

AT FIRST, PROCEEDING FROM OUR OWN AGE, YOU MUST BEGIN WITH THE FIRST PAGE, AND GO FORWARD, IN ORDER.
WHAT PAST IS IT THE TALE MEANS WHEN IT SAYS 'ONCE UPON A TIME'?

ACTUALLY, I HAVE BEEN FEEDING MYSELF WITH WONDER THIS LONG TIME ABOUT THAT.
WE SEE SOME BEGINNINGS OF THIS IN OUR OWN TIME, AND IN THE FUTURE AGE IT WILL BE COMPLETED. THIS, I MUST REMIND YOU, IS MY
SPECULATION AT THIS TIME.

I KNEW THAT A HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE WAS IN THE PAST AND ALL OVER. AND NOW, SEE, A PRESENT.
BUT, WHAT IS THIS TIME? I WANT A DIFFERENT KIND OF FUTURE.

WELL, SOME DAY IT'S COMING: IT MIGHT NOT BE SOON, IT MIGHT NOT BE WITH IN THE LIFETIME OF ANY ANIMAL NOW LIVING, BUT STILL IT'S COMING. I GAZED A HORIZON WITHOUT KNOWING, EVEN WITHOUT WISHING TO KNOW.

SO THEN, DOES THE CHANGE OF THE WORD NOT ALTER THE MATTER?

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT TIME IS. YOU SAY THE PAST IS GONE, THE FUTURE IS NOT REAL AND THERE IS NO CHANGE AND NO HOPE.

NOW YOU ARE BEGINNING TO REALIZE WHAT THAT WORLD WILL BE LIKE. BUT IN THE END YOU WILL DO MORE THAN UNDERSTAND IT. YOU WILL
ACCEPT IT, WELCOME IT, BECOME PART OF IT.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND, YOU ARE LIKE SOMEBODY FROM OUR OWN PAST, THE OLD IDEALISTS, THE VISIONARIES OF FREEDOM, AND YET I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU, AS IF YOU WERE TRYING TO TELL ME OF FUTURE THINGS; AND YET, AS YOU SAY, YOU ARE HERE, NOW!

WELL, IN MYTH AND LEGEND THERE IS NO TIME. NOTHING WILL REMAIN OF YOU, NOT A NAME IN A REGISTER, NOT A MEMORY IN A LIVING BRAIN. YOU WILL BE ANNIHILATED IN THE PAST AS WELL AS IN THE FUTURE. YOU WILL NEVER HAVE EXISTED.' FOR EXAMPLE, YESTERDAY I NOTED THE CLOCK. A MOMENT BEFORE, AS IT SEEMED, IT HAD STOOD AT A MINUTE OR SO PAST SEVEN; THEN SUDDENLY IT WAS NEARLY HALF-PAST TEN! THEN I THOUGHT I MUST HAVE GONE INTO THE PAST IF I HAVE GONE ANYWHERE.

IT MAY BE THAT YOU SWEEPED BACK INTO THE PAST BY CHANCE. HAVE YOU EVER RETURNED?

IT TOOK ME SOME LITTLE TIME TO REMEMBER WHERE I WAS, AS IT ALWAYS DOES, BUT I SOON CAME BACK TO ME AND THEN I FELT LIKE WARMED AND PROTECTED AS IF I WAS BACK AT HOME. SOMETIMES I HAVE DREAMS. YOU CAN LAUGH IF YOU LIKE BUT THERE ARE LOTS OF DREAMS AROUND.

YOU THINK IT'S SOMETHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE. BUT IT IS NOT REAL, YOU KNOW. IT IS NOT STABLE, NOT SOLID — NOTHING IS. THINGS
CHANGE AND YOU CANNOT HAVE ANYTHING.

IT IS NOT UNTIL AN ACT OCCURS WITHIN THE LANDSCAPE OF THE PAST AND THE FUTURE THAT IT IS A HUMAN ACT. "YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE PAST."

NOT, ALL THAT IS TIME PAST, IRRELEVANT. IT WILL VANISH, PASS INTO FUTURE TIME, AND DISAPPEAR. SHOULD YOU NOT HAVE SAID THE
CONTRAST OF THE PRESENT WITH THE FUTURE: OF BLIND DESPAIR WITH HOPE?"

BUT TO ME THE FUTURE IS STILL BLACK AND BLANK, IS A VAST IGNORANCE, LIT AT A FEW CASUAL PLACES BY THE MEMORY OF HIS STORY.

OFTEN IN THE PAST I HAD WONDERED WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO BE SUBJECTED. THE MUTABILITY OF THE PAST IS THE CENTRAL TENET OF PAST
EVENTS, IT IS ARGUED, HAVE NO OBJECTIVE EXISTENCE, BUT SURVIVE ONLY IN WRITTEN RECORDS AND IN HUMAN MEMORIES. THE PAST IS
WHATEVER THE RECORDS AND THE MEMORIES AGREE UPON.

I KNEW I HAD HEARD IT BEFORE SOMEWHERE, BUT HAD NOT TIME TO REMEMBER.

IT ALSO FOLLOWS THAT THOUGH THE PAST IS ALTERABLE, IT NEVER HAS BEEN ALTERED IN ANY SPECIFIC INSTANCE. FOR WHEN IT HAS BEEN RECREATED IN WHATEVER SHAPE IS NEEDED AT THE MOMENT, THEN THIS NEW VERSION IS THE PAST, AND NO DIFFERENT PAST CAN EVER HAVE EXISTED.

YES, I AM MUCH TIED TO THE PAST, MY PAST. I SHOULD BE QUITE CONTENT TO DREAM ABOUT PAST TIMES, AND IF I COULD NOT IDEALISE THEM, YET AT LEAST IDEALISE SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN THEM. DOES THE PAST EXIST CONCRETELY, IN SPACE? IS THERE SOMEWHERE OR OTHER A PLACE, A WORLD OF SOLID OBJECTS, WHERE THE PAST IS STILL HAPPENING?'

BUT IT DID EXIST! IT DOES EXIST! IT EXISTS IN MEMORY. I REMEMBER IT. YOU REMEMBER IT.

WELL, IT IS ALSO NECESSARY TO REMEMBER THAT EVENTS HAPPENED IN THE DESIRED MANNER. AND IF IT IS NECESSARY TO REARRANGE ONE'S MEMORIES OR TO TAMPER WITH WRITTEN RECORDS, THEN IT IS NECESSARY TO FORGET THAT ONE HAS DONE SO.

IT WILL BE SEEN THAT THE CONTROL OF THE PAST DEPENDS ABOVE ALL ON THE TRAINING OF MEMORY. "IN OTHER WORDS, ONE OF THESE 'ASPECTS' IS REAL, THE OTHER'S SIMPLY AN ILLUSION." MY MIND SLID AWAY INTO THE LABYRINTH WORD OF DOUBLETHINK.

WHO CONTROLS THE PAST CONTROLS THE FUTURE: WHO CONTROLS THE PRESENT CONTROLS THE PAST.

WELL, I THOUGHT OF THEIR DISTANCE, AND THE SLOW INEVITABLE DRIFT OF THEIR MOVEMENTS OUT OF THE UNKNOWN PAST INTO THE UNKNOWN FUTURE. BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH, AND BETWEEN PHYSICAL PLEASURE AND PHYSICAL PAIN, THERE IS STILL A DISTINCTION, BUT THAT IS ALL. OUR MENTAL EXISTENCES, WHICH ARE IMMATERIAL AND HAVE NO DIMENSIONS, ARE PASSING ALONG THE TIME-DIMENSION.

WHAT IS MORE INTERESTING TO US, IS THAT I HAVE DETAILED RECORD OF THE PERIOD OF THE CHANGE TO THE PRESENT STATE OF THINGS, ESPECIALLY OF THAT EXODUS OF THE PEOPLE. THROUGHOUT RECORDED TIME, AND PROBABLY SINCE THE END OF THE NEOLITHIC AGE, THERE HAVE BEEN KINDS OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD, THEY HAVE BEEN SUBDIVIDED IN MANY WAYS, BUT THE ESSENTIAL STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY HAS NEVER ALTERED.

I KNEW IT ALL THE TIME. I HADN'T FORGOTTEN. LISTEN TO ME! IN SOME OF THESE VISIONS OF UTOPIAS AND COMING TIMES, WHICH I HAVE READ, THERE IS A VAST AMOUNT OF DETAIL ABOUT SOCIAL ARRANGEMENTS. LET GO ALL THE GOOD THINGS THAT WERE AMONG THOSE OF FORMER AGES, YET, IF BETTER THINGS ARE PROPOSED, DO NOT COVER YOURSELF OBSTINATELY WITH THIS EXCUSE OF REVERENCE TO PAST TIMES.

BUT WHILE SUCH DETAILS ARE EASY ENOUGH TO OBTAIN WHEN THE WHOLE WORLD IS CONTAINED IN ONE'S IMAGINATION, THEY ARE ALTOGETHER INACCESSIBLE AS I FOUND HERE. NOW THAT I HAVE EASED MY MIND BY MAKING YOU UNCOMFORTABLE, LET US HAVE AN END OF THE SUBJECT FOR THE PRESENT.

I DID UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT EVERYTHING REALLY ALL EXISTS NOW. YOU CANNOT GET AWAY FROM THE PRESENT MOMENT.

WELL, MEANTIME FOR THE PRESENT WE WILL LET IT BE; FOR I MUST LOOK AT THIS NEW COUNTRY THAT WE ARE PASSING THROUGH. SEE HOW THE RIVER HAS CHANGED CHARACTER AGAIN: IT IS BROAD NOW, AND THE REACHES ARE LONG AND VERY SLOW-RUNNING. WE'VE GOT PLENTY OF TIME!"
NOBODY KNOWS WHERE WE ARE. WE MAY BE HERE A LONG TIME.

AT ORDINARY TIMES THE EYE CONCERNS ITSELF WITH SUCH PROBLEMS AS WHERE? HOW FAR? HOW SITUATED IN RELATION TO WHAT?

AT PRESENT WE ARE INCAPABLE OF IMAGINING ALTERNATIVES IN THE FUTURE OR THE PAST. ALSO WE FORGET WHATEVER IT IS NECESSARY TO FORGET, THEN TO DRAW IT BACK INTO MEMORY AGAIN AT THE MOMENT WHEN IT IS NEEDED, AND THEN PROMPTLY TO FORGET IT AGAIN: AND ABOVE ALL, TO APPLY THE SAME PROCESS TO THE PROCESS ITSELF.

SHOULD YOU NOT HAVE SAID THE CONTRAST OF THE PRESENT WITH THE FUTURE: A BLIND DESPAIR WITH HOPE?

YOU HAVE BEGUN AGAIN YOUR NEVER-ENDING CONTRAST BETWEEN THIS PRESENT AND THE FUTURE. IS IT NOT SO? IT WOULD BE A LITTLE LIKE READING A BOOK, YOU SEE. THE BOOK IS ALL THERE, ALL AT ONCE, BETWEEN ITS COVERS. BUT IF YOU WANT TO READ THE STORY AND UNDERSTAND IT, YOU CAN BEGIN WITH THE FIRST PAGE, AND GO FORWARD, ALWAYS IN ORDER. A LOT OF IT WOULD BE ALL LIKE MADE UP, BUT SOME OF IT WOULD BE TRUE.

IT'S A BEAUTIFUL THING, THE DESTRUCTION OF WORDS. OF COURSE __THE GREAT WASTAGE IS IN THE VERBS AND ADJECTIVES, BUT THERE ARE
HUNDREDS OF NOUNS THAT CAN BE GOT RID OF AS WELL.

AFTER ALL, WHAT JUSTIFICATION IS THERE FOR A WORD, WHICH IS SIMPLY THE OPPOSITE OF SOME OTHER WORD? A WORD CONTAINS ITS OPPOSITE
IN ITSELF. INTO THE FUTURE OR THE PAST—I DON'T, FOR CERTAIN, KNOW WHICH.

IT CAN'T BE MUCH LONGER NOW. NOW MUST BE VERY NEAR THE END OF THE TIME.

IT'S HALF-PAST SEVEN NOW,' HAD ANYTHING HAPPENED? FOR A MOMENT I SUSPECTED THAT MY INTELLECT HAD TRICKED ME.

I'M SORRY I BEEN SUCH A TIME. OUR TIMES OF TRIAL ARE LONG. WE HAVEN'T BEEN OUT OF HERE, HAVE WE? BEEN HERE ALL THE TIME, HAVEN'T WE?

ALONG WITH INDIFFERENCE TO SPACE THERE WENT AN EVEN MORE COMPLETE INDIFFERENCE TO TIME. BUT ALL I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW IS THIS:
IF AT ANY TIME IN THE FUTURE YOU LOOK BACK TO THESE TIMES AND RE- MEMBER ME, WE'LL HAVE A LITTLE CHAT ABOUT THIS SOME OTHER TIME.

TOMORROW WE SHALL MEET SAME PLACE SAME TIME, ME HOPING TO BE LIKE A LOT BETTER.'

