

## Reality, “Fiction” and Psychorealising the Fictive

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### Abstract

Readers of literature, listeners of music, appreciators of visual art – indeed, all recipients or “audiences” in any form of the creative and performance arts – do sometimes connect with the artistic work on a deeply personal and subjective level when the work strikes a relatable chord in them. Audiences tend to find themselves and their everyday reality mirrored, or “place-able,” in the work’s creative or enacted reality. This subjective experience has been termed “Psychofictive Reality”. This article proposes this concept through the prism of Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic concepts of Internal/External Realities and Aristotle’s dramatic notion of Catharsis. It establishes key notions such as Artistic Reality, Psychic-Material Reality and Mirroriness/Relatability, in the concept of Psychofictive Reality.

*Keywords:* archetypes, realism, catharsis, subjectivity, Sigmund Freud, psychic reality

## Introduction

This study begins with a definition of the notion of psychofictive reality in the appreciative engagement of the arts in general, particularly the creative and performance arts. Its illustrative analyses will draw from the fields of literature, drama and music. Moreover, the term “audience” will be used throughout this study in a very broad sense. Its comprehensive range embraces recipients of any work of the creative or performance arts as appreciators of such work, however lay the audience or unpremeditatedly it engages with or relates to the artistic work. It is in this sense, therefore, that the reader of a work of literature, the viewer of a work of visual art, or the audience of a theatrical production or cinema can be said to be included suitably under the said umbrella.

As an initial sketch we may characterise Psychofictive Reality as the associative connection in the mind of the audience to a work of creative or performance art. It is the connection that is established between the artistic reality (that is, the work’s creative or enacted reality) and the audience’s psychic-material reality (which involves, but is not limited to, events, experiences and standards in the audience member’s everyday life, involving his/her psychological “realities” such as emotions, desires, wishes, dreams, and so on). Furthermore, it is the subjective experience that takes place in the mind of an audience of a work of creative or performance art when the work strikes a perfect chord in his/her mind and s/he feels able to place him/herself psychologically in, or interpret his/her everyday reality within, the context of the created or enacted reality.

The notion of psychofictive reality, put in other words, is what may be termed the psychological experience of an audience of any work of art has when the work becomes so relatable that s/he can connect with an event, character, dialogue, etc. in the work of art on a deeply personal and subjective level. It is a reader’s personal, impression-based interaction with a literary work, for instance; a listener’s emotional or psychological connection with a musical piece, or a member of an audience’s subjective engagement with a dramatic performance.

However, since such interaction with a work of art is characteristically psychological, personal, emotional and subjective, it follows that a preliminary analysis of it cannot determine what parts of the work will be *psychorealised* by an audience or in what manner different audiences will *psychorealise* it. In other words, one cannot predict what part of a work of art its audience will be able to relate to his/her own reality.

## What Psychofictive Reality Is and What It Is Not

While Psychofictive Reality refers to a subjective experience, it does not equate with everything that the world of subjective experiences offers. To avoid a misinterpretation of its essence and operational dialectics, this article will illustrate and evaluate psychofictive reality to demonstrate what it is and what it is not. It shall also be made clear in what terms psychofictive reality is to be construed, interpreted or contextualised in its dialectical relationship with the arts, both the creative and performance arts.

### Psychofictive reality is...

Psychofictive reality thus relates, for instance, to when teenagers appreciate a musical piece by emotionally responding in a manner that suggests the lyrics of the piece were in fact written for them. He or she appropriates the pronoun “me” used for the persona and substitutes

him/herself in the imaginary setting and situation created by the lyrics. This happens because fantasies, wishes and aspirations, pain and fear, and indeed all other sentiments are an integral part of a person's psychic-material reality. Likewise, all wishes, fantasies, fears and such like are rooted in the present: they are simply projections or manifestations of the person's present reality (Freud, 2010, p. 147–157).

The moment a listener places him/herself in music, the experience may advance beyond the music's melody or lyrics. What happens in fact is that it feels, at that instance, as though the music has simply come alive, as though it has simply been *embodied*. This is perhaps better typified in the Karaoke pop culture in Japan, South Korea and the Philippines. The moment when a karaoke singer passionately lip-sings a touching music track by his or her music idol in a karaoke box (or “noraebang” in Korean), so much so that at that moment s/he ‘owns’ not merely stage but, in fact, the imaginative lines of the music piece, at that instance s/he sees him/herself *place-able* within the creative work. Hence, s/he can cry in total abandon, lip-singing the lines of the song. This happens because the appreciator of the work of art now imagines his or her own reality in the light of the work's reality. S/he has simply psychorealised the musical work, or the work is psychorealised within him or her.

At the point of an imaginative story when we can remark: *If it were me, I'd do this, or I'd do that*, we can say that we have simply introduced ourselves into the story's distinctive scenarios. Thus, we do not get angry when seeing a fictional character behave in some silly or wicked manner, not until we place ourselves within the work's environment. That is to say, it is not until we comprehend the fictional (or artistic) reality in terms of our own reality that psychofictive reality ensues. This is the psychological objective of most works of art: that the audience will personally relate to the creative or performance work.

In engaging a musical work, furthermore, the *psychorealitic* experience occasionally may not have any connection with the lyrics but have everything to do with the musicality and melody of a song. This is why creative writers at times play a melodious or emotive tune when writing a deeply moving poem or story: it inspires them. That inspiration may come simply from the melody, with the writer producing thematic content that is very different from the song's actual lyrics. Thus the writer may create something as different in thematic content as a sober, reflective poem on life's contingencies from psychorealising a soulful musical piece about love.

### **Psychofictive reality is not...**

While psychofictive reality is what we have previously defined, it is, however, not many things. Psychofictive reality is not a verification of the plausibility of a fictional plot, for instance, nor is it substantiation of how close to real life fictive events are. It is, on the contrary, simply picturing the self within the fictional material. It is an art of functionality perhaps best portrayed as an audience psychologically “reimagining” the fictive material of an artistic work in terms of his/her own psychic-material reality.

Psychofictive reality, furthermore, is not a calculated art nor is it a deliberate venture: it is, in contrast, a response to art peculiarly rooted in spontaneity and un-intentionality. This is why the process of a work of tragedy becoming psychorealised by the audience, resulting in a moment of emotional release or catharsis, is altogether uncalculated and unpremeditated by the audience. Spontaneity is the distinctive characteristic of psychofictive reality, and it confirms it as a private, subjective and personal engagement with a work of art. Hence, the audience does not know beforehand what part of the work will be psychorealised. Neither can s/he know

for certain exactly how the process of psychofictive reality plays out. Therefore, it is a sincere, natural and uninhibited form of engagement with a work of art.

In addition, psychofictive reality is not a process through which one interprets a work; it is not a critical method of interpretation, but a concept not yet subjected to diagrammatic methodology. Saying that someone has *psychorealised* a work does not directly suggest that an interpretative method has been used to analyse the process. Psychofictive awareness refers to the realisation of a subjective connection with an artistic work rather than an analyst's interpretation of such idiosyncratic interaction. The exception only is when the artistic concept of psychofictive reality is used in the fields of psychotherapy and medical psychology. We necessarily bare ourselves to therapists as well as lawyers simply because we consider ourselves helpless in a medical condition or a legal case without them.

Thus, conceptualising psychofictive reality does not involve an analysis of how a person psychorealises an artistic work. This is because psychofictive reality is essentially a private experience evoking the psychorealising audience's core emotions amid reminiscences of personal and sentimental life experiences. Hence, the audience member inhibits the slightest intrusion of analytic thought into the private experience of psychofictive reality.

Let us consider the example of a literary critic opting to critically analyse the process of a person's psychofictive reality. Let us say in the realisation of an empirical analysis the critic collects data from interviews conducted on a few people about their experiences of psychorealising a particular work. The critic then makes a comparative analysis of how each of the audience members psychorealises the work vis-à-vis their collective psychic-material reality, deploying artistic archetypes as motifs. This kind of textual analysis is problematic in its very essence, as the critic's analysis is necessarily deficient in systematised parameters to be objective. On the one hand, the critic can only interpret a reported, belated (rather than real-time or live) account of the audience member's psychorealitic moment or experience. Due to its idiosyncratic nature, an analysis of a psychorealitic experience cannot render an audience member's idiosyncratic experience of psychofictive reality in generic terms with an acceptable degree of accuracy. Adding to the complications, the analysed audience will necessarily hold back elements of the experience that are deeply personal, as expressing such elements goes against human nature; the very personal and subjective elements of psychorealitic moments are those that typify psychofictive reality the most.

On the contrary, we can show in a critical analysis how a character in a narrative, for instance, psychorealises a work of art in the narrative as an imaginative or fictional representation of the concept of psychofictive reality. That is to say, it is only absolutely justifiable in textual analyses to critically analyse the representation of the concept of psychofictive reality as creatively portrayed in a work of art. It is, however, to the extent it suffices to admit that empirical observations themselves are allowed rough values of inference due to unavoidable human error – it is only to this extent that a literary psychorealitic interpretation of an audience of a work of art through private diaries, personal interviews, questionnaire inputs, and so on, can be excused as equally valid. This, in my perspective, is absolutely understandable and correct.

### **Psychofictive reality: Key notions**

Intrinsic to the understanding of the dialectics of psychofictive reality in the appreciation of works of art are a few primal notions that require simultaneous emphasis. In giving attention

to them the paper shall both critically engage and build on the work of Aristotle and Sigmund Freud particularly.

### **Artistic reality/psychic-material reality**

This article's usage of the "fictive" component in the term "psychofictive reality" reflects etymology in *Oxford Living Dictionaries: English* (n.p.), with its latest derivation being from early 17th century English, in turn etymologically rooted in French (as "*fictif*, -ive") and Medieval Latin (as "*fictive*"). Its French and Medieval Latin etymology translates in its verbal form as to "contrive or form". By an etymological-semantic development, its English derivation signifies the quality of being 'created by the imagination' (def. "fictive"; 1st entry). This captures the peculiar essence of the "fictive" component of our usage of the term "psychofictive reality"; as all forms of art, however realistic or abstract, are creations of the imagination – a contrived/formed reality. It is this component that gives character to the notion of *artistic reality* in the conception of psychofictive reality. It is in this sense, thus, that artistic reality translates to imaginative scene, plot, action, experience, imagery, mood, representation, symbol or such like portrayed or relayed in any work of art, whether fiction, visual art, film and so forth. It is the reality of the artistic work; bearing the sense of the *Oxford Living Dictionaries: English* (n.d.) definition of the "fictive" component of "psychofictive reality": that is, the reality that is "created by imagination" (def. "fictive"; 1st entry). Hence, the term: *artistic reality*.

On the other hand, Sigmund Freud conceptualises material reality, also called external reality, and psychic/psychical reality, or internal reality. The two notions, though of binary opposition in their properties and characters, share a paradoxical interrelatedness and inter-functionality. The *International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis* (2018) in an article on Freud's notions of external versus internal reality, explains *material/external reality* as subsuming 'the object of our physical environment, the subject's body, and the subject's inscribed place in the society' (Internal Reality/External Reality, para. 2). Freud's *psychic reality*, however, refers to a person's "internal reality [which] corresponds to a collection of processes, representations, and affects that are essentially (but not only) unconscious" and "contains representations of the world that the subject has formed, fantasies stemming from unconscious desires, and universal fantasy structures: the primal fantasies". The "existence and efficiency" of these are, in fact, said to be "comparable to physical reality" (*International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*, Internal Reality/External Reality, para. 1).

It is, therefore, in this sense of material reality and psychic reality that this essay has developed the second notion in the concept of psychofictive reality, called the *psychic-material reality*, which is an alternate notion to artistic reality. In essence, this study's notion of psychic-material reality articulates the dialectical interrelatedness between Freud's psychic reality and material reality with regards to the appreciative concept of psychofictive reality.

### **Psychofictive reality vis-à-vis archetypes**

Reality necessarily becomes more subjective, personal and individualistic when we narrow it down from collective to personal. However, within several audiences' psychic-material reality, there is the possibility of an intersection of such realities, and only made possible by the agencies of society (whether micro or macro) and archetypes/universal phenomena such as love, revenge, death and so on.

It is the possibility of this idea of a collectivity of psychological and material experiences that is evident in Caruth's (1996, p. 8; as cited in Alford, 2011, p. 196; Andermahr, 2015; p. 502)

conception of collective trauma and historical trauma. In this, she establishes that traumatic experience may go beyond being private and personal to belonging to a society or group of people, or to a people's history. By extension, reality (or, a person's psychic-material reality) can go beyond being personal and private, to becoming shared with other persons at particular points due to an intersection or overlap conditioned by the agency of society. The fact of this intersection of realities is also enhanced by the fact of archetypes – that is to say, universal phenomena, notions and ideas existent in societies cross-culturally and globally – typified in works of art and are understandable and relatable to audiences across cultures simply because of their universal nature.

However, as universal as archetypes such as love, revenge, death or sacrifice are, there are varying degrees to people's reception and reaction on both the cultural and, more significantly, individual levels of relating to universals. For instance, while love is universal and archetypal across places/cultures such as India/n, Pakistan/i, France/French, the United States, and Nigeria/n; the manner in which individual cultures relate to the universal idea differs considerably. Hence, Hindustanis by and large may relate to the archetypal love in terms of its emotional cum patriotic essence. To most Pakistanis, it may be perceived as relating to religious devotion. To the Frenchman, moreover, love may equate with bold, sensuous or else clandestine romance. To the "pop-cultured" American, it may evoke sexuality with a sense of self-fulfilment; while among Nigeria's cultural nations and ethnic groups, love especially in a marital relationship may be widely expressed in terms of duty.

Also, archetypal revenge may be perceived in some ancient or modern societies cum philosophies as justice. In some others, it is equitable with crime. To yet some others, it is synonymous to sin. Some, still, may conceive it in moral terms of the metaphor of a poison to a noble soul. These examples show that, as universal and cross-cultural as archetypes are, societies' reception may differ considerably from culture to culture, or from place to place. This means that archetypes, however universal they may be defined to be, are essentially subjective on a cultural level.

Someone might argue that if there are archetypes, then psychofictive reality can only be collective or shared, meaning that its personal and individual nature and essence is defeated. This, however, is not the case with psychofictive reality, because even archetypes that are interlaced with a culture-specific or society-specific substance are predisposed to individual subjectivity. Even if archetypes are, in fact, subjective in the manner in which cultures relate or react to them, there is still the plausibility of a variant personal response to, and interpretation of, archetypes rooted in the person's (psychic-material) reality.

Therefore, it is not only at the cultural level that the reception and reaction to archetypes are subjective; they are, in fact, also on a personal and individual level. When an audience engages a work of art with archetypes, it still only psychorealises the work on a personal, subjective and individual level.

### **Mirroriness and relatability**

Pivotal to the poetics of all forms of the creative or performance arts are its characteristic inclination towards reflecting life, or reality, and the aspects that make it relatable to an audience. These are what this research has termed its *mirroriness* and its *relatability*. It has become a tradition that all forms and expressions of the arts expectedly reflect, or else are some form of interpretation of, life – that is, reality. All works of literature, theatre/film, music, fine art and so on, are either a mirror or a lens with regards to reality. They either reflect reality, as

with realistic works of fiction, or else, they simply magnify or *microfy* reality, as with sci-fi novels, films and comics or allegorical and abstract works.

Achebe (2007) disputes the coherence of Pablo Picasso's remark that all art is false. According to Achebe, Picasso himself produced *Guernica*, a compelling, truth-bearing canvas, a work that has the quality of being relatable. Achebe notes that Picasso, in his assertion, must have merely been drawing attention "in the exaggerated manner of seers and prophets to the important but simple fact that art cannot be a carbon copy of life; and thus, in that specific case, cannot be 'true'..." (p. 107).

Furthermore, Achebe's redefinition of art captures the very perspective with which that particular argument analyses the arts. He asserts: "Actually, art is man's constant effort to create for himself a different order of reality from that which is given to him; an aspiration to provide himself with a second handle on existence *through his imagination*" (p. 107). By this, he corroborates the idea that art has a reality that is a reflection of human psychic-material realities. Moreover, it is popular in modern analyses of literature, particularly, that art is a product of its society, that it reflects the society that produces it. Modern criticism as well as postmodern owe much of their features to literature's *relatability* and *mirroriness*. A criticism in ethnic studies is possible, for instance, in Adichie's *Americanah* simply because her fiction *mirrors* the sociocultural realities of colour and racial identity question, migration, Afro-diaspora, and the like, among migrant Afro-descendants in the United States. A feminist criticism of the text is equally possible merely because the novel also *mirrors* the social realities of the postmodern woman standing to upturn instituted feminine stereotypes in a densely patriarchal world. A postcolonial reading of Soyinka's *Samarkand and Other Markets I Have Known* will be appropriate as well because most of its poems deal with issues that are readily visible in postcolonial Africa. Postcolonial themes such as corruption, military dictatorship, overturned government, failed elections and poverty are explored in the collection through engaging Nigeria's recent history of the alleged assassination of a military dictator and a presidential candidate.

Conversely, the notion that literature is a reflection of society can be viewed from the perspective of a modern critical reestablishment of the *universal*, disregarded by Plato in his classic *Republic*. Reacting to Plato's deliberate exclusion of poets from his imaginary ideal society -because poets (artists) "allegedly misrepresent the world" through lies-"poststructuralists (including historicists, feminists, deconstructionists, postcolonialists, and queer theorists)" show and continue to prove the mirror relationship between the literary text and the world as "offering a window onto the world or (in Hamlet's words) holding up a mirror to nature". They *re-establish* the idea of art's *mirroriness* in the classical notion of art being *mimesis*; that is, an imitation (Bennett, A. & Royle, N., 2004; p. 27–28).

If a work of art is, therefore, a reflection or interpretation of life, if it is a mirror or lens of reality, then it best strikes a sentimental chord in the audience merely in relation to reality. For instance, for the audience of a work of visual art to make intelligible meaning out of an artistic representation, whether the work is abstract or realistic, then, s/he connects the art with his/her relatable world via his/her particular mindset. Also, an audience of a futuristic work such as sci-fi or Afro-futurism subconsciously draws from reality to best engage and psychologically connect with the artistic reality of such work of future realism.

## We Have Always Psychorealised Art

In Aristotle's *Poetics*, through *katharsis* (or, "catharsis" in English: translated from classic Greek as the purgation – that is, the release – of emotion) the audience feels "compassion for the vulnerabilities of others" (Kennedy, X.J. & Gioia, D., 2007, p. G17). This experience of catharsis or a release of emotion, producing compassion, pity and fear, according to Aristotle (*Poetics of Aristotle*, trans. Butcher, 2000, p. 10, pp. 18–20), is achieved in the audience's mind just after the climactic moment of the play. Moreover, this compassion occurs simply because the audience knows that "the destruction of hopes and dreams are very much part of what really happens in the world" (Kennedy, X.J. & Gioia, D., 2007, p. 884).

In essence, the said empathy owes largely to the work's *relatability*, and which in the case of tragedy is peaked in the climactic scene. We can affirm that an audience necessarily first finds him/herself place-able in the work of art *before* the empathy that produces Aristotle's concept of catharsis is evoked in him/her. The fact of the work's relatability will, in turn, be due to tragedy's characteristic feature of reflecting reality, to whatever degree it does: its *mirroriness*.

Aristotle's notion of catharsis only goes to highlight the fact that we tend to psychologically and emotionally connect with a work of art at its most relatable points. The notion itself exists because of the fact that members of the theatre audience feel the tragic hero is deserving of pity and empathy because s/he is a reflection of the intersection of the archetype with their inner selves. Humans have always psychorealised works of art, even though we may not until now have been able to conceptually define and designate the natural psycho-subjective experience.

If literature, for instance, is a reflection of life that makes relating possible, then there is no way people can relate with a literary work on a personal level unless via the subjective *psychorealitic* experience. If literature reflects life, then psychofictive reality engages it on a personal, subjective level. It is in this light that the form of literature which by its generic nature best privileges psychofictive reality is realistic narrative, especially popular fiction. Readers readily imagine, fantasize, dream of and weep about events in such super-realistic works as popular fiction because it mirrors their own reality; and far more than they would respond if they were reading literary fiction. This is mostly because popular fiction is essentially plot-driven (and actions are those that directly mirror reality) while literary fiction is theme-driven (themes being only mouthpieces for "preaching" artistic truths).

It is easier, however, for narratives (fiction), enactments (theatre, film, and mime and dance performance), lyrical/melodious music and realistic fine art to be psychorealised by audiences, than other forms of art. This is because the micro form of reality they recreate is usually a closer reflection of the relatable materials of reality itself.

Poetry, however, owing to its elevated, stylized and elliptical use of language, will naturally distance a reader from psychorealising its content. This explains why readers of poets are mostly poets; such is the consequence of poetry's characteristic difficulty for its readership. The exception, though, is some contemporary forms of poetry with their very prosaic, day-to-day and lyrical style of language use. This brings back a possibility of psychofictive reality to poetry, particularly the contemporary prosaic, lyrical and emotive styles of poetical practice.

Abstract art, on the other hand, is one of the most typifying examples of works with deliberate techniques for the audience's detachment from a personal, subjective engagement of such works. The only plausibility for an abstract work of art to strike a psychorealitic chord in the



mind of the audience engaging the artwork is when the piece becomes “a piece of a whole jigsaw puzzle”, as it were; and s/he psychologically fits the image of the artwork within the rest of the figurative puzzle. That is to say, the psychorealistic experience happens only when the artwork is physically connected to, or associated with, a larger frame of things (reality) such as a physical place, a haunting or soothing past experience, a locale bearing a particular sentiment to the audience, and such like. If the audience of the artwork feels psychologically connected to the abstractions, such as the colours, symbols and imagery; when he recalls a real place, an experience, and so on – or vice-versa, then, we do have the possibility of psychofictive reality, even with abstract art.

### **Psychofictive Reality in Contemporary Art**

Contemporary culture is replete with documentations, narratives and metaphoric portraits of psychofictive reality in the engagement with the arts; only that critics are only not as aware that such experiences or portraits are parts and parcels of this psycho-subjective process.

The psychorealistic experiences across the arts and contemporary history have been triggered by elements in works of art resonating with the audience in strong, powerful ways. The resonance can come from the characterisation in the work of art being engaged by the audience or the setting, the tone or mood, the tune or sound/melody or the motif, the dialogue, the plot or the climax or any number of any artistic elements.

### **The Korean drama *It's Okay, That's Love***

An apt representation of psychofictive reality in a work of art is its portrayal in a Korean episodic drama. Executive Producer Kim Young Sub's *It's Okay, That's Love* (2014) is a psychological drama with its fictional story developed upon a possible diagnosis in neuropsychiatry. The protagonist, the rich prominent fiction writer Jang Jae Yeol, who is diagnosed with obsessive compulsive disorder, habitually sleeps only in the bathroom of his luxurious homes. On the wall over the bathtub in which he sleeps every night, he hangs an artwork that soon makes sense vis-à-vis his compulsion. The art is a split-scene painting of a camel tied to a tree in a desert by night; by morning the rope with which it is tied is loosened from the tree, but the camel remains fixed to the point it is previously seen to be at in the night scene. Jae Yeol relates to his girlfriend Ji Hae Soo, what psychological import the artwork bears for him. In the dialogue subtitled in English from Korean, he says:

Do you know what this camel painting is about? The people who live in the desert tie their camels to trees at night. They untie the rope in the morning, as you can see. But the camel doesn't run away... it remembers being tied to the tree at night. Just like we remember our past wounds. Our past wounds... the trauma... weighs down our feet in the present. For me, the bathroom... For you, anxiety... (Kim Young Sub, *It's Okay, That's Love*, 2014; Season 6).

Hence, author Jae Yeol finds his traumatic past (his psychic-material reality) place-able in the context of the artistic reality of the work. Jae Yeol's obsessive compulsion does stem from a traumatizing experience in his childhood: his father's repetitive abuse of his mother has made mother and son to flee home one night and take shelter in a polluted public bathroom. He recalls this along this line, speaking again to Hae Soo: “I dove down into that dirty place. From that time on, I feel the bathroom is the safest place” (Kim Young Sub, *It's Okay, That's Love*, 2014;

Season 5). While his mother cannot find sleep unless it is in an airy, spacious place; Jae Yeol can only find sleep in a bathroom.

Jae Yeol's bathroom art piece best interprets his psychological state to him in a manner that begins as a first step in his journey of self-realization, and consequently diagnosis and therapy. He has simply psychorealised the artwork.

### **Oscar Wilde's Novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray***

Furthermore, psychofictive reality is a bold metaphor and pervading motif in Oscar Wilde's novel of the Decadent literary tradition, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. When vile and corrupt Lord Henry "Harry" Watton makes a painting portrait of the charming male protagonist Dorian Gray through an artist, it becomes the mirror reflection, in a metaphoric sense, of Dorian Gray's moral soul throughout the plot.

As Wanton deliberately corrupts Gray's moral character and integrity, Gray grows even more charming and debonair. He views his portrait often but he always finds his image in the painting gradually decaying and decomposing, at the same rate in which he advances in looks. This continues until Gray himself eventually dies when his image in the painting reaches the furthest extent of decomposition. In the novel, Dorian Gray's psychic-material reality is reflected off the artwork as Gray does see his reality place-able in the painting. Beyond that, however, this story of Oscar Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray* is essentially an extended metaphor for what we now designate as the concept of Psychofictive Reality.

### **Sinatra's music *My Way* and killings in Philippine Karaoke Bars**

Lastly, a critical case of psychofictive reality is that of American singer Frank Sinatra's hit song *My Way* and the killings that took place in direct relation to the song in Philippine karaoke bars between 2002 and 2012 (Onishi, 2010; Brown, 2017, "How My Way Exposed the Truth," para. 8). According to Onishi (2010) in the *New York Times*, Sinatra's iconic song, which many of his fans have become obsessive about (especially in karaoke bars) resulted in killings among his fans in the Philippines while they sang the tune in karaoke bars. Killings in the way of shootings and stabbings were recorded during singing sessions in karaoke boxes. Fans at the height of emotional involvement with the song stirred up a fight against someone who sang the tune off-key or incorrectly and shoot or stab the other person in the process (Sinatra's Song Often Strikes Deadly Chord, paras. 1–4).

Onishi's (2010) article in the *New York Times* puts it thus:

The authorities do not know exactly how many people have been killed warbling "My Way" in karaoke bars over the years in the Philippines, or how many fatal fights it has fueled. But the news media have recorded at least dozen victims in the past decade and includes them in a subcategory of crime dubbed the "My Way Killings" (Sinatra's Song Often Strikes Deadly Cord, *NYT*, Feb. 7, 2010, para. 4).

Moreover, the reaction to the musical work throughout much of the world is one of eagerness and excitement, but it is notably not a motive for violence in other countries as it is in the Philippines. Brown (2017) in the *Financial Times* notes that Sinatra's song, when it was released in 1969, had a successful reception in the United Kingdom, "where it stayed on the charts for 122 weeks" ("How My Way Exposed the Truth," para. 6, 9). It has been reproduced

by Sinatra in more contemporary times and has been sung by many artists through the 1980's, 1990's and up to 2017, and all with first-rate reception (para. 9).

The “My Way Killings” in the Philippines, therefore, show that a work of art can psychologically resonate with an audience so much so that s/he feels as if s/he owns the “reality” of the work. Roland B. Tolentino, a pop culture expert in the Philippines (as cited in Onishi, 2010), puts this thought in the manner this essay has previously established about psychofictive reality. He observes: “The Philippines is a very violent society, so karaoke only triggers what already exists here when certain social rules are broken” (Sinatra’s Song Often Strikes Deadly Chord, par. 14). This highlights the idea of the subjectivity of psychofictive reality we have earlier established. In addition, Albarracín (as cited in Onishi, 2010) puts the psychological impact of the music on its audience, thus: “‘I did it my way’—it’s so arrogant... The lyrics evoke feelings of pride and arrogance in the singer, as if you’re somebody when you’re really nobody. It covers up your failures. That’s why it leads to fights” (Sinatra Song Often Strikes Deadly Chord, par. 12). Also, the mere fact that not every Filipino psychorealizes Sinatra’s musical work in a violent manner, furthermore, highlights the notion that response to artistic archetypes are rather subjective even within the same culture.

## Conclusion

When music feels alive to the point where the listener feels more a part of it and less apart from it, or a creative book’s fictional characters seem to merge with the reader’s id; when fine art paintings are not just a play with colours, and creative writings are not mere play with words; when the emotional psyche finds itself place-able in art; when art audience “own” a piece of art – that experience of ownership is what has been termed *Psychofictive Reality*.

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