

# HAMLET TO HAMILTON

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## Season One, Episode Three *Schwumpf, There It Is*

**EMILY.** This is Hamlet to Hamilton: Exploring Verse Drama. I'm your host, Emily C. A. Snyder. You're listening to Season 1, Episode 3: Schwumpf. Because if Bill can make up words, so can I.

[music]

**HAMLET 1.** To be...

**HAMLET 2.** To be...

**HAMLET 1.** ... or not to be?

**HAMLET 3.** To be or not to be?

**HAMLET 1.** That is the question.

**HAMLET 3.** ... or not?

**EMILY.** Hello, friends, and welcome back. This is – not for you, but it is for me – the third time that I'm recording this episode, and the reason why is because this episode we're going to get into really beginning the nitty gritty of what verse is, what it does, and different parts of it. We're going to be looking under the hood, or we're going to be looking at all the ingredients, however you want to think about it. And the reason why it's the third time that I'm recording this is because every time I've recorded it, I've stopped after and said, "Okay, but is that the most precise way of defining the things I've defined? Things still feel sort of schwumpf together or something." And that schwumpf is exactly something I want to talk about.

In today's podcast we will have a glossary that you can access so you don't have to just listen to me and go, "What is that word?" In this episode, there's going to be some words that have never existed before, because there were ideas that we do naturally as writers of verse, as practitioners of verse, as human beings, that don't have a name. And so I wanted to give it a name. This all sounds very high and esoteric, so let me begin again at the beginning.

[music]

Rather than starting with a lecture, I want to start with an exercise. I want to remind you, if at any point during this exercise, you feel a little lost, simply go to [hamlettohamilton.com](http://hamlettohamilton.com) and you can access the full glossary of terms there.

However, if you're willing to learn about words as you experience them, this is what I'm going to ask you to do. I'm going to ask you to go to a comfortable place, to let your mind wander, and I want you to think about a galaxy. Think about the night sky. Think about how, when you look up and you see all those variety of different stars, and perhaps you know a constellation or two. I can always pick out Orion and the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper, and occasionally I figure that I've gotten Cassandra and I'm always looking for Draco. But there's all these different stars, and you know that around each of those stars, they're in their own galaxies. Some of them might make up nebulae. It's kind of huge and vast, and what we, as humans, do, obviously, is we try to make sense of it.

I want you to think about all these stars, and now I want you to think about the word "home." Just sit with that word for a minute. Home. What does it make you feel? What do you smell when I say "home?" What do you think of in terms of houses? Is there one house? Multiple? No house? House on wheels? Is there a color that comes to you when I say "home?" What happens when you think about the people who are inside of the home? Is it positive? Is it negative? Does it depend on who the person is, or whether it's Christmas, or whether it's a good day or a variety of things? Do you have multiple homes? Is there a difference between childhood home and the home you've made as an adult? When you think of home, is there a person who's your home or a person who was your home?

Each of these different things we might think of as separate stars, right? Different things that we experience, different things that we've put on it. I bet you if I asked you right now, sing a song that has the word "home" in it, oh, you've got several different answers, don't you? And that song is going to make you feel something else entirely and is going to connect to something else, which is going to connect to something else, which is going to connect to something else. What I want to bring you through is: this is how humans think. This is how human beings *be*. This is how we spend our existence, is taking all these stars and then schwumping them down into a single thing, a single totem that we might call the word "home," or that we might call the smell of certain culinary things, right? You've smelled something where there's a certain particular feel in the weather, and all of a sudden you're back in a different geographical location altogether, right?

Okay, now, talking to neuroscientists, it turns out that, essentially, various totems will trigger in your head a neural pathway, right? And so we might call it a neural net or a neural pattern. That pattern is really going to look rather like a galaxy. It's going to look like a bunch of different stars all lit up, and again, the sensation when we pull up that entire neural network when I say "home" is going to be what I'm going to call a schwumpf, because we've schwumped a lot of visceral things together, right?

Now, we can add on extra schwumpfs to this. For example, if we think about a home that we like or a home that we've adopted or a home that we've created versus a home that we've left or a home that was toxic or a home that was a prison, right? And each of those brought up slight variation in your neural pattern, in your neural network. You've got different stars that you've schwumped onto each of those contexts.

Now, this is important because we, as humans, as beings, go throughout our day and just sort of schwumpf things left and right. (laughs) You know? I know for myself... Here's something really random: my first job, official job, official job that I paid taxes on – not babysitting or newspaper route or something – my first official job was working at an ice cream factory. It was run by a really rather terrible person, and she would yell at you if you didn't get the scoop on right, and she didn't really train you. It was really kind of awful. The thing was that if you volunteered to do some of the menial tasks, such as taking out the trash or doing the dishes, she tended to leave you alone, and I schwumped together that doing the dishes was kind of a form of safety. And this was similar, even at home. I didn't want to cook dinner, but if I, schwumpf, did the dishes, I was safe from doing dinner. I mean, what does dinner at home and working in an ice cream shop and my boss and a sense of safety, let alone just, you know, Palmolive and... You know? These are all separate things. None of them factually overlap. None of them necessarily overlap, but in me, they're schwumped. I do a dish and it blows up a neural network. Since having lived with a bunch of roommates, some of whom were (sings) terrible at doing dishes, I've since schwumped on different things on that as well, on the act of doing dishes.

Take a moment. Think about something that you've schwumped together in your life, and what the component stars are in that neural network. What are some of the things that you have schwumped? Now, the job of communication, really, is to get someone else to understand, or in the case of storytelling, to even experience our schwumpf, right? Or our character's schwumpf, at any rate. The job of the writer is to sort of take all these different stars, schwumpf them into an idea, and then fwah it out on the paper in such a way that then the equation can continue. Then we pick up the schwumpf that the author fwahed onto the page, and I might pick it up as a director or as an actor or as a set designer or as a dramaturg, and I add on my own schwumpfs about what I feel about the story as it's written.

Look at *Taming of the Shrew*, right? It was written at a very different time of male-to-female relations (laughs) and it seems to present very much a schwumpf that I flink at, that I say, "No, no, no thank you," to. And so my job, particularly when I was directing it, was to say, okay, I want to make sure that everyone knows what's not okay about the schwumpf, about the way that this was all brought together, and so I'm going to put all this context, I'm going to schwumpf all this context around it, and then I'm going to fwah that sort of bigger schwumpf now – this multiplied schwumpf, the schwumpf that was there from the author,

the schwumpf I've put on top of it with my cast and crew – and we're going to fwah that out to the audience, and hopefully the audience can see both parts. They can see what relationships were like between men and women, the unfortunate toxic relationships, and then what we were trying to schwumpf was a way out, right? Was a different way of being and living in harmony, rather than living in subjugation.

And then the audience themselves, when they watch it, they're receiving that sort of huge schwumpf of all the ideas from the author and from myself as the director and from the cast and crew and how they were feeling that day, and the audience is also experiencing now a new schwumpf, which is going to have to do with was it raining when they came in? Are they tired? Is this the third time they've seen it, because this is their kid's school play and they had to come every night? Which definitely happened. I was in education for years. (laughs) What do they feel about it? What is their own marriage like? What do they think about the play? What did they watch that afternoon? What is the rest of the audience doing? Is this a great audience, and suddenly you're participating in the schwumpf? You're not going, flink, "no thank you."

Okay, so I've created, as you can even hear, a bunch of words, and I just used them because I wanted you to have the experience of the experience, of essentially taking a bunch of different thoughts, feelings, expressions, all this visceral stuff of the universe, schwumping it together, fwahing it out. Someone else receives that schwumpf, they add onto the scwhumpf, they fwah it out. The audience receives the schwumpf, they add onto the scwhumpf, and they may fwah it out or they may choose do to something else with it.

What I'm getting at, though, is theatre and the performing arts in particular, but art, in a special way, has three components to it, or can have three components to it. It has the creation of the thing, it has the interpretation of the thing, and it has the reception of the thing. It's not equal sides all the way through. Again, the purpose of storytelling, the purpose of life, is to get people to understand you. Which I guess means that it's not ironic or it is ironic, or it's entirely appropriate that it took me three times to think through this, and I'm hoping to get you to understand me. (laughs) I'm going to try my hardest.

But the lovely thing about verse, and I think the reason why I'm drawn to verse drama, and not just to verse poetry, not just to writing, and then it may or may never be read by anyone else. It certainly will never necessarily be interpreted by anyone else in a dramatic form. Why I'm drawn to verse drama is because when we do think of poetry, we tend to think first of things like metaphors and similes, things that automatically schwumpf.

My love is like a red, red rose.

Love, the color red, and rose, three very separate facts, but we hear:

My love is like a red, red rose

And we schwumpf the ideas together, and we tend to accept it. How does that work? How does any of this work? How is it that art can so well mirror what we do in nature? And what does it mean?

These are some pretty big ideas, so I'm going to calm us down for a second and I'm going to talk instead... The way I'm going to calm us down is I'm going to talk about some German philosophers. (laughs) Okay. Y'all ready? (sighs) We're going to take a deep breath together. Ready? Inhale. Exhale. It's going to be an experiential podcast episode, friends. That's what this one is. Which makes sense, again. It's appropriate. We're going to be schwumping together a lot of ideas, but we can do this. We can do this.

I'm going to talk about some German philosophers that I went and did this sort of YouTube SparkNotes version on, because I really don't want to reread the German philosophers. I did not do so great the first time I was supposed to read the German philosophers, and I do much better when German philosophers are schwumped together and then fwahed to me in the form of *The Good Place*. And then instead of going, (English accent) "I can't," I go, "oh, perhaps I Kan....t" That is a great joke, and don't @ me.

Anyway, (laughs) and then I also talked to a neuroscientist. This is all going to connect together, but what we're going to do is we're going to take a step back, and we're going to talk about some thoughts about being. All right? What it is to be a being, and what it is to be a human, and what it is to think. And then I promise this is all going to come back to verse drama. I am not, at present, a philosophical podcast, YouTube, educational thing. We'll see what happens in the future. Perhaps I'll come back and I'll laugh at myself. "You fool, you were always philosophical."

All right, so now that we've used some humor to sort of calm you down and pull up a different neural network, let's talk a little bit about philosophy. The German philosophers are really good, I find... I don't know what it is about, maybe drinking the Danube water, what's going on there, and I can say that because I'm part German and part Swiss. But they're really good at thinking about existence. The French, I feel – and again, this is such a generalization, but the French tend to be either like, (French accent) "oh, my sexy French depression," as they say in *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*, or there's a sense of, "I give up," or a sense of, "well, laissez-faire," or, "let us you and I go and voulez vous." Whereas the Germans – and then also I'm going to bring in the Danes, like Kierkegaard – tend to sort of sit in their despair and go (laughs)... They don't say, (French accent) "Ah, life is difficult. Let us go and have a baguette and go and kiss some pretty people and then have a cigarette and pet a cat." Instead, this is where you sort of get, "As I walk through the strawberry fields of my grandfather" – this is Swedish, but – "I

see the figure of the spectre of death.” (laughs) There’s a bit more of “I’m just going to live with doom and gloom and what-is-it-all-about-ness.” It’s sort of situated in that part of the world, which actually can be very fruitful.

Since I’m in the middle of a pandemic, I have apparently – and I just had a birthday, which included two digits, one of which was a four. (laughs) I’m sitting here and I find myself having come to the part of the pandemic of, “What is life? What is going on? What is existence?” And so let us turn to some German philosophers who’ve already done the work. I’m going to be not looking right now at Kant, not necessarily at Kierkegaard. I’ll talk a little bit about Jung. The guy I’m going to talk about mostly, though, is Heidegger, with a side of Edith Stein. I do want to say up front that Heidegger did have a Nazi phase that he never really repented for. And I want to put that in your star network, as it were, as you’re going to schwumpf what I’m coming up to, because that’s the thing, is that humans are weird and sometimes not... People who do terrible things still have worthy ideas, but I don’t want you to look him up and be like, (gasp) “He was a Nazi. How dare she talk about him?” Just to be clear, I’m super not down with these new Nazis. Sorry, guys. Sorry, not sorry. But at the same time, let’s pull apart our immediate knee jerk of (gasp) “Oh no! Therefore everything he ever thought is wrong.” No. Unfortunately, no. His thought, I think, is actually pretty good. Where it led him to, I have issues with, right? Again, I don’t mind that he pointed out this star, that star, the other star exist, and this is how they function. What I take quibble with is then he said, “And because of all these stars, I will be a Nazi.” (laughs) That, I find problematic. But his pointing out the stars I find very helpful.

So what are the stars that Heidegger pointed out? Well, Heidegger pointed out... Essentially, he was saying what is being? What is it to be? He came up with a very helpful word called Dasein, which basically means being here, which, if you’re listening to this in the middle of a pandemic still, or if you’ve just come out of a pandemic, you know what it’s like to be here. Just kind of being here. I’m being, and I’m here. Right? You might feel that really viscerally. He said that pretty much every object that exists is a Dasein, right? Is being here. So I in this room, I’m looking at curtains ahead of me, and there’s a bookshelf next to me, and there’s a lamp and there’s a microphone, and all these things are being here, and I am also being here. We are all Dasein.

But my quibble with that is that it still sounds fairly intellectual. It’s not visceral. It’s not a sensation of what it is to be, if we’re going to go to *Hamlet*. Because as soon as I heard Dasein, I was like, “To be or not to be, that is the question.” Dasein or not Dasein, that is the question. And then coming down on the side of “Let be,” which is Hamlet’s final answer. Let be. Dasein. It must be. I am. Right? Which is sort of the fundamental state of anything.

But again, I don’t know about you, but being in the middle of this pandemic, being just Dasein, is not enough. I want life and vitality and to make connections. Oh

God, do I want to make a connection. Perhaps that's why I'm recording this podcast. For heaven's sakes, I need connection. I want to schwumpf through the world. I don't want to just Dasein. It's not enough for me to Dasein.

Now, something that you need to know is that Heidegger himself essentially was schwumping together ideas that he had learned from something called phenomenology, and as I was... So I've talked to a lot of my friends this past week, rather like a mad scientist who, instead of writing on the walls, makes a lot of phone calls to friends. It was like, "I need to talk to you about this idea." So I am obliged for Laura Pittenger, since I've talked about phenomenology, to go (sings a la Muppets) "doo doooo do doo doo Phenomenology doo doo doo doo." (laughs) Anyway. If you know what that is, you've schwumped two things together.

Phenomenology was created by Edmund Husserl, and then Martin Heidegger picked it up. Now, other people that also followed Husserl, who is the phenomenologist, is Edith Stein, who, if you're Catholic, you know her because she is a Catholic saint, which is kind of cool. You don't always have saints who are philosophers, but in this case, you do. In this case, she was not a Nazi. Unfortunately, she was killed by the Nazis. And what's rather fascinating is that she did her thesis on empathy. Interesting, isn't it?

Now, what is empathy versus sympathy? These are two students of phenomenology, which is... Phenomenology was basically trying to study the experience of being, but the experience of experiencing being, so as Dasein, again, feels fairly intellectual and not visceral, phenomenologists were trying to look for something visceral and not just keep it rather like, "Oh, I'm thinking about things," but you never let it travel further into your body. For anyone who's an actor or who's worked with actors, you probably know exactly what I mean. We're constantly talking about, "You're very in your head. You're not in your body." Phenomenology was essentially trying to get philosophy out of its head and into the experience of being, and that's where Heidegger went off and was like, "Okay, well, we need language for what it means to be." Hence Dasein. And Edith Stein, future saint, went off and she was a culturally Jewish woman who then became an atheist, who studied under these great people at a time when that was still a huge thing for a woman to be doing her doctoral work. Then she became a Carmelite nun. She converted to Catholicism and became a nun. Then the Nazis happened, and they were like, "Well, you're Jewish, so we're killing you." And life is not fair. Sometimes life is not fair, and the existence of life is not fair. So this is going to be a cheery podcast. Let's go back and maybe (French accent) be French, and everyone should eat a baguette right now. Get yourself some very nice brie cheese, and say, "Ah, well, what are you going to do? I guess I will pet a cat."

Anyway, she took phenomenology and she was interested not only in the primary experience, and I'm going to, again, use the word schwumpf. That schwumpf is

the experience of the experience, right? So when I call up home, you re-experience that whole neural network. What Edith Stein was talking about was she was talking about empathy, and empathy is what I was talking about before, is that communication, this connection, is – and it's different from sympathy. I'm going to talk about both of them. Empathy is when you recognize someone else's neural network as true for them. Now, you may not experience it yourself, but you recognize it. You see it. You know, it's when people say, "I see you. I get you. I understand you." I've heard this a lot in couples therapy. I listen to Esther Perel. She's got an amazing couples therapy podcast, and you get to actually listen in, and I find philosophy and psychology so fascinating. So go and check out Esther Perel's podcast if you also want to listen in on other people's therapy. But one of the things you do in any sort of restorative, human-to-human therapy, is someone tries to fwah their schwumpf. Someone tries to explain the entirety of their being, and then the exercise is you ask the other person, "Well, what did you hear?" Essentially, did you empathize? Did you see their neural pattern? If they point out the constellation in their stars, that schwumpf, the way they made a constellation in their stars, do you see that same pattern? Or are you still stuck on your own pattern? That's where, for example, narcissists are not empathetic, and where they keep trying to put their neural pattern, one size fits all, on the world, right?

Sympathetic is not only do you recognize someone else's neural pattern, not only do you recognize someone else's schwumpf, but they don't even need to fwah it to you. You resonate with them right away. Half the time, if you're sympathetic, you've been through the same schwumpf, right? This is very helpful, and of course, this is what we talk about in theatre. When people, for example, are taking on Iago or Richard III or some terrible character, they need to be able really to empathize with their character. If I'm writing a character and they're doing something that is very antithetical to all the ways that I want to connect those dots, that I want to make a schwumpf, I still need to be able to empathize, that is to recognize, and to recognize as true for them, in the same way that I can recognize as true for Heidegger that he figured out Dasein, but then I don't sympathize. I'm not also accepting. I'm not also saying I agree with you or that my experience also leads me to being a Nazi. Whereas with Edith Stein, I read her stuff, I empathize. I also happen to sympathize, and so I go on a slightly different journey with Edith Stein in terms of how she schwumpfs her stars.

Okay, now let's do one more German philosopher, who actually is also a psychologist, Carl Jung. I came across Carl Jung's text in college. This is *On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry* from 1922. It is interesting, isn't it, that right around, or rather between the world wars, all these people are thinking about being and whatnot. And this particular essay, it's in a book that I have called *Dramatic Theory and Criticism: Greeks to Grotowski* by Bernard F. Dukore, and it's actually a really good theory of theatre primer, so if you're looking for one, I do recommend this. In the section on the Germanic writing about the theory of theatre, he has this from Jung, who you might not think would

talk about theatre, but Aristotle wrote about theatre, and people have had very strong opinions about theatre, which, put a pin in that. We're going to be coming back to it.

Carl Jung, in this essay, points out that there are two types of artists. He loved using "extroverted" and "introverted" for everything, and he didn't necessarily use it the way that we use it in a much more narrow sense of extroversion means that you get your daily dose of energy from interaction with other people, and introversion means that you get your energy from time spent alone, talking to yourself as you walk through New York City saying words like schwumpf. (laughs) Guess which I am. But instead, when he's talking about the extroverted versus the introverted artist, he's using it in a different way. Let me 'splain. There's too much. Let me sum up. When he's talking about the introverted artist, he's saying that essentially, the introverted artist is someone who looks at all the stuff in front of them, looks at all the stars, and instead of looking up and letting it pass through you, they kind of carefully and consciously create the art. They look inward. They don't really get outward inspiration. Instead, it's incredibly controlled. If we're looking at an introverted verse drama artist, then what we're looking at is someone who sits down and says, "I will write in a meter of five, pentameter. I will write without rhymes, blank verse. I will write only using the rhythmic pattern that we call an iamb, which is unstressed-stressed, ba-DUM. I will be highly conscious of just everything." And I'm going to argue that that yields one type of verse drama, but I'm not sure that it has an element of schwumpf.

Whereas the extroverted writer, the extroverted artist, according to Jung, is someone who sort of pulls on a ton of different things and is inspired by they know not what, and it's just a sort of flotsam and jetsam, the stuff that sleeps through the multiverse, as Terry Pratchett would put it. Sir Terry Pratchett, brilliant satirist, 1000% recommend his novels. Essentially, the extroverted artist schwumpfs things together and then fwahs it on the page, and the introverted artist gets very, "Eins, zwei, eins, zwei, eins, zwei, one, two, one, two, one, two" about it. And I think, my gut tells me, and also from having read a lot of verse dramatists who are very precise – and we'll be looking at them later on, and a lot of verse dramatists who might be a little bit less precise but are a lot more human, and there's something a little less Dasein, a little more schwumpf about them. I'm intrigued by the latter. And also, when we do a lot of our training, a lot of the tricks that we use to learn our craft are kind of ways to get us to schwumpf things together. It's ways to trick us into accessing not just our intellect, but our intellect with our entire being. I don't want you to get into an anti-intellectual tradition at all. It's just as opposed to only using our intellect, we want to use our intellect with our entire being.

This may be why I love *Cupid and Psyche*, because, again, it's passion and reason, right? It's the intellect and the entirety of experience. It's not either/or, it's both/and. It's not just being here, being Dasein, but as I am being here, to schwumpf in the whole of my memories and the whole of my hopes and future

desires, and then to be intensely present in the moment as well. I personally don't want things that are static and precise. I want things that are vital.

I'm going to stop this section with a little thought from G. K. Chesterton, and then we're going to come back and we're going to talk about fast and slow thought and continue into how schwumpf works practically for writing verse, because it does. But I want to leave you with this thought from G. K. Chesterton, who is another philosopher of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He's from the English tradition. The English tradition, I find to be a mixture of being... Well, when you get C. S. Lewis and G. K. Chesterton, you get a kind of lovely, very robust feeling, I find, to the British philosophers of the last century. But I also find there's, therefore, a little bit of bravado as well that has perhaps lent itself to schwumpfing together "All men are free, Black people and women don't get the same liberties as us." (laughs) You know? Like, hmm, I think you need to reexamine your stars, there, man. You know, liberty and justice for all. What do you mean by "all?" Define "all." Like, it sounds very robust. Because the British tradition, of course, vastly influenced the American tradition.

But G. K. Chesterton, I find him to be a somewhat new breed, or at least I like, again, not all, but a lot of how he schwumpfs his stars together. He uses a lot of metaphor, which is a great way to fwah schwumpf, which is what I've hopefully been doing here, sort of giving you context and examples, because this is how we think. Neural patterns, we're constantly making patterns out of things, which, again, and some of you might be very clever and see, oh, I absolutely see how this is going to work for verse drama. Well done, you.

G. K. Chesterton has this lovely story in his philosophy where he talks about where the heart ought to be in the body of a man. Now, again, he's writing at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and so he doesn't talk about humans. He talks about men in place of humans, which has its own problems. There we are. But he says, okay, so if an alien were to come down and to look at a human man – we'll say person, human person – what the alien would recognize, what they would see, what they would start schwumpfing together, is that this human person probably has two eyes and two nostrils and two ears and two arms and two legs and essentially, more or less, looks like a bifurcated creature. And so they would make the further schwumpf, the further inference, in this case, that if they cut open this human person, that all the insides would also be symmetrical. But what they would be surprised to find is that the human heart is not in the center. It is actually to the side. And if it is to the side, then it is in the right place. That in fact, that imperfection is the perfection. That thing that seems off, the thing that seems like the extroverted artist, that thing that doesn't seem to connect or is not the thing you'd expect is exactly the thing that's true.

And so, for example, when we say a man's heart or a person's heart is in the right place, in some ways, what we're accounting for is the surprise, is the imperfection, is the vitality, is the very fact that I'm using the word "heart," both as

an organ and as a metaphor, and you're easily pulling up the neural pathways. You're easily pulling up the schwumpfs to go, "I know when she means the organ, and I know when she's talking about the metaphor of the heart being in the right place. I get it. I get the schwumpf." And you're moving easily between the two of them, which is going to bring us, when we come back, to a modern philosopher.

[music]

What's that sound? Oh, that? That's just the sound of a really good book. In this podcast, we're making a lot of references. It's true. And one of the ways that you can help yourself and help the podcast, is to go to [hamlettohamilton.com](http://hamlettohamilton.com), check out any episode's show notes, and go down to the references and get yourself one of the books that we refer to, or one of the CDs or DVDs. All of them are part of the Amazon Associate Affiliate link, and so even if you can't support us, perhaps, month to month on Patreon – although you can also support us month to month on Patreon – you can certainly help us out, and help yourself out too, by grabbing yourself anything, such as John Barton's *Playing Shakespeare*, which is the book that I have in hand. Sounds like this (book flips). Very sexy. And we'll get a few pennies from that, which goes a long way to making sure that there are transcripts available for people who cannot afford resources, make sure that we can actually pay our audio department, any guests that come on. All that really means a lot. So head on over to [hamlettohamilton.com](http://hamlettohamilton.com), check on any of the episode links, scroll down to the bottom where you can get all the resources, get yourself a book, get yourself the warm fuzzy feeling that you have made the world, and your bookcase, a slightly better place.

All right, welcome back, friends. Hopefully, perhaps over that advertisement, you went, you relaxed your brain, you played a puzzle game, you got yourself some tea, you got yourself comfy, you wrangled your kids in from the car to wherever they are going next, you bought that milk, whatever it may be. Or perhaps you're just lying there and listening all the way through, because I'm fascinating today. You thought you were just going to get stuff about Shakespeare and Lin Manuel Miranda. Oh no. There is German philosophy, my friend.

Okay, so we're going to now look at a modern philosopher, and this is another piece of the puzzle. Daniel Kahneman – Kah-ne-man, I believe? Sorry, my many apologies, sir. He wrote a book called *Thinking Fast and Slow*, and it won the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, so kind of important, and he published it in 2011, so this is really new. What he did – I stumbled across this, actually, thanks to Philosophy Tube, and immediately, I was like, "Ah, this explains how we schwumpf! Oh my gosh!" What he does is he talks about fast thinking and slow thinking. Fast thinking is what he's going to call System 1, and fast thinking are the immediate responses, what I will call the schwumpfs that come very easily to mind. Very easy ones are, for example, two plus two is... Romeo and... Or how you feel when I say the word, "fascism," since Nazis have come up a lot. How

you feel when I say the word, “treatment of Black people.” Something’s going to come up. And I’m going to actually ask you for a second, sit with the feeling you’re feeling. You did not expect me to say that, but you have an immediate reaction, whatever it was. And some of the context might be about who I am asking that question. Some of the context might be what’s going on in the news, what your neighbors are saying, what’s being yelled at Facebook. And now, as I’ve slowed you down a little bit, as you’ve stopped and gone, “Okay, well, what are some of the stars in my immediate reaction, in my System 1 fast thinking, my immediate feeling, my immediate pulling of a neural network?”

Then what he says is that there’s System 2, which is slow thinking. What I would suggest is System 2 tends to recognize what the different stars are and doesn’t just schwumpf them together, but will look at them individually and then will even go in further and further and further and further as you pull apart molecule by molecule. If you were so inclined, you could. But System 2, slow thought, is when you have to stop, when you’re confronted, perhaps, when either someone tries to say, “So this star and this star and this star equals being a Nazi.” And you go – and again, I call that flink. And you kind of go, uh, flink. Or it might not be a full stop on flink. It might be a mrwrm, like, “Slow down, buddy.” And instead of going, “Ta da, Romeo and Juliet. Ta da, two and two is four, ta da,” instead of just accepting it as true, there’s something in you that goes flink or mrwrm, and you stop and you sort of shift gears, and you go down to System 2, to slow thought. And you start really looking at the component parts of what you schwumped together. So what Kahneman gave us was System 1, System 2, which equals fast thought versus slow thought.

Coming back to the neuroscientist, she – we were talking a little bit about, okay, so when you pull up a neural pattern in your brain, whether you bring up that neural pattern in System 1, which is, again, immediate, or in System 2, which is a bit more deliberate – and again, we could even bring this back to Carl Jung, right? That System 1, which is fast, is kind of writing as an extroverted artist. You’re just taking it all in and fwahing it all out. You may not necessarily be thinking about it. System 2, where you slow down your thought and you pull apart the component molecules – which is kind of what we’re doing in this podcast – System 2 is a little bit more of the introverted artist being a little bit more precise. It’s fine detail work. And so, perhaps more accurately, I would say the experience of being, then, of Dasein, part of Dasein, is you’re constantly schwumpfing things together, and those schwumpfs keep sort of rocking back and forth between System 1 and System 2, between fast thought and slow thought. Fast thought, slow thought, fast thought, slow thought. Because a fast thought, according to the neuroscientist, who (sings) thank you very much for talking to me, even a little bit. And for all of you neuroscientists out there that are going to listen to this and go, “You are totally wrong, let me correct you,” please do come. Please correct me. I am an amateur at best, and I realize that I am schwumpfing together theories left and right, which you may be... Please tell me if I am making these constellations wrong, or if there’s a better way to make the constellations.

So when you have a neural pattern that you're very comfortable with, that has worked for you, that's System 1, that's fast. If someone comes up to you, then – this is, I think, what happens a lot on Facebook and Twitter. When someone comes up and is just like, “No, flink, you're a stupid poo-poo head.” Or even, “No, flink, here's a bunch of facts and figures as to why you're wrong,” and they may be right or they may be wrong, but that's not what I'm getting at here. When you are at Thanksgiving dinner with your family, and you're in America and it's an election year, I mean, you guys are just throwing fast thoughts at each other all over the place, and what you're hoping to do is to introduce a different schwumpf, a different neural pattern. But my theory is – again, coming at this as an amateur – is that essentially, you've got a neural pattern that works. You're really accustomed to pulling up this pattern. You're really comfortable with this pattern. This pattern has yet to fail you. And when someone flinks that neural pattern, the way you've schwumped something together, when someone flinks that, they're asking you not just to bring up different stars. Those stars are already up and active. But they're saying, “Combine them in a different way.” Or they might even add on extra. They're inviting you to bring up, perhaps, a completely different system of stars, and to hold both systems together simultaneously.

And now, the neuroscientist was saying that essentially, that when you bring up these patterns, it's weighted. That the energy, because this is literally energy, like zap energy, lightning going through your brain. I realize I'm oversimplifying. I'm giving a story to help explain the inexplicable. It's explicable, but to explain it as far as I understand it. I asked her, “Well, what happens if you were to just bring up all the possible patterns? If you were to bring it all up and turn up the lights to full, essentially.” And she said, “What happens then is you have a stroke. That's what happens.” So my working theory is, I think this is why it's so hard to change someone's mind about something, because you're inviting them to either completely change the pattern that's been working for them or to bring up all the lights in their brain at once so that you can then go change the pattern. And I wonder to what degree the body's just going, “Oh, this is dangerous. We will have a stroke now.” It's something I'm trying to have not happen in you, dear listener, is having a stroke right now. And that's why I'm trying to introduce, bit by bit, star by star, gently schwumping these ideas into you, and then making jokes in between to give you a breather. But really, that's time for your brain to do the slow thought and say, “Is it safe for this thought to be connected to this thought? Is it safe for us to say a person who ended up becoming a Nazi might have a helpful thought? Is that a thing that we can live with? Will this destroy us?”

Same thing when you start doing any work on thought patterns or when you start doing therapy, right? That's the whole point, is you are very gently being invited to pull up your neural network, and then to pull it apart, and then to possibly make a new pattern, to make a new schwumpf and a slow thought schwumpf, right? But this takes time. That's why when people grab you by the throat and sort of go, “Do you believe in this,” or, “Do you believe in that,” or, “Do you have a

second to talk about this?" Your response is, "Uh, no. No no no no. Unsafe. You are an unsafe way to think about anything." You know, I've had multiple people come up to me because, again, I live in New York City. And like, "Do you have a moment to talk about climate change?" And it's like, "I agree with you, but back off." (laughs) You know? Same thing, I was raised Christian Catholic. I do believe in God, and when people are like, "Repent! Talk to Jesus," I'm like, "I don't want to have anything to do with you." And part of it, in that case is, I would suggest, there's something in me that's saying what you are peddling and the way you're peddling it is not what I'm buying. The God I know is not someone who's going to try to shove a schwumpf on you. And I think we get very anxious if anyone tries to shove their schwumpf on you.

But this – and I'm sure many of you are very clever and have already made the connection, schwumpfed over to the next thing – this is what art does well. This is something that art does very well. In a play, over the course of several hours, I'm going to gently invite you, in a distancing way, where if you disagree with me, by the end you could still say, "Oh, well, it was just fiction." But I'm going to invite you to live vicariously through these characters in this world, to consider these thoughts, and that's why, if you think about something that, like really good art, all of a sudden, later on, you're seeing the connections it was making, and you're seeing it in real life. It's like you see *Schindler's List*, and you come out of it and you have that immediate schwumpf response. I know for us, at the end of seeing it in the movie theatre, the whole audience just sat. Just sat in silence. No one got up early to leave during the credits, and it was not like the MCU, where we were expecting a tease of something afterwards. But we were so in the experience of the experience. We were so in the schwumpf. But then later, you come across something, and you've been invited to experience the experience of the Holocaust, and you've been invited to this new schwumpf. Where before, perhaps something, it was just in the intellect. "Oh, yes, I know that happened. Oh, yes, I feel that it's bad." But you didn't experience it. It was always a slow thought. It was never a fast thought.

You can think about this about any story, and this is why I think, as well, bad storytelling, or ineffective storytelling, they just kind of hit you over the head with the schwumpf. They never actually take the time to pull apart the stars. They're just like, "This is true," and you're like, "Well..." (laughs) You know? It's the same thing as Thanksgiving dinner. You haven't done the work of art to gently give me an entire context, a galaxy, a nebula, and then pull apart the various stars. You haven't done the work of constructing a schwumpf and inviting me, in a pleasant way, into that schwumpf. Some of you who are extremely fast have already asked, "Well, what about Brecht?" We will come to him. And once again, ye olde Germans. Really, what is happening up there? Because there's some really interesting thoughts that are very helpful for theatre.

One last note before we actually, then, look at how verse drama uses schwumpf, because it uses it in an incredibly practical way that, if you've ever done any

verse drama or if you've written any poetry, you've probably already done without knowing what you were doing, which is cool. But I want to mention that while I say that art – and particularly storytelling art, but any form of art – can be highly effective in inviting you to experience the same schwumpf that the author, the artist is trying to convey. That the trying to fwah your schwumpf, again, is the work of Dasein, is the work of being. And so politicians do this. Politicians will schwumpf together thoughts, and it's up to us not to just System 1 think, but to System 2 think.

I'm going to conclude this section with – I mentioned Terry Pratchett before, but let's conclude with an actual quote from the man. Terry Pratchett comes very much from the British, rather robust... You might not call him a philosopher, but honestly, I think his books, as much as they're satire and they're fantasy and they're political commentary, they're a lot of things. They're also really pretty good philosophy books. This is *A Hat Full of Sky*, which is part of a series of books from Discworld, and again, just enjoy. If you have not yet enjoyed Sir Terry Pratchett's Discworld books, very much enjoy. But he says this:

First thoughts are the everyday thoughts. Everyone has those. Second thoughts are the thoughts you think about the way you think. People who enjoy thinking have those. Third thoughts are thoughts that watch the world and think all by themselves. They're rare and often troublesome. Listening to them is part of witchcraft.

Told you he was a fantasy author. But I love this. The first thoughts, basically, that's the everyday thoughts. That's just the (snap) System 1 thought. That's the (snap) instant neural network. That's the (snap) schwumpf that we're accustomed to. Second thoughts is the pulling apart of the stars, is the slowing down of the thoughts. It's System 2. It's examining, again, extrovert/introvert. Third thoughts, in this, actually, I would say third thoughts is what you do if you've slowed things down enough to second thoughts. And third thoughts can, as he says, they're rare and often troublesome, because third thoughts is when you start saying, "Did I mean to put all those things together that way?" Not just, "This is true enough." (snap) First thoughts. Not, "Is this true?" Second thoughts. It's third thoughts, "I will search for the truth, even if it scares me."

[music]

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So we've done a lot of philosophy. We've done neuroscience. We've invented new words, such as schwumpf, which is taking a bunch of different experiences and thoughts and memories and facts and nouns and verbs and everything in the world that I'm calling stars and schwumping them together. When we send that schwumpf out into the world, I call it fwah. Fwah is the effective form of sending something out into the world. We're going to be adding to our dictionary even more as we go on. If we disagree with that thought, we go flink. We also talked about Dasein, which is the state of being. It means "being here," which comes from Heidegger. We talked about empathy, which Edith Stein talked a lot about. Again, both of them came from the phenomenology. (sings) Ma naaah da da da. Empathy, which is recognizing someone else's schwumpf, someone else's neural pattern, and saying, "It is true for you. I see it. I recognize it. I get it." Sympathy, which is you not only see it and get it, but you experience the same exact schwumpf. That's sympathy. And we talked about System 1, which is fast thought, which is the instantaneous thought that we have. It's the kneejerk reaction that we have. It's a neural pathway that we understand or that has been useful to us quickly, the connection, the schwumpf that has been useful to us that we pull up immediately, versus System 2, which is slow thought. And then the thought of System 3, Terry Pratchett, which might be, I need to rethink this or I need to find new stars or I need to discard some of the stars that I've been schwumping together. It's not just going back and checking your math homework. It's kind of starting the problem from the beginning in a conscious way that both allows for the extroverted and the introverted schwumpf. That's a lot. That's a lot.

We haven't even talked about any verse drama today. That's absurd. So I want to, in my second and third thoughts (laughs) I actually found my old rhyming dictionary. Now, for years, I've been using some online rhyming dictionaries, such as [rhymer.com](https://rhymer.com) or [rhymezone.com](https://rhymezone.com), both very good sites, as well as an online thesaurus, just [thesaurus.com](https://thesaurus.com), because (sings) I've never gotten a great thesaurus, and the one that I loved died and fell apart. But I was so glad to see

that this came with me back when I moved from New England down to New York. What I wanted to see was I knew that there was a whole little mini-pamphlet at the beginning of – well, it's a whole book, practically, at the beginning of this that talked about various forms of poetry, and I just wanted to sort of brush up on that. Much to my surprise, what I found in the very beginning – and this was originally printed in 1930 – is he was talking about poetry versus verse, and I was like, "I'm sorry, excuse me? What? Mrwrm? Flink? What?" (laughs)

Basically, what he defined, this fellow whose name I'm having difficulty figuring out because of the way this is written – many apologies – but this is *The Complete Rhyming Dictionary*, Laurel Reference Shelf from Dell. I've no idea if it's still in print. Probably not. It's edited by Clement Wood. It's revised by Ronald Bogus, and I bought it in, like, 1990 or something like that. I probably bought it after 1991, because that's when this edition came out, but it was originally from 1936, and some dude wrote this, that kind of shattered my world. You ready? Ready to have your brain more exploded? It won't explode. You're going to be fine. Okay. I just schwumpf that into you. Mwah-ha-ha-ha. We should do the Hans Zimmer *Inception* noise. [music] I hope not. I hope all the schwumpf has been very gentle. But he says:

The word "poetry" is often used loosely and to mean whatever embodies the products of imagination and fancy, the finer emotions, and the sense of ideal beauty. In this lax usage, men speak of the poetry of motion, the poetry of Rodin or Wagner, the poetry of dahlia raising. In accurate language, poetry is a specific fine art defined as follows: poetry is the expression of thoughts which awake the higher and nobler emotions or their opposites in words arranged according to some accepted convention.

Then he goes on, actually, to be rather racist, so we're going to skip that. But then he comes back and he says, essentially, that prose can be poetic. I had to stop and go, "Oh, actually that's true." I've ready plenty of poetical prose. I've written plenty of poetical prose. And he starts to make a difference between poetry and verse, so being a good student, I went and I took out my *Poet's Glossary*, by Edward Hirsch. This was my present to myself for my New York-iversary, and it's moderately pricey. There is a travel version and the big old version. I recommend the big old version. It is chock full of goodies. It's so cool.

And in it, he also defined verse as different from poetry, which was kind of blowing my mind. And he was saying that poetry, again, is... It might be easiest to say it's some form of heightened language, and that's going to vary depending on, well, on the schwumpf of a culture, right? That our culture is going to, certain adjectives are going to feel more poetic. Certain combinations of sounds in another language are going to register as poetic. All right, but there's some sort of pleasing-ness. There's some sort of height. There's some sort of beyond-ness. There's some sort of musicality. There's something more than just regular

speech, which we're going to call prose. Okay, fine. Then I looked up verse, because he was, in fact, saying that poetry is also different from verse. And so I'm awfully sorry that I've used them interchangeably in the past two episodes. But hey, first thoughts, second thoughts, third thoughts. There we go.

Verse, I was shocked to find, is actually, as I stumbled upon saying in one of the very early episodes, is just a line, and a line of verse might be poetical, but it might not be. All that a line of verse means is that there is an intentional line ending. That's going to be really important. Again, I know I keep coming back to the line endings, and even so, I don't actually mean line ending. We'll talk about that in a second. But a line of verse has an intentional length. It's not subject to the length of a sentence or the length of a thought. It's visual. When you look at a line of poetry, or rather, I should say, a line of verse – see? It's tough to pull these stars apart. When you take a look at a line of verse, it looks stacked. You could play with the placement of where a line of verse is. You could play with the placement of words within a line of verse. You could leave a lot of white space, and we'll have a whole episode on white space.

And so I started to ask the question. I was like, oh, okay, I haven't done the slow thought work, the System 2 work of really pulling apart these words. I've pulled apart some words, but I haven't pulled apart everything, and actually, this is important. So again, a line of verse may or may not be poetic. I want you to take a moment and sit with that for a second, because there are a lot more verse plays in the world that are really popular than we give credence to. I think a lot of Sarah Ruhl's stuff, a lot of Lauren Gunderson's stuff, she uses punctuation in a sort of versical way. My friend [Laura Pittenger](#) that I mentioned before, she's a brilliant playwright. 1000% look her up. If you're doing plays or you're doing Zoom plays, hire her. She's great. I may be a little bit biased. I got to work with her for several years. But one of her plays... We were talking about it the other day, and one of her plays is in verse, and I asked her now, because then the next question that I have, the next slower thought, third thought question I have is... I guess the second thought question is, okay, well what is verse? And then the third thought question is, well, what does a line of verse do? Why do we do it? If we can have poetical prose, why are we chopping up these sentences? Why are we doing it? Really. What purpose does it serve? How is it a good tool?

And I asked her – rather like with Deb Victoroff – I was like, “Was this play always in verse?” And she was sitting there going, “I'm sorry, it's in what now?” I'm like, “Yeah, am I not wrong? There are intentional line endings, and then you also left a bunch of white space for places where there should be pause or movement or silence. You left a lot of white space on the page. There will be white space even between two lines of verse for an actor speaking. But did you write that initially in prose or in verse?” Again, not in poetry, in verse. Because her lines are full of extremely modern syntax. It is a beautiful, beautiful play, a sort of slice of life. She does very modern work, and it is beautiful. She said, “Yes, no, it was originally written in prose.” And then as her director was directing

it, the actors were not hitting the music that she was hearing in her head. She had very definitive music, just like Beckett will put in “pause, pause, pause, silence, yawn, blink.” Right? And he does that to sort of... I would suggest that he’s writing in verse. “Pause” is a line of verse for him. Putting in “yawn” in the middle of two syllables is part of his verse.

She said she rewrote it and put in a bunch of white space and put in line endings just to try to force or to indicate through her formatting to the actors and the director what the music was. What was she getting at? She was like, “I use less white space now,” but she’s writing in verse. So what does a line of verse do? It does a couple things. One, just practically speaking, it behaves like a measure of music. Again, this is not saying whether the music is the music you want to hear, whether it’s to your taste, whether the music is written well or written poorly. Even whether the music is written correctly according to the rules of writing music. But a line of verse indicates to the people interpreting your verse, who are going – the actors, the cast, the crew, etc. – the music that you’re trying to get them to sing. It’s a measure of music. So just technically, it does that.

The reason for that, it’s a physical reason. Again, the reason why I like the idea of schwumpf is because it’s not just, “Oh, yes, it does this mrrr mrrr.” But there’s always a visceral, physical, immediate reason for things as well. It’s not just all in the brain. But part of the reason for this is because if I’m confronted with a new piece of verse, my eye literally behaves sort of like a typewriter and I get to the end of the line, and then it takes a second for my eye to go back to the beginning of the line. This is not how a paragraph works, in quite the same way, because I get to the end of it, and there’s no sudden expanse of white space to the side of it that makes me go, “Whoa, wait a minute. What’s going on?” Whereas a line of verse ends, and I’m left pondering what I just read, and then my eyes literally go back and I start the next line of verse, and I get to the end, and I’m left pondering that and how it connected to the previous line. Then my eyes have to travel back. There’s a start-and-stop-ness that’s built into verse drama that is not the way you have to perform it, but it absolutely is something that people tend to do, even without knowing they’re doing it, in the same way that if you were to put something in **bold** or in **red** or in “quotation marks,” you tend to sort of interpret that anyway. Again, you make a connection as to what you think about red if I were to put something in red and then say, “**Perform this,**” right? I’ve told you something. I’ve schwumped something together and I’ve fwahed that to you, and I expect you to pick up that schwumpf and to fwah it to an audience.

And that’s the other thing that a line of verse does, and I would suggest... Technically speaking, a line of verse demarks a measure of music. Emotionally, emotively, because, again, a line of verse... I should say a line of verse drama, which is going to be interpreted by a second party. Again, written drama requires, at minimum, three people or three different movements, right, at least two different people, of the generation of the thing, the interpretation of the thing, the

reception of the thing. So what a line of verse can do, or how each line of verse is experienced, is its own schwumpf. There is the experience of the line of verse.

And so if you're using verse well, then you're going to put the line ending wherever there's a new schwumpf. I'm going to say that again. If you're using verse well, then you want your measure of music not to go sentence by sentence, but schwumpf by schwumpf, because if you were to go back and take any part of this podcast, you'd probably hear bits where I've got sub-clauses that I've said really fast, or as I'm speaking right now, and you might decide to put all of this, up to the thing I just said, on one line of verse, in order to indicate to someone, "Say all this. It's all connected." And then you stop, like I just did, when you change the schwumpf, when you change the energy, when you're changing the connections.

I want to add in one extra little word, and we're going to be schwumping this into the next episode, because I think schwumpf is going to kind of be our guide. But I want to create or coin a new word, and again, I'm purposely using nonsense words, really nonsense sounds, emotive sounds, because I don't want you to get too much in your head. I started with Greek words or Latin-based words. I tried Germanish-type words. And I realized I need an emotive language in order to express these emotive, visceral experiences. So we have schwumpf. We fwah the schwumpf. But between the lines of verse, there's white space, isn't there? And we tend to disregard that white space. Now, some practitioners will say, "You need to do something to the line ending," and then other practitioners will say, "You need to do something to the line beginning," and then others say, "Don't worry about that. Just shove it all together." But if we wanted it shoved all together, we would have written it in prose. We wrote it in verse for a reason. We felt something instinctually, but we couldn't quite see the star, and so I'm going to name this star. This star is the energy between the end of one line of verse and the beginning of the next line of verse. Really, it's the energy between schwumpfs. Really, it's the connective tissue between schwumpfs. It's a thing that holds schwumpfs together, and I'm calling this uvriel. All right.

At the end of a line of verse, there's an uvriel. There's this nuancing of the energy of the schwumpf that was just on this line of verse, and you need to take the uvriel, you need to take this raw, kinetic energy and nuance it, somehow make the connection. Verb it. It's a verb, or you're going to do a verb on it, which is going to get you to the next line. Now, this all sounds very terrifying and esoteric, but I promise you, you do it all the time. You do this all the time, and all I'm doing is giving a name to something that you've been doing since you were old enough to make nonsense words yourself. (laughs)

Okay. Let's take a look, again, at the first quality of a verse line – so we're finally, finally into verse drama – and then let's take a look at the second quality, that is the schwumpf, the uvriel, and how those two work together a little bit. We'll just be looking at that lightly today, because it's going to be the subject of quite a lot

of what we're going to do in the future, just because, again, all these things build off each other, so it's not like I'm going to spend decades talking about this, although who knows?

If we remember from Deb Victoroff, when she took her prose and turned it into poetry, same thing that my playwright friend did, it was written as, in prose:

Stay, sir. If you brother be, stay your vocal 'plaint.

But the way that she wrote it in, the music that she wanted me to do was:

Stay, sir. If you brother be,  
Stay your vocal 'plaint.

Okay, so "Stay, sir. If you brother be" is one measure of music. My eye travels back to the beginning to be able to say, "Stay your vocal 'plaint." I'm not continuing to go across the way I do when it's prose, when it's in paragraph form.

And what she's saying to me, because, again, all I asked her to do, I asked her to go off her instinct, to go off that extroverted, to basically go off her first thoughts. I said, "Put a line break wherever you want the actor to take a breath, and don't worry too much about anything else." Basically, I was asking her to go by her gut and to put a line break wherever she felt the end of a schwumpf. And so she said, "This is one schwumpf. These things are somehow schwumped together," which is:

Stay, sir. If you brother be,

Now my job, because she put together a couple things, stay, calling the guy sir, and then calling him brother. Right? Stay, sir, brother. Three separate things that she's asked me to schwumpf together. She's saying these things are connected.

Now, I can have multiple different ways to fwah that to you, to convince you that this schwumpf, this energy is all together. And then the next line is

Stay your vocal 'plaint.

so that's all one schwumpf, although it's still stay, as in stop, your vocalized complaint. And so I would still need to do the work, when I'm interpreting, of something that Shakespeare & Co., up in the Berkshires in Massachusetts, called dropping in, which is basically I would need to do the work, like how do I feel about the word "stay?" Basically, you do the work of trying to explore, like you take the stars apart again. You say, "Okay, there's the word 'stay.' What's the neural network that comes up? What are the different neural networks that come up with the hashtag 'stay,' and what do I think about them?" You do the work of slowing down your thoughts, of looking at it and then recreating it and

only keeping the bits that work for your character, and if you have no overlap with your character, you have to excavate and find what's true for them. It's the work of, again, schwumpfing your stars, slow thought to fast thought to slow thought to fast thought, to figure out how you feel about it, how you're going to schwumpf it together.

But again, the crucial thing is she, on instinct, knew to schwumpf together:

Stay, sir. If you brother be

And there is a period after "sir." It's not a comma. Stay, sir, period. If you brother be... So it was written originally, in prose. If I were just following the punctuation, if I were presuming that schwumpfs are on punctuation, are on sentences, in prose,

Stay, sir.

would be a schwumpf, and it would not necessarily be connected to the next sentence. The next sentence is:

If you brother be, stay your vocal 'plaint.

That's one schwumpf. Now, I mean, "If you brother be, stay your vocal 'plaint" is a perfectly good schwumpf. Like, if you're my brother, stop complaining. Right? That is fair that it's all one schwumpf, but she, as the artist, helped me know what her thought pattern was, that in fact,

Stay, sir. If you brother be

was the schwumpf. And then there's an uvriel I need to somehow nuance.

Stay your vocal 'plaint.

is its own schwumpf. It's a different thing. Now "Stay your vocal 'plaint" becomes... While it's connected to "If you brother be," "Stay your vocal 'plaint" is its own thing, and it's kind of a command now. It's not conditional to "If you're my brother, then you'll stop," but it's a...

Stay, sir. If you brother be

To me, the uvriel of that feels like really reaching out, and then

Stay your vocal 'plaint.

to me, feels very sort of, like, fwump, down. And a different actor would have different things that they schwumpf on top, different experiences of the

experience that they're having. And in fact, talk to any actor. From night to night, the experience of the experience is nuances of the schwumpf will change vastly.

Let us now look at "To be or not to be," by Shakespeare, *Hamlet*. Now, in future episodes, I'll be going into even more technical jargon for all of you who want to do the introverted work. But all I want to point out here, because it was "To be or not to be" that helped me even... Seems appropriate, right, that this questioning of Dasein was the thing that led me to schwumpf. Because what I noticed was that it's just constantly full of all these different schwumpfs, what I'm going to call hemischwumpf, which is like little schwumpf on a larger schwumpf line.

Just musically, if I were to look at this as music, I'm going to, again, for right now, and in the next upcoming episodes, we're going to be talking more and more about different ways to interpret a line, different ways to act a line. This is where uvriel's going to be really important. What are the different energies that we have to get from line to line? But for right now, mechanically, I'm going to take a breath. The first line, if it functions just as a measure of music, is:

To be, or not to be, that is the question,

End of that line.

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

Ooh, that's a curious place. I wouldn't necessarily stop there. But

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

End of that line.

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

End of that line.

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,

End of that line.

And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;

Whoa! Hold on, wait. Where did we get from... We were sort of following along, right? I'm going to read this again now without saying, "end of line," and I want you to feel the huge shift in schwumpf that happens when we get to "To die; to sleep." I'm going to read it line by line, just melodically, just so you can hear the measure of music, what I am forced to do if I'm doing a cold reading.

To be, or not to be, that is the question,  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;

Whoa, what? How do... We were going along quite merrily, saying, "Is it better to fight? Is it better not to fight?" Whoa, death came up really fast. But whether you're the writer of this, the interpreter of this, or the receiver of this, what you're asked to do by this line of verse – and this hopefully will be really helpful to any teachers out there that are like, "Oh, I have to teach Shakespeare. I hate this, I hate this so much," is that you can examine this in an academic sense, in a literary style sense. Because if each verse line is schwumpfing together ideas, then our question is, why is Shakespeare saying that, for Hamlet, these ideas are all schwumpfed together?

And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;

We might even go back a line, because actually it's what I'm going to call a semischwumpf. Don't worry about it. We're going to talk about it in a future episode. We've had enough definitions today. But basically a semischwumpf is a line and a half. You've got a couple different schwumpfs together, which is:

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;

That these things are schwumpfed together. They're connected together for Hamlet. And so we can do the literary work, and we're going to do this especially in the interpretive phase, especially whether you're a student in the interpretive phase, whether you're someone prepping for performance in the interpretive phase. But we can also do this, frankly, in the generative phase, because the generative phase, when you're writing it – and so again, English teachers, use this. If you want to give a creative writing assignment to your students, have them write out a speech from someone else's point of view, or maybe from their own point of view, and only put line endings when there's a change of schwumpf, or rather to say each line is a connection of ideas. Then put the line ending when there's an alteration or a nuance to that collection of ideas.

Because again, in a speech, you're accumulating schwumpf, right? You're putting all these things together, just as this particular podcast, this particular season, I'm hopefully scaffolding. This is what you do all the time, teachers. You scaffold what you're trying to schwumpf into your students. That's what verse does. It scaffolds schwumpfs.

So to go back, I'm going to pull apart the separate schwumpfs, even if they're on the same line. So

To be,  
Schwumpf.

or not to be,

Now, again, I might experience that, though, as

To be, or not to be,

is the schwumpf. Right? So schwumpfs can be larger, can be smaller, in the same way that... Well, you've got individual words. Individual words make sentences, right? You can decide what's the stronger schwumpf for you.

that is the question,

can be its own schwumpf. You can also decide that the whole thing,

To be, or not to be, that is the question,

is a full schwumpf with no sort of, you don't need to nuance anything in between.

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

That's one schwumpf.

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

Another schwumpf. And so again, literally, English teachers, this is what we actors do, what we actors and crew and director do at the start, is we kind of do it as an English class. We sit down. We do something called table work, which is from Stanislavsky, and we look at the text, and we say, "Wait, hold on, why is 'whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer,' I don't generally say 'noble' and 'suffer,' and why is it only in my mind?" We do the work of dropping in, saying what are the schwumpfs? What do I feel about "noble?" What do I feel about "noble" connected to "suffer," that sort of minutia work. All right:

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

And again, we can say why did he choose the words "slings and arrows?" What do we mean by "outrageous?" What do we mean by "fortune?" And how, again, is this schwumpf building on this schwumpf building on this schwumpf?

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,

And that's where you can point out that "take arms" is in harmony with the previous line's schwumpf. Slings and arrows. Take arms. Right? And then the next line has the same thing:

And by opposing end them?

That there's harmonics to those three schwumpfs on three separate lines. But even so,

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,

because it's on its own verse line, its own schwumpf, we're saying there's something different about "take arms against a sea of troubles" and "by opposing end them." Then we say there is some connection between

And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;

The very cool thing about this verse is we have followed Hamlet's train of thought.

Now, I didn't need to tell you any of that. Frankly, if you sat down and just sort of spent time with it, this is part of being a Dasein. This is exactly how we just behaved. We sit around, and my understanding is that people with neurodivergence, people with ADHD, some forms of being on the spectrum, actually do this schwumpfung even more naturally and even faster than most people. It's not a bug, it's a feature, and everyone else has to get their second thoughts up to first thoughts in order to keep up with them.

There was a meme that was going around. Someone was explaining how ADHD works for them. They were calling it, I believe, the dolphin theory, and the idea is that two people are looking at a lake. One person is neurodivergent. The other person is neurotypical. The neurotypical person looks at the lake and says, "What a pretty lake." And the neurodivergent person, who again, is, I would suggest, just making schwumpfs really fast is, yeah, just sort of going from thought to thought to thought, experience to experience to experience to experience. But what they verbalize, the one line of verse that comes out from the neurodivergent person in response to "What a pretty lake" is, "I wish I had nunchucks."

What a soliloquy does, what verse does, and again, I'm scaffolding this. I'm giving you sneak peaks of what's coming up. But instead of just going, "What? How'd you get to nunchucks?" the characters talk out loud and tell you exactly how they got to nunchucks. In this case, I don't remember the entire permutation,

but it was something like, “Oh, it’s a lake. I wonder if there are turtles in this lake. Oh, I love Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Oh, my favorite one is the one that has nunchucks. I wish I had nunchucks.” And the only thing that was different in that is that we didn’t get all the parts of their schwumpfs. We didn’t get schwumpf-schwumpf, and you heard... Actually, as I spoke that, you could take that section and put it into verse, and then you would be making decisions as to whether all of that should be on one line of verse, whether some of it is more connected than others, and so we’re going to put some of it on the same verse line, and there’s some major nuance, some major uvriel, that we need for the line ending, or some energy that gets changed and shifted, and so the next line’s going to be on a verse line, etc.

[music]

I am going to give you homework. Whether you’re a writer or a teacher or an actor or anything, I want you first to start being aware of your own schwumpfs. Start being aware of your first thoughts and your second thoughts. Start being aware of your fast thoughts and your slow thoughts. Start doing the work of looking at the stars of your own thought and the constellations that you’ve made from them, the way that you’ve schwumpfed together constellations of these thoughts. Not just thoughts, experiences, etc. Do some work and bring up some totems. Choose different words – home, apple, whatever it is – and see what different neural networks start coming up, and whether they’re having any visceral reactions in you.

If you dare to, and again, if you’re going through a tough time, it is better to be kind to yourself than to be like, “I have to push myself.” No, be kind to yourself. Be kind to yourself. That’s where, perhaps, I’m not so German. It’s a little bit of the... Maybe that’s something nice about America. I hope so. But, perhaps go to something that typically your brain goes, “Ah, this is going to kill us. We’re going to have a stroke,” and just gently pull apart some stars in something that you don’t like to pull the stars apart. Just do a little work on it. Maybe you don’t have to pull the stars apart. Maybe just look at the stars, and how is this one different from that one? What is this one? What is the function of this one? What do I think about this one? Investigate it. What else is in it? Is it a sun? Is it a moon, actually, that I’m seeing? Is it a comet just passing through? What is that bright light? Is it something that’s dead that I’m just living with the residual light that I received from my ancestors years and years and years ago, but is no longer hot, really? Do I need it?

If it is helpful to you, do some of that slow thinking, second and third thoughts. Then if you want something practical, because this is verse drama, I encourage you, actually, that you can do one of two things. You can do both of them if you really like. Again, if you’re in a pandemic and you’re looking for something to take up time, do all of this. Woo-hoo! And then drop me a comment and tell me what your exploration yielded. I want to know. Because your exploration is part of what

makes you uniquely you. I think when someone says your name, they're schwumpfing together everything that is you. How beautiful is that?

But here's two other exercises that you can do. You can take "To be or not to be," or any speech that you like and pull it apart. Put in a line or highlight the different schwumpfs that you're seeing, particularly the mini-schwumpfs. Or if you think two lines go together and share a certain schwumpf, but go through a speech that's already set, that's already written, and just question, okay, this is one line of music, but it's also one schwumpf. Are there smaller schwumpfs in it? What happens if I entertain that all these component parts, all these stars belong together? What does that do to me? You can take and analyze someone's work.

If you also want to do some creative writing work, and once again, this is going to be verse. I don't care about the quality of it, and I invite you not to care about the quality of it either. We're not going for quality right now. We're just going for technique. Let's take all the burden of being Shakespeare or the next great whatever off of you. We're just looking at mechanics right now. It's all good. We're just going to try out the tool. We're going to put baking powder instead of baking soda in the cookies and see what happens. That's all. It may come out with cookies we prefer. May come out with cookies we don't like. Doesn't matter. We're just testing out what happens when we do it.

I'm going to encourage you to write some verse, by which I mean just maybe start writing your diary entry, journal for the day, and don't put in a line break until there's some nuance of thought, until there's some nuance of new energy, new uvriel. Right? And you may find that you've got really short schwumpfs. You have really frequent uvriels, that you're constantly readjusting the schwumpf, constantly readjusting the thought with new uvriels. And again, see if there may be an uvriel, or two or three or four uvriels, but that still are on one line. You're saying this schwumpfs together. And you don't need to ask why. Again, we're going to be using our extroverted artist in order to create this verse. Again, it doesn't have to be beautiful. It doesn't have to be poetry. Not all verse is poetry. It just needs to have a line ending whenever you feel that it's the end of a schwumpf. If you're having difficulty feeling the schwumpf, if you're in your brain too much, then I suggest doing the shortcut, which is going to basically get over your introverted artist that's trying to get it right, and just put a line break whenever you take a breath. Just do that.

Now, if you feel like going back and then analyzing what you did and seeing what's there, that's cool. If you want to share what you wrote with the whole class, with everyone, that's awesome. I would love to see what you create. If this is highly personal to yourself, awesome. Well done. You got into something deep and real and raw, and I'm proud of you. It is the scariest thing to show who you are. I'm going to let you in on a little clue: it's scariest when you show the most beautiful thing about yourself. In some ways, it's very easy to show the yucky

parts of us. I hope that when you do this exercise, you find something utterly exquisite in yourself. I hope you're just like those stars.

[music]

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