



The Art of Impossibility



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Abstract: Alternative possibilities relative to actuality constitute the staple food of the art of fiction. Recent literary theory's turn towards the metaphysics and semantics of possible worlds is a systematic attempt to theorize fictional worlds of literary narratives as explorations of fictional possible worlds. A fictional text is a textual construction of possible worlds, even if the fictional world so constructed becomes radically unnatural because of violation of the laws of nature. However, the process of violation of the rules of actuality, or the reality principle, has not stopped at the laws of nature; it has transgressed even the laws of logic or thought, such as the law of non-contradiction. This trend is particularly visible in postmodernist fictions, which are various ontological experiments in the exploration of impossible worlds. Can the possible-world literary theory (PWLT) account for textual constructions of impossible fictional worlds? Or, does the appearance of "impossible fictions" signal the explanatory inadequacy or limitation of PWLT? Is the concept of impossible world an oxymoron? Can fictions have (non-trivial) impossible content? Given that impossible fictions prevail, how are we to assess the accessibility or non-accessibility of their textual meaning and the readers' engagement with them? It is with these questions that I shall deal in the talk, and offer an explanation of the "deviant" narrative of impossible fiction.

Date: 25 Nov 2020, Wed

Time: 04:00 – 5:30 pm

Google Meet: <https://meet.google.com/ttx-inzv-rqq>