

> You have only to reflect for a moment on how you would react if you saw, or thought you saw, a threatening monster, or if you thought yourself alone in a house with an axe murderer, or I thought you were watching someone about to be attacked by an axe murderer, to see that your behavior in the cinema is quite unlike that of someone who really did believe in the reality of the fiction presented.[13]

Though the argument is obviously persuasive, perhaps its very obviousness should give us pause. Indeed the position Currie attacks here would probably be rejected – and for the same reasons – by a child of eight, who would be likely to be more than capable of telling you why the presence of a monster on screen does not imply the existence of monsters in real life (which is not to say she won't be scared of the monster on screen). Do film theorists who insist on the role of cognitive illusion really think that audiences in cinemas are duped into believing wholeheartedly in what they see on screen, in just the way they believe in the events of real life? As I indicated above, it would be better to understand their claims about belief in a more charitable way: as claims not about standard belief but some less rational version of it. Consider Metz's point that spectators will tell you they do not believe in what they see on screen: the claim is not simply that cinematic spectatorship involves cognitive illusion, but that the belief it engenders is of a special, disavowed kind. The cognitivist, of course, will now respond by questioning the empirical validity of the notion of the unconscious at work here.[14] I am not interested in intervening on either side of this debate. Rather, I am interested in the

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intuitions at work in it about cinematic images. In particular, I am interested in a deep intuition regarding how films move us, which is apparently shared by both sides here.

We have just seen that on classic psychoanalytic accounts, what happens in a film is entertained in beliefs (beliefs that may be disavowed, or held only unconsciously). In Chapter 3 we saw that, for Carroll, the content of a fictional film is not believed but imagined suppositionally by its spectators. In *Image and Mind*, Currie makes a similar argument: films affect us because they lead us to simulate imaginatively the events we see on screen. Fictions, Currie argues, engage our mental processes in "off-line" mode, by which he means they work by "severing the connections between our mental states and their perceptual causes and behavioural effects".[15] "With fictions," he claims, "what we acquire instead of beliefs is [sic] *imaginings* which simulate belief."[16] This notion of imaginative simulation, Currie argues, can resolve the paradox of fiction, or the problem of how we can be moved by events in whose reality we do not believe.

Because they do not rely on a problematic notion of cognitive illusion, the accounts of Currie and Carroll are perhaps more sophisticated than those of psychoanalytic film theorists. But the accounts share the assumption that, for a film to move us, we must be brought to entertain – whether through believing, supposing, or imagining – its propositional content. In a number of places in this book – most notably in Chapter 2's account of the particular form of solidarity engendered by *ABC Africa*, Chapter 3's account of how *Ten*'s troubling the distinction between supposition and belief allows something to emerge that is not captured by either, and in Chapter 5's account of how the faces of *Shirin* can move us without convincing us – I have sought to show that films can affect us otherwise. If those accounts hold good, in other words, we have reason to question the assumption underlying the cognitivist theories I have invoked, and the psychoanalytic theories against which they have been pitted (at least on the accounts of the theories forwarded for attack by cognitivists).

There is another, perhaps deeper reason to be dubious of these accounts, which it will take me some time to bring out. It is not simply that they may falsify the nature of our relation to cinematic images. It is also that they may falsify the nature of our relationship to reality. Consider what it is to be absorbed in ordinary life, outside the context of a viewing a film. Let's say you are sitting at your desk, involved in some work, and drinking coffee from a cup sitting next to your computer. Does your act of reaching for the cup to drink from it presuppose your *believing* that the cup is there? In a certain frame of mind, the idea may seem completely uncontroversial: why else would you

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reach for the cup? Surely we do not tend to reach for things we do not believe to be in reach! But there may be good phenomenological reasons for regarding this as confused. Consider the following from Carleton B. Christensen:

> I come out of my house and suddenly see *that* my recently departed visitor has thoughtlessly left the gate open, thereby potentially allowing my dogs to get out onto the street, where they could get hit by a car. Note how this example suggests an important phenomenological observation: I judge perceptually that *p* precisely when I am *not* oriented towards the things I 'see' in the way I need to be in order to set about doing what I have to do with them. For clearly, I am concerned to have the gate closed and the fact that I notice its having been left open at all indicates that I am aware of the significance this fact has for me (and, in particular, my dogs). Precisely because 'perceptual experience' in this apophantic sense does not orient me towards, or suitably set me up to engage with, the items I need to deal with, I might have to deliberate about what to do next.[17]

Drawing on Heidegger and Edmund Husserl – and responding to McDowell's influential account of the role of concepts in perceptual experience, to which I will shortly turn – Christensen forwards a nuanced description of the form of absorption characteristic of our being in the world. And it is obviously not that propositional content plays no role here. As the encounter with the open gate described in this passage demonstrates – where Christensen walks out of his house and judges perceptually that *p* (where *p* is 'the gate is open' or perhaps 'the gate has been left open') – it can play a pivotal role. The point is that judgements such as this do not play a constitutive role in perceptual experience: that Christensen only judges that the gate is open because the gate is not *supposed* to be open; that the gate's being open jars him into believing the proposition that it is. If the gate had not been left open, Christensen would not have needed to deliberate about what to do, nor would he have needed to make a perceptual judgement leading him to form this belief: he would simply have walked up to the gate, opened it, exited his garden, and closed it behind him. As Heidegger's phenomenology of our engagements with equipment indicates,[18] only in some circumstances, such as when something goes wrong in our dealings – for example, when one's hammer breaks, or the gate is left open when it shouldn't be – do we step back from the world, and enter the reflective, deliberative, intellectual mode of comportment proper to judgement-making and belief-formation. Though it may always be possible to give a partial rendering of our worldly engagements in propositional terms, such renderings miss the phenomenon of everyday absorption (or what

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Hubert Dreyfus calls "coping"[19]), because of its pre-propositional elements. Our ordinary absorption in the world cannot be cashed out as propositional content except at the cost of something essential.

In 1994's *Mind and World*, McDowell advanced an account of perception which, in a Wittgensteinian spirit, was meant to dissolve sceptical problems regarding the bearing of the world and the mind upon one another. Scepticism can find its feet, according to McDowell, because of a "tension between . . . two forces".[20] The first force comes from what, following Wilfrid Sellars, he calls 'the Myth of the Given': the intuitive notion that, for the mind to be in touch with the objective world, it must be affected by "non-conceptual impacts from outside the world of thought",[21] which is often figured through some version of the idea of sense impressions. The problem with recourse to the Given, however, is that it effectively deprives us of what it was supposed to provide, because the notion of brute causal impacts from a realm external to thought – from what McDowell, again following Sellars, calls the 'space of nature' – undermines the justificatory force of what is delivered by it. If the idea of the Given establishes experience as in touch with the world, in other words, it achieves this at the cost of disconnecting it from what McDowell and Sellars call the 'space of reasons': the normative context in which our claims about the world can be vindicated, or "a logical space whose structure consists in some of its occupants being . . . warranted or correct in the light of others".[22] The point of appealing to the Given was to secure the mind's being in touch with the world, but it threatens to lead us headlong into the thought that "we have no convincing way to credit ourselves with empirical knowledge".[23] This is one of the ways in which scepticism sneaks into our picture of mind and world.

Another way, McDowell argues, is through a kind of recoil from the Given. This is the second force at work in the tension he identifies. It begins from an attempt to take seriously the lesson learned from the Given's failure to give us what we wanted: that purely causal, non-conceptual impingements – "brute impacts from the exterior",[24] as McDowell puts it – cannot ground our knowledge of the world outside our minds, because they could never figure in justification. As we recoil from this idea, then, we may be led to give up the very idea of empirically derived knowledge, supposing that experience itself must be left outside the space of reasons. Thus Davidson's coherentism, which holds that justification for beliefs cannot be grounded in the "testimony of the senses",[25] and must instead be derived from other beliefs. "[N]othing can count as a reason for holding a belief", Davidson says, "except another belief".[26] The problem with this recourse to beliefs, according to McDowell, is that it leaves us trapped in them, as though they form a

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self-contained whole that can accept no rational influence from the world lying outside them. McDowell refers to the "confinement imagery"[27] that runs through Davidson's account, and to which I turned in Chapter 2, when I evoked Davidson's remark about our being unable to get outside our own skins: "Perhaps we can understand how Davidson can be so casual in this remark", McDowell writes, "if we take it that our literal confinement inside our skins strikes him as an analogue to a metaphorical confinement inside our beliefs, which he is happy to let his coherentism imply".[28] The rejection of the idea that we must ground our beliefs in the impingements of the Given, in other words, leads us back into the worry that our beliefs have no bearing on the world they were supposed to be directed towards. This is to say it leads us back to the very worry that made the Given look attractive in the first place. Hence McDowell's idea that a key symptom of being in the thrall of scepticism is a kind of oscillation between two opposing positions, neither of which seems to grant us purchase on reality.

It is worth pausing to recognise how McDowell's account of this sceptical oscillation chimes with the descriptions of scepticism I have been providing in this book. In *The Wind Will Carry Us*, we saw that the protagonist heads to Iranian Kurdistan in the hope of capturing a pre-modern tradition on camera: a tradition that he and his crew have set up as treasure-like. As I argued, he projects onto the villagers a fantasy of unmediated access to the world, but he finds this was a fantasy internal to his own world; thus he leaves without getting what he wanted. When I treated *ABC Africa*, I traced a different oscillation: this time between the idea that objectivity can be attained through the elimination of subjective elements, and the opposing thought that, because subjectivity cannot be elided, an objective stance can never be attained. In the account of reality television I developed in Chapter 3, I described a fantasy of capturing ordinary life by digging down through layers of artifice, and the seemingly paradoxical result of this procedure: images of the ordinary that are literally incredible. When the ordinary is figured as subsisting beneath mediation in this way, I tried to show, it sparks the thought that we have to cut through that mediation. But what emerges out of this are travesties of the ordinary. Chapter 4 turned to the idea that the aesthetic power of photographic media stems from their capacity to record events that could never have been intended by photographers or directors. Yet I argued this notion of something lying entirely outside the reach of directorial intervention is driven by a thought that is hard to make sense of: that if a human hand has been involved in an event, it will somehow spoil its claim to reality. If Kiarostami's procedure in *Five* achieves its goal, it will still the oscillation between a thought of pristine, untouched reality and the thought that, because accessing it would

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entail spoiling it, we must be completely out of touch with the real. In the chapter on *Shirin*, I treated the Cavellian idea of sceptical spectatorship, which is predicated on the notion that film grants us a connection with the world, but only at the cost of absenting us from it. The problem is that in being given what we want, we find ourselves losing it. In the last chapter, I followed the thought that, if the world cannot be known from a position of certainty and security, it cannot be known at all. As I tried to show, *Certified Copy* figures the consequences of this in terms of a crisis of experiential authority. In the sceptical conditions depicted and enacted by these films, we find ourselves faced not just with a loss of knowledge, but wavering between a thought of victory over scepticism and a thought of defeat by it, where the thought of defeat sparks a desire for victory that, in turn, leads us back into defeat.

Now McDowell's own attempt at stopping the sceptical oscillation is elegant: it is to recommend a picture of mind and world on which experience must have conceptual content. Here he draws on Kant's insight regarding spontaneity and receptivity, concepts and intuitions. For Kant, spontaneity is at work when we exercise our faculty of understanding: it is the power of knowing objects through the deployment of concepts. Receptivity is at work when we enjoy impressions through the faculty of sensibility: it is how we are able to obtain intuitions. Kant's insight was about the inextricability of these processes: that for knowledge to be possible, receptivity must be at work in spontaneity, and vice versa; in his justly famous phrase, "thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind".[29] A contentless thought would be a mere deployment of concepts without sensory intake to fill them out (this is what we see in Davidson, on McDowell's account of his coherentism); a blind intuition would be a bare sense impression that can make no rational claim on us (which is all the Given ended up offering us). McDowell's Kantian idea is that, to account for the bearing of mind on world and vice versa, we need to take it that perceptual experience is always already conceptual. That meets the need for rational constraint, because in experience we are receptive to the layout of the world; but experience can play a normative role in the space of reasons, because experiences come with conceptual content. This is how McDowell purports to dissolve the sceptical threat, releasing the tension between the force of the attraction of the Given and the force of our recoil from it. We are receptive to the world and so to the rational constraints it provides, but that very receptivity is permeated by concepts, and so spontaneity extends "all the way out"[30] to our empirical judgements. This implies there is no problem with asserting that experience can deliver knowledge of the world to us, nor with the idea that it can do it non-inferentially: "In experience one takes in, for instance sees, *that things are thus and so*."[31]

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Before we bring this back to the problem of how cinematic images move us, we should consider a problematic aspect of McDowell's early account. On the picture I just outlined, in experience we do not register bare bits of sense data, but how it is with the world. When I see my dog curled up asleep in the corner of my study, for example, I do not receive sense impressions that I must interpret and/or from which I must infer (which would allow scepticism to creep into the picture, as one is led to ask if those impressions can be trusted): I simply see *that* Champion Ruby is curled up asleep in the corner of my study. Yet this may imply something that sits uneasily with the phenomenological evidence I raised earlier in this chapter, which indicates that in our everyday dealings with the world, the making of judgements and the forming of beliefs tend only to take place in certain circumstances (such as when something jumps out as a disturbance, jarring me out of my absorption). The presence of Ruby curled up asleep in the corner of my study typically does not have this effect, because she often sleeps in here as I work: I see her in the room, but that does not mean I internally articulate it, indeed I usually pass over it without a moment's thought (by contrast, I would be jarred into immediate deliberation if I saw her in the front garden, because she is not allowed out there). The problem, in other words, is that the notion of conceptual content looks suspiciously like the notion of propositional content, and is thus in danger of reducing and so falsifying what absorbed experience is like. As Christensen says, McDowell remains "committed to the traditional conviction that to be conceptually contentful is to be *propositionally* contentful . . .".[32] This is also at the root of the criticism of McDowell advanced by Arthur Collins: that "the scene I take in perceptually will support a large and open-ended number of possible propositional descriptions and no one of them is essential or required . . . experience does not come, as though, with subtitles".[33] Part of the problem with taking experience as always already propositional is that it elides how experiences place no upper limit on what can be said about them: it's not quite that our propositions are not enough to describe a scene, but that there is always more to say. Experiences are inexhaustible in this way.

McDowell has been at pains to clarify and indeed modify this aspect of his account in more recent work, where he distinguishes his picture of perception as intrinsically conceptual from a picture of perception as intrinsically propositional. In 2009's 'Avoiding the Myth of the Given', he writes:

> Intuitions bring our surroundings into view, but not in an operation of mere sensibility . . . [T]he conceptual content that allows us to avoid the Myth is intuitional, not propositional, so experiencing is not taking things to be so. In

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> bringing our surroundings into view, experiences entitle us to take things to be so; whether we do is a further question.[34]

The difference may seem slight but it is crucial: experience is not taking things to be thus and so, but what *entitles us* to take things to be thus and so. In *Mind and World*, experiences were figured as delivering propositional content: perceptual content that can become the content of a judgement if the experiencer takes the perception at face value. As McDowell writes there: "*That things are thus and so* is the content of the experience, and it can also be the content of a judgement: it becomes the content of a judgement if the subject decides to take the experience at face value."[35] In 'Avoiding the Myth of the Given', by contrast, that things are thus and so is not the content of experiences, but something they make available for articulation. Experience delivers pre-propositional content that is nevertheless conceptual, which makes it immediately suitable for articulation in discursive activities like judgements. It does not come pre-carved into propositional form, in other words, but ready to be so carved. And of course, there is no limit on how it can be. The subtlety of this thought is perhaps part of why McDowell's descriptions of it can sound laboured: "intuitions immediately reveal things to be as they would be claimed to be in claims that would be no more than a discursive exploitation of some of the content of the intuitions".[36] The difficulty lies in avoiding two pitfalls: falling into talk of 'mere' or non-conceptual sense impressions, or into the intellectualist picture that would boil it all down to propositions. The former pitfall sees us appealing to the Given; the latter sees us "exaggerate the extent of the doxastic activity experience prompts in us . . .".[37] The account forwarded in *Mind and World* avoided the former mistake, but not the latter one. In avoiding it too, we avoid falsifying absorbed experience, and do not have to face the implication that rightly worried Collins: that in experience we somehow "acquire all the beliefs we would be entitled to by what we have in view".[38] This allows us to explain away a seeming paradox in the phenomenology I raised earlier, on which features of the world often do not register with us in propositional form unless they jar as remarkable in some way. If I do not first judge that *p*, someone might ask, how can I be jarred by it? Surely my being jarred by *p presupposes* my judging that *p*. But this is not a problem on this account of perception, because our intuitions reveal the layout of the world to us. When I am jarred by something unusual, I judge something that was already delivered for my perceiving. I carve out something that, in more usual circumstances, I would have left unarticulated.

This may allow us to rethink the paradox of fiction as it applies to cinema. Here is one of Carroll's formulations of it: "Emotional response is thought to

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require belief in the existence of its object; but with fictions we know that the Green Slime does not exist. So our fear in this case seems inconsistent with our knowledge."[39] As we have seen, the standard cognitivist response to such problems is to insist that emotional response does not have to require belief in its object, but merely that I suppose it, or simulate it in my imagination. The problem with such a response is that it falls into the intellectualist trap that caught the McDowell of *Mind and World*: the assumption that content must be propositional. Thus it is in danger of falsifying our relation to reality, because the entertainment of propositional content – whether through beliefs, judgements, simulations, assertions, or whatever – is just one, important but by no means central mode in which we engage the world. The very idea of a paradox of fiction betrays the assumption that belief is a necessary constituent of our worldly engagements. I do not have to believe in the existence of the Green Slime to fear it, just as I do not have to believe in the existence of my coffee cup to drink from it.

Drawing on my critical accounts of Kiarostami's films, I also said above that it is in danger of falsifying our relation to the cinematic image. Why can emerge more clearly now. Films, just like the rest of reality, make a range of conceptual content available to us. For us to be affected by that content, we do not have to carve it out in propositional form: as when we are absorbed in the world, in cinematic absorption we often do not need to articulate the content. This is why we can fear the Green Slime without considering its existential status: without believing in it, imagining it, or supposing it to be real. And for much of the time, this is how we do respond to films: we are absorbed in what happens, and are affected by it, all without having to articulate it propositionally.[40] This is not to say that cinematic absorption is pre-cognitive or merely affective (that would be to set it up as a version of the Given).[41] On this account, cinematic absorption is conceptual but pre-propositional: to respond to what happens on the screen, we do not need to infer from dumb data given to our senses; but nor do we need to articulate it in propositional terms. In Chapter 5 I argued that, on pain of giving teeth to scepticism, absorption should not be taken as a function of conviction. In the case of fictional films, one problem with that idea is that conviction would require belief in their propositional content (a situation that, as cognitivists are right to point out, would see us respond to films very differently from how we typically do). Perhaps now we can see there is a deeper problem. It is that this blinds us to the very phenomenon of cinematic absorption, and what is so uncannily powerful about cinematic images.[42]

Part of what is unsatisfactory about the accounts of Currie and Carroll is that they needlessly complicate what it is to respond to films. To be moved

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by them, I do not necessarily need to imagine or suppose anything. I can just respond pre-reflectively to what is there on screen. This does not mean propositional content is irrelevant to our experience of films (if that claim is not implausible enough in itself, then consider how it would be contradicted by all the discursive articulations of what happens in Kiarostami's films I provide in this very book). On this account, films deliver conceptual content ready for articulation: content we take in pre-reflectively and are moved by while absorbed, but which we can usually begin to articulate if called upon to do so.[43] This allows us to respect key aspects of what it is to talk about a film: that cinematic images contain more than we can formulate, overflowing our propositions; that a good critic may find content in them that we had not picked out; that images are inexhaustible. And of course, as in normal perception, cinematic spectators can easily move between these different modes of engagement, sliding ineluctably between non-propositional absorption and the explicit entertainment of propositions (indeed it would be a mistake to regard these two states as necessarily exclusive). In some cases, this will involve the entertainment of propositions about what happens in the movie (as when we notice that Akiko and Takashi are very tired, and so judge that they may have had sex the previous night). In some cases, this will involve awareness of the fact that we are watching a film (as when we note that Kiarostami is withholding crucial information from us, and so judge that *Like Someone in Love* is typical of his deliberately ambiguous style). In neither kind of case will problems or paradoxes regarding the reality of the fictional entities one sees on screen typically arise, as long as one is familiar with the conventions surrounding fictional films (as even eight-year-old children tend to be).

Sometimes questions arise regarding the propositional status of what happens on screen. This is typical of modernist films, which employ a range of techniques to get us questioning what we see, sometimes by provoking us into medium awareness.[44] And on the understanding of Kiarostami's work I have developed in this book, raising such questions is fundamental to his own directorial strategy. Consider what I have been describing as the paradigm of his characteristic gesture: the coda of *Taste of Cherry*, which reveals him and his crew. As I have argued, part of what is remarkable about it is that it does not simply distance us – puncturing our conviction in the film – but complicates our absorption in it. And there is something enlivening about it. Coming as it does after a shot of a man who may be killing himself, it casts a surprising light on the preceding story, imbuing it with what Butler very aptly calls "unexpected jubilation".[45] For psychoanalytic theory, the revelation of the director would have to represent a shattering of the cinematic

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illusion, rather like what happens when there is a fault with the projector, on Baudry's account of such events (consider the violence that is typical of some modernist techniques, as displayed, for example, in the opening sequence of Ingmar Bergman's *Persona*). But Kiarostami's coda brings about the very opposite of a rude awakening (though it is rightly described as an awakening). It troubles the propositional claims we might make about the film. We cannot say if Badii has died. We don't know if the scene counts as part of the preceding movie, or if that movie ended with Badii in the dark of his grave. We wonder if it has turned into a documentary of some sort. We cannot say if the soldiers are still in character, or what 'in character' means when one is watching non-professional actors, hired to play themselves. We try to understand the meaning of the director's presence on the scene. But we are not simply thrown out of the film. Rather, we are led to admit that we do not know what we are looking at. We are not thus distanced but disoriented and overwhelmed. The coda asks us to acknowledge that cinematic absorption operates on a level that precedes our judgements regarding, beliefs about, and knowledge of the world. It is enlivening because, in throwing us back on our absorption, it shows it is untouched by scepticism.

If we read the double window in Takashi's apartment as a metonym of the screen, then its shattering could be taken as the metonymic destruction of the cinematic illusion. This could be given weight by the fact that Noriaki smashes Takashi's window in an act of insane rage spurred by the discovery that Akiko has been deceiving him. On this interpretation, the break must be a gesture designed to force us to confront our own naïve belief that we were being told the truth (or perhaps our nagging doubt that we weren't), just as Noriaki did. Yet if the above is right, we should hesitate here. And of course, part of the problem is that this would align Kiarostami himself with Noriaki, as though the director is on board with his act of violence.

On my reading, Noriaki's act figures what we might describe as the sceptical underpinnings of the urge to overcome scepticism.[46] Kiarostami is presenting a lesson in what happens when we seek to root out and destroy deception.[47] We should read the break not as the shattering of illusion, then, but as the shattering of an illusion of it. What Kiarostami suspends is not simply belief but the belief in belief:[48] the idea that we *must* have believed in the first place, and the notion that propositional attitudes must be fundamental to how we encounter the world. This means that Deleuze's claim that the task of modern cinema is to "restore our belief in the world"[49] is right enough in spirit but in a deeper sense precisely wrong. The task of anti-theoretical film-philosophy is not to restore something that has been lost, but to show that we could never have had what we thought we lost, and so not simply that

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we do not have it, but also that we have not lost it. Absorption in cinema is literally uncanny. So it is with the world.

Notes

1. Kiarostami's procedure here corresponds exactly to Robert Baird's description of the cinematic "startle effect": a character is present; there is a threat off screen; then there is an intrusion into that character's personal space (see 'The Startle Effect').
2. Saeed-Vafa, 'Reflections on *Like Someone in Love*'. Saeed-Vafa also supports the idea that the window is a metonym for the screen, arguing that "the window of the old man's apartment becomes the screen/frame . . .".
3. Nancy, *The Evidence of Film*, 92.
4. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 6 (emphasis added).
5. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 6.
6. Ferri, *Willing Suspension of Disbelief*, 86.
7. Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier*, 61.
8. Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier*, 48.
9. Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier*, 72.
10. Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier*, 40.
11. Baudry, 'Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus', 45.
12. Baudry, 'Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus', 42.
13. Currie, *Image and Mind*, 24. See also the argument from Carroll and Seeley: "We don't flee danger at the movies, we don't attempt to help the injured, nor do we try to console the bereaved. No matter how you slice it, explanations of the qualitative, experiential grip of movies that appeal to an illusion of reality are dead in the water" ('Cognitivism, Psychology, and Neuroscience', 55). Gaut puts it similarly: "were [viewers] really under the illusion that they were in the presence of an axe-wielding maniac depicted in a horror film, they would flee the cinema" (*A Philosophy of Cinematic Art*, 63).

    Allen, by contrast, presents a compelling account of what he calls 'projective illusion' that preserves aspects of psychoanalytic theories, yet without committing to the claim that spectators are led to believe in the reality of what they see on screen. "When we experience a pictorial representation as a projective illusion," Allen writes, "we do not believe that what we see is real" (*Projecting Illusion*, 97–8). On Allen's account, in the experience of projective illusion,

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> you lose awareness of the fact that you are seeing a film, that is, watching a recorded event that is staged before the camera. Instead of looking 'from the outside' upon something staged in this world, you perceive the events of the film directly or 'from within.' You perceive a fully realized though fictional world that has all the perceptual immediacy of our own; you experience the film as a projective illusion. (107)

14. Carroll takes this line in his reply to Warren Buckland's negative review of *Mystifying Movies* (see 'Cognitivism, Contemporary Film Theory and Method', 207–8).
15. Currie, *Image and Mind*, 149.
16. Currie, *Image and Mind*, 148. Elsewhere he writes:

> While fictions do not cause us to believe in the reality of the fictional story, they can engage us to the extent of causing within us the sometimes pleasant and sometimes unpleasant bodily states we associate with being emotionally moved by events. If fictions encourage simulations, and simulated beliefs and desires retain their internal connection to our bodily states, that is exactly what we would expect. (*Image and Mind*, 156)

17. Christensen, *Self and World*, 144 (original emphasis).
18. See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, SZ 63–113; 59–105e.
19. See Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 88–107. The difference between Dreyfus's account and the one forwarded here is that, following McDowell, I want to regard absorption as conceptual. McDowell and Dreyfus's debate on this issue is famous (see Dreyfus, 'Overcoming the Myth of the Mental' and McDowell, 'What Myth?'). For a collection of papers dealing with their important exchange, see Schear, *Mind, Reason, and Being-in-the-World*.
20. McDowell, *Mind and World*, xvi.
21. McDowell, *Mind and World*, 7.
22. McDowell, *Mind and World*, xvi.
23. McDowell, *Mind and World*, 15.
24. McDowell, *Mind and World*, 8.
25. Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', 310.
26. Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', 310; quoted in McDowell, *Mind and World*, 14.
27. McDowell, *Mind and World*, 16.
28. McDowell, *Mind and World*, 16.
29. Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, B76 A52; 193–4e.
30. McDowell, *Mind and World*, 67.

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31. McDowell, *Mind and World*, 9 (original emphasis).
32. Christensen, *Self and World*, 9 (original emphasis).
33. Collins, 'Beastly Experience', 379. This point supports the arguments developed in Chapters 2 and 3 that it is a fundamental mistake to take reality as a totality of propositional content.
34. McDowell, 'Avoiding the Myth of the Given', 269.
35. McDowell, *Mind and World*, 26 (original emphasis).
36. McDowell, 'Avoiding the Myth of the Given', 267.
37. McDowell, 'Avoiding the Myth of the Given', 269.
38. McDowell, 'Avoiding the Myth of the Given', 269.
39. Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror*, 79.
40. Tarja Laine outlines a somewhat similar position in *Feeling Cinema*, which argues that "the process of emotional engagement with the film is a dynamic event of interaction" (11). Particularly relevant is her treatment of horror films, and her argument that they "scare through more immediate means than can be explained by spectators entertaining in thought, say, the impure properties of Count Dracula, or by their feeling concern for film characters in horrific situations" (12). Yet Laine bases her arguments on an ontology of cinema that contains metaphysical commitments that strike me both as implausible in themselves and as unnecessary for an account of cinema's affective powers, such as her claim that films should be understood as emotional agents which "feel about their subject matter and possess an emotional attitude toward the spectators" (3).
41. It would also be to make the mistake that causes such problems for Dreyfus's (otherwise highly compelling) account of absorbed coping. It sees him draw a sharp distinction between pre-cognitive, pre-conceptual absorption and detached, conceptually articulated reflection, and leads him to make implausible claims like the following:

    > After much experience, the chess master is directly drawn by the forces on the board to make a masterful move, and, in the same way, the kind person, as Sartre sees, is directly drawn to act by the force of the needy person's apparent need. In neither case does the master make his move *for a reason*. ('The Myth of the Pervasiveness of the Mental', 35)

    As McDowell shows (see 'The Myth of the Mind as Detached', 46), the absorption of a master in a game of blitz chess does not preclude his acting for reasons. If he pauses to reflect explicitly on what he is doing, he may indeed break his flow – but not because his acting in flow was somehow non-cognitive or purely perceptual. Rather, it is because he has

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actualised conceptual capacities that were already pervasive in his flow. I am arguing that the same goes for spectators in cinemas.

42. We could compare this account of cinematic absorption with Heidegger's treatment of worldly absorption in *Being and Time*. As Heidegger found, the difficulty is that philosophy, because of the intellectualist tendency that runs right through the tradition, is constitutively ill equipped to grasp the phenomenon in question. Like a star that vanishes as soon as one tries to focus on it, the phenomenon of absorption disappears when we try to grasp it theoretically.
43. As McDowell writes in one of his replies to Dreyfus's attacks on his alleged intellectualism:

> A *capacity* to step back from situations and consider whether features of them constitute reasons for thinking or acting in this or that way is a central element in what it is to have conceptual capacities at all. But that is not to say that the capacity for distance is actualized whenever conceptual capacities are in play. Exactly not: the capacity for distance is *not* actualized in unreflective perceptual experience or in unreflective intentional agency, but conceptual capacities are operative in both. ('The Myth of the Mind as Detached', 53; original emphasis)

This also indicates a way out of the rather tired debate in film theory regarding active versus passive spectatorship. On the one hand, it allows us to account for the undeniable power of cinematic images: the notion that, when they are absorbed in a film, spectators are in a profound sense given over to it. On the other hand, it allows us to account for the fact that, despite their being given over, spectators are not merely the passive dupes of what takes place on screen. Cinematic absorption is pre-reflective, but our conceptual capacities remain in play in it, ready to be actualised in reflection.

44. For a useful account of medium awareness that draws on insights both from cognitivism and a reconstructed version of psychoanalytic theory, see Allen, *Projecting Illusion*, 82–110. A significant difference between Allen's account and the one I am developing here, of course, is that his theory of cinematic absorption turns on the idea of illusion. "[T]he loss of medium awareness", as he writes, "is pre-requisite to the experience of projective illusion" (108).
45. Butler, 'Abbas Kiarostami', 72.
46. Considering the link between scepticism and masculinity I identified in Chapter 6, it should not surprise us that this act of violence emerges out

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of a male desire for control. That said, the explicit depiction of violence is itself surprising, coming in a Kiarostami film. The only real precedents for it are in his pre-Revolutionary work, and especially *The Report*, which contains a harrowing scene of domestic violence perpetrated by its male protagonist.

47. This may give us a way of understanding the role of love in this film. First we should acknowledge that its characters seem in want of love. The professor is a widower or divorced or estranged from his wife; he calls a sex worker, but for something other than or more than only sex. Noriaki is not treated sympathetically in the film, but it's evident he is suffering, and perhaps from a kind of lovelessness: we could put his jealousy down to a function of his lack of love, or at least his inability to bear it (like Cavell's King Lear); he is brutal and controlling, but has been brutalised by a society that does not care for him, granting him little control over his own existence – as a young working-class man, it is clear enough that he cannot really keep Akiko (note the scene in which he confronts her at university: the extent to which he sticks out from the students) – which is perhaps part of what drives him to act in the way he does. Akiko herself treats her grandmother quite brutally, but she too seems to have been brutalised by circumstance, apparently compelled by financial strife into prostitution. Then there is the title, taken from the eponymous Ella Fitzgerald song to which Takashi listens in the initial apartment scene, and which also plays over the closing credits of the film. The lyrics:

> Lately, I find myself gazing at stars
> Hearing guitars like someone in love
> Sometimes the things I do astound me
> Mostly whenever you're around me
>
> Lately, I seem to walk as though I had wings
> Bump into things like someone in love
> Each time I look at you, I'm limp as a glove
> And feeling like someone in love

There are two ways of reading the song: to feel like *someone in love* could just mean being in the early days of falling in love, when you feel that something is starting to happen. Yet it could also have to do with semblance, with feeling *like* someone in love, with feeling something that resembles it, and in that sense isn't really it.

But the category of knowledge has an ambiguous application to love.

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Consider the epistemic status of a declaration of love. It is perhaps more problematic even than the reports associated with sceptical threats of the problem of other minds: if it is true that when "I see someone writhing in pain with evident cause I do not think: all the same, his feelings are hidden from me" (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 190e), then in love things are complicated. Here one can be mistaken in attributing the predicate 'in love' to oneself (Romeo and Rosaline); here it is not meaningless to say, 'I know I am in love' ('How?' 'I just *know*'); here the intensity of an emotional display can itself cast doubt on what we might presume (or hope) it is intended to convey (sometimes the louder you shout it, the hollower you sound). Wittgenstein again: "Love is not a feeling. Love is put to the test, pain not. One does not say: that was not true pain, or it would not have faded so quickly" (Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, §504; 89e; translation modified). It is not that love cannot be proven save through exceptional actions (gifts, sonnets, extravagant marriage proposals, etc.), but that this 'being put to the test' is crucial to it, and persists with it at all times. There is no way of proving it once and for all, and so the task it sets is continual. As a thought experiment, imagine it were possible to use neuroimaging to determine the intensity of feeling a subject has for a certain person. Even if one could establish scientifically that a particular man or woman arouses extreme desire and/or affection in the subject, then would this be sufficient to prove love? Are such feelings even necessary to love? Could we not, in certain circumstances, legitimately speak of it in their absence?

And why can't we say that Noriaki loves Akiko, and/or that Takashi does? To say that true love cannot exist in circumstances of insane jealousy or financial exchange would perhaps be too romantic. Yet at the same time it is clear that something isn't right for these characters.

48. To illustrate this one need only register the state of contemporary 'debates' regarding the existence of God, in which hapless theists end up looking like they believe in something for which there is no rational evidence (God as Russell's teapot). This is a way of understanding what the death of God means (God dies just as belief in God is reduced to believing in the existence of a particular entity). In modernity, we do not simply lose our belief; rather, we are saddled with a concept of belief that puts pressure on the lived experience of believing.
49. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 187 (see also 170–1). For an extended critique of the theological dimensions of Deleuze's claim about belief and modern cinema, see Bernstein, 'Movement! Action! Belief?' For a more sympathetic recent discussion of the claim and the responses it has provoked, see Sinnerbrink, *Cinematic Ethics* (52–79).

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