What makes us scared? A few remarks on the problem of interpretive casuses and impossible narratives

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When creating a universe - whether that universe is actual, possible or even fictional - the fundamental question that must be posed is that of what to include in that universe. In the contemporary world, characterised by an escalating level of danger, the delineation between real, possible and impossible becomes increasingly pertinent. As someone deeply committed to philosophy, I think the latest achievements in cognitive sciences, especially cognitive narratology and psychology are like the missing links between philosophy and other sciences. These days we are flooded with non-fictional narratives about what's going on in the world, but it's all getting more and more similar to the dystopian fictions we grew up reading. The possession of a proper method of reading and understanding could help us deal with the flood of information and ensure literature has a place in the ever-changing future.

The aim of my presentation is to draw attention to the parallels that can be drawn between fictional and non-fictional narratives with regard to the relationship between philosophical and literary possible worlds. The initial phase will provide a concise overview of the metaphysically and epistemologically correlated problems of causality and modality. This will be followed by an examination of the so-called Humean challenge and the classical philosophical theories of possible worlds. Adopting the standpoint of modal fictionalism, I will treat possible worlds as fictional artefacts, thus making the process of creating and understanding such worlds the central issue of my further investigations. The subsequent section will address the concept of unnatural narratives, which are regarded as the most revolutionary and promising trend in present-day cognitive narratology. The issue of impossible minds will be discussed within the broader context of 4E Cognition. The third and final section will provide a brief review of the neuroscientific theory of active inference, with a particular focus on its current results in terms of the importance of narrativity within the process of abductive inference.

I will conclude that the least common multiple of the aforementioned theories is the general yet enigmatic capacity of imagination. It is therefore proposed that narrativity should be regarded as a valuable evolutionary tool with which to face and overcome the unknown, whether it is our worst fear or our greatest desire, be it inside or outside of ourselves.