

“No, I haven’t seen the Two-Tonic Twits since last Thursday’s pool league.” Big Betty, Zenda Tap’s manager, grinned, “So it’s been thankfully . . .” She turned to the sound of two bikes noising to a stop. “That sounds like them. I told that twit Pedar that Triumph, Tigger 750 still needs a timing adjustment. But he don’ listen.” Betty laughed as she headed down-bar with the tassels of her suede biker vest swaying to her stride.

Mary just grinned. Even with all the nonsense in his life, her brother Alex was rarely late to the bar. She needed him to price out adding exterior drain tiles to her Pastor’s mom’s house. A Catholic all her life, Mary was a little surprised when her Pastor’s mom had asked for advice. The Catholic Church’s resources were abundant—even in her little town. Mary turned to Father Gerad, who came along for the ride. “That’s Peder, and the other guy’s my brother Alex.” Mary pointed them out with a highly polished red index fingernail. “Alex is the one who can help.”

“I don’t know Peder, but Alex is sure familiar.”

“You know him?” Mary sat back.

“Not personally. Last month, Alex rented out our hunt club for some big Friday night bash. We were reluctant to rent it because there was a wedding going on the following day.” He laughed.

“What? They trashed the place, right?” Mary clicked her nails, “Go figure.” His grin told her that was not the problem. “The cops didn’t raid the place, did they?” Mary would have heard if they did. The town wasn’t that big.

“No, they trashed the place alright. I met the cleanup crew at ten the following day. There was about an inch of beer covering the entire floor with empty cans that seemed to float in the currents of a drunken sea. The deer antlers were decorated with women’s . . . underthings, and the walls glistened with champaign. From what deputy Harris told me, the lot was jammed with cars. He figured at least one-fifty were in attendance.”

“In Harvard Hall? Jeez.” Mary inwardly smiled; she’d been to one or two of Alex’s Swamp Angel bashes that year. “Here, let’s introduce you . . .” She stood as the twits passed.

“And how do you figure that?” Peder stooped to load the pool table. “If Matter holds any truth in it, what happens when it’s converted to energy? Does it’s truth just vape like some baked-out stoner?” He laughed.

“No, you idiot. Information in Matter relates to its ontological makeup, like how many quarks, proton to electron relationship—that shit. So when I was saying that all information in Matter that enters a black hole is lost, I’m saying it can’t just reappear in some other dimension on the other side. That wheel-chair guy’s prediction that energy escapes black holes was verified, so this silly multi-universal mass argument is nonsense.”

“What the hell are you two hashing on now?” Mary asked as she came over to hug them.

Peder slammed the cueball break draining the seven-ball. “Your goofy brother was sayin’ that the multidimensional universe theory is an impossibility.”

“Whatever . . .” Mary threw up a hand, “Guy’s, this is Father Gerad. He’s from Harvard.”

“Harvard boy, eh?” Pedar offered his hand. “Lose your tie?”

“Well . . . actually, I’m from Georgetown University. I only live in Harvard.” Gerad grinned while shaking hands. “What got you two on to the multi-universe thing?”

Pedar smiled, “On the ride up here, we passed two boats that seemed to have collided at an intersection. They were left off on the side of the road with no trailers in sight.” He turned away to take his next pool shot.

“That’s it?” Gerad gave Mary a bewildered look.

“No, of course not. I wouldn’t ask any more about it unless you’ve got a couple hours to kill. But I should warn you, as Nietzsche says: ‘if you gaze too long into the abyss, the abyss gazes back.’ ”

“I *think* I know what that means . . .”

“Trust me, if not . . . you will,” Mary laughed. “Hey, Betty, a couple beers over here.”

Gerad turned his attention to the game just in time to see Pedar miss an easy 9-ball combo for the kill.

“So what are you gonna tell me next? In another dimension, you made that shot?” Alex stalked the table for his next play. “And that a whole different set of causality events occur—so dramatically different—the impossible happens, and you manage to get laid tonight?” Alex missed when the four-ball rattled out of the pocket.

“Could be . . . and years later, during a dimensional shift, my kid comes back and teaches you geometry. But then, you wouldn’t listen anyway since you don’t use math.”

“I never said I don’t use it—I said I don’t believe in it as a sole representation of logic.” Alex handed Pedar a beer.

“Whatever. You acknowledge causality chains, right? Math is used to predict events. One might say that without math, there is little advancement. In fact, math is needed to understand fundamental truths like reality is not static; there are variants.”

“Needed or used?”

“Both. Why split hairs. In logic, math is fundamental. Take the statement two plus two is four. The verb ‘is’ represents the causal connection. When I say your hair *is* chaotic—a by-product of your mental state, no doubt—the ‘is’ represents the binary logical connection of the observation. Mary, whose good opinion of you is beyond me, would disagree on style-point and say your hair *is not* chaotic. The reasoning can be ill-defined; however, the logical operative verb remains a function of causality.”

Mary interjected, “That sounds like word-play, Pedar. Connectives used for cause and effect are words like: because, consequently, therefore, so, etc . . .”

“Forgive me, madam,” He bowed gallantly, “If I may have misled the notion of true or false. Logic propositions can only be or not be. However, there is also a snapshot of reality in the evolution of time. To say ‘his hair *is* chaotic’ is logically definitive—as to the state of affairs ‘his hair *being* chaotic’. I used the word connection as a bond in the link of causality. One does not say two and two being four, or that four is, therefore, two and two.”

“By the evolution of time, are you referring to Werner Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle?” Gerad asked, surprising the shit out of both twits.

“He’s not,” Alex said, racking the pool balls after the loss. “He has little knowledge of quantum theory. But his grasp of systems is . . . passable.” He laughed, ducking under Pedar’s half-hearted swipe.

“Heisenburg was a piker.” Pedar paused before breaking the rack. “It is impossible to mark *any* object’s exact position and velocity simultaneously, no matter the size.” he rocketed the cue into the rack. “The very concept of exact position, and velocity, are meaningless in nature. That Einstein feller got a ton of credit for what every second-year Eastern padawan understands—it’s all relative. Now, these guys were hampered by Western ideals, so it’s to their credit they could find truth through math.”

“That’s hilarious.” Alex drained a shot of Jack before hitting a two-nine combination bank for the win. “The problem with math is that it is limited to set reaction responses. Throw in subjective reasoning, and the predictions become meaningless. The internal . . . “

“Wait.” Pedar drained his Jack before chugging the rest of his beer. “We’ve covered this *Descartes* shit before. I will submit to your chain of reasoning if you agree that your so-called ‘mindless’ pieces of Matter are mathematically predictable after a willful action is initiated.”

“I thought were we discussing causal events?” Alex countered.

“We were . . .”

“Hold on for a second, guys,” Gerad interjected. Betty, I’ll buy the next round.” He then raised shot glasses in a toast. “Which is the cause of this occasion?” He challenged.

The twits grinned at each other like little kids.

“Are we drinking because I ordered them, or I wanted to drink with you, so I ordered them?”

“Well . . . certainly, it was not due to some extradimensional influence.” Alex snarked.

Gerad asked. “So, Pedar, how would we know if it was?”

“It’s metaphysically intrinsic like Karma or the influence of your Holy Spirit. People have made claims of prior lives or experienced *déjà vu*, cosmic influence, ancestral guidance, etc . . . We, meaning all beings, use discernment to determine metaphysical events. Discernment is a

function of correlative facts—how they relate. As to proof? Even your Christian Bible didn't find that necessary. God is."

"I see. Interesting answer. You intimated that discernment is an intrinsic characteristic of Beings, meaning it is part of our nature and not a learned trait; like . . . oh, expressing manners."

"Yes, and idealism plays a part in that discernment. Like which mannerism, how we will act, in a place like this bar or your workplace. As with our dear host Betty," he winked at her as she passed, "I'm sure the language she uses at home with her kids is different. My point is: that idealism is the inner world, and realism the external. When discussing the metaphysical, we mean to say the internal is affected by the external—how ideals or beliefs are influenced."

I agree," Alex missed his third shot in a run. "The fact that we can perceive the world means we are in it, but it doesn't mean the world *is* our perception. Schopenhauer's solipsistic arguments are sound only if we define the world in an idealistic way. I may not be unique to the world, but my idealism reveals a world unique to me."

Mary nodded. "So, if I get this right, your sayin' the realistic world is static. Only through our view of it does it become diverse. Why is this different than what Pedar is sayin'?"

"He wants to include things that cannot be empirically perceived—I separate the two. By definition: spirituality *is not* empirical."

Gerad interjected. "Is it possible, when discussing reality, to separate the two?"

Alex grinned. "They are separate because God is separate from the creation. Going back to Schopenhauer: there is the perceived world and the independent I. And I didn't say the world was static. The second law of thermodynamics illustrates the temporary state of Matter. If we use the relativity argument, Matter is constantly in flux. It is only static to our position of observation in space-time. Consciousness differs because as our idealism shapes our perception of the world, our actions can shape the real world."

Pedar laughed. "How do you define consciousness, collectively or individualistic? There is such a thing as herd mentality—some call it religion. People want to fit in and be a part of the now. It's called fashion."

"Pedar," Mary raised her voice. "Show some respect."

Father Gerad laughed. “Unfortunately, he is quite correct. Not all religious people seek fellowship with God. But I think being conscientious and having a conscious are two different actions. Going back to your earlier point, I may be conscientious of my manners, but my conscious accuses me. It makes me aware of wrongful actions, and I feel . . . unbalanced. So, to feel this way, I must be in agreement with something, right? Someone is speaking to me. In counseling, people who claim not to have this inner voice are prone to drastically unconsidered actions . . . ah, terrible actions.” He nervously looked away for a moment. “I think it’s separate . . . a different influence, a spiritual influence, and not some preprogrammed biological response. It’s almost an . . . a allergic response in the way it can debilitate a person leading to depression, anxiety and the ilk.”

“Yes,” Alex replied, staying Pedar with a hand. “The phrase ‘conscious decision’ means acting with the will—not an instinctual knee-jerk. I defer to the logic chain of reasoning. First, you must have knowledge of a thing; then, believe that it’s actual, meaning actually in existence, before any conscious action can be directed. So my question is, how can you willfully act without perception?”

Mary countered, “What about the Karma thing Pedar brought up? Many people believe in it, that whole thing—what comes around goes around.”

Alex looked at Pedar to respond, who just said, “You dug it—you fill it,” before returning to the pool game.

Alex shrugged. “Well, first off, the logic operatives he was using were correct to mathematics but not to aesthetics. It is not logical that my hair is chaotic because it’s a subjective argument. So is Karma. Karma, by definition, is a metaphysical element that does not exist outside of subjective argument, meaning that it can’t be empirically measured.”

“Karma?” Gerad looked askance, “is a what?”

“It’s a Theasopical thing where . . .” Alex began before Pedar interrupted.

“It’s a substance built up from behavior. Wrong actions bring bad Karma that can only be expunged by good action through a secession of lives.”

“A subjective atonement,” Alex chipped back in, “where good and evil are not defined.”

Pedar drained the last of his beer before calling for more. “This, lady and gentleman, is the crux of the disagreement. In Kant’s theory of *a priori*, the majority of knowledge we obtain does not come from our direct experience. This is important because the actualization of knowledge is not so evident in the chain of reasoning that Alex seems to use as a mantra. This is where logic comes in. As stated earlier, things cannot be and not be simultaneously, so if a proposition is made, it needs to be reduced to a logical endgame that . . .”

“But not all things can be reduced to . . .” Alex interrupted.

“I’m not finished, buddy.” Pedar smiled. “Logic takes out the grey areas of subjective reasoning, reducing propositions to fields of Belief. It is a fool’s task to describe the ineffable. What can we know of the works of good deeds?” Pedar glared at Alex, “for who can know the mind of God through another’s system of belief?”

“Well said, Pedar,” Father Gerad answered. “There is only one way to God, and that is through his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“I don’t think that’s what he meant.” Alex sat down. “I think he is sayin’ there are many paths to God—he knows there’s a Creator.”

“I do. If Belief is subjective, by what chain of reasoning is one Belief more salient than another? I believe because it’s illogical to think that this all sprang from nothing. But this Belief can be modified through new knowledge. Here is where Alex and I differ. He claims reality is empirically knowable on the one hand, yet he agrees that when we subjectively act on Belief, that action modifies reality. Neither one of us can prove single or multidimensional reality, but the knowledge gained from logic mathematically shows the viability of a multidimensional reality.”

Alex countered. “Yet, single dimension is the only observation that can be realized. Math is a construct of the mind, it is not elemental . . .”

“—neither is spirit, yet you . . .”

“Hold it, you two.” Mary stopped them both. “First of all, this point-counterpoint shit is not helpful. Secondly, we are all subject to indoctrination, especially after developing a belief system. Right, Father Gerad?”

“That’s right. Our will decides the path to take, and God shows the way. Your ‘will be done’ works on both paths. If you decide not to follow the Lord, then you have made a choice. But through life, which must be realized by action, you can change that choice. It was interesting when Alex used his mantra,” he laughed, pointing at Pedar, “about discerning what is true. I was taught that that reason chain also defines faith. “So is seeking truth the same as seeking faith? I guess it is if our faith is true.”

“I agree,” Mary continued. “Secondly, love is an action of spirit, you twit—that’s the living proof of free will. We are born with the capacity to love, and only through choice can it be expressed. And before there was a thing called history, mythology recorded both actual events *and* metaphoric meaning, placing each in context. Yes, Pedar, it is foolish to attempt to define the ineffable—that’s why we use metaphors. Yet, truth can also be related by simply depicting events. In Uhland’s poem *Count Eberhard’s Hawthorn*, the author cuts a hawthorn spray, which he plants on his property, and 28 lines later, he sits in old age beneath it. There are no moralisms, no philosophy, no religious prattle, or transcendental twitters. The story is impactful because it’s shared knowledge that requires no experience. That’s what teaching is all about.”

“Yes, rain falls on the just and unjust.” Gerad smiled kindly. “The path to God neither contains nor requires secret knowledge, just a different world perspective. Alex says correctly that our Beliefs change our actions. This is not so with God. God’s love is static, unchanging for us. That’s what grace is all about. Love cannot be compelled.”

“Yes,” Pedar looked off, “So, integrity in conscience is for us to be consistent with our Beliefs, faith?”

Alex looked at him sideways. “I think the issue is like Spinoza’s idea that metaphysical properties are the only real ones. Following Plato and Aristotle, he says the coolest shit in life is knowing and understanding. It’s that whole Spock thing with Vyger where knowledge is barren.”

Gerad looked at Mary in wonder. “Did he just use a Star Trek reference?”

“Yeah, it’s a goto for his country bar-room philosophy.” She laughed.

Smiling at this reveal, Alex plunged ahead. “Like the sci-dude says, Matter is in a constant state of change. Its attempt to reach its lowest energy state is pulled apart by entropy,



where it can return to an energy state. This conversion is true with all Matter. Yet, with Beings, the essence remains. Think near-death experiences where tons of cases have been recorded with similarities in experience that transcend culture, religion, and education.”

“So you admit, a different reality does exist.” Pedar pointed with his beer can. “This is where we started with the two boats at the intersection.”

“Yup. Biblically speaking, there is another dimensional reality, and in that reality, Matter still exists, just not how it is here.”

“The material plane?” Pedar held up a hand. “Wait, you said earlier that time is not a constant. Would you then agree that those two biblical realities can run concurrently?”

“No, because that removes cause and effect, and then everything happens simultaneously. Which makes no sense.”

“Unless there is a division . . . a boundary like a black hole.” Pedar looked off, “but time is measured by change, and time is only eternal if things continue to change. I still say there must be some kind of essence that survives when Matter is converted. Its continued reemergence points that way.”

“Benito Spinoza,” Father Gerard finally remembered. “Early modern period, mid-1600s, he developed the theory of attributes which are the key things that allow something to continue to exist. Not just be, but to continue in uniqueness. Different than Descartes’s mind-body relationship, Spinoza doesn’t separate God from nature. In fact, he wants to equate them in that they exist to no end and therefore act to no end. He finds that to put any special purpose or meaning to existence is delusionary—things just are, so enjoy it. He says the greatest evil is our arrogance that the world was created for us—a by-product of falsely applied intellectual attributes. If our main attribute is intellectual, then that is where we will find our most joy. So we are to have an intellectual love of God, which has its foundations going all the way back to Plato. But, this is a barren form of love where appreciation is the main focus. I love things—it’s conditional love.”

“The important thing here,” Mary reminded them, “Is that love is the ultimate form of spiritual expression. Our expression of love defines us, directs our lives, and ultimately governs a person’s future when this fickle material world loses its thin veneer.”

Alex winked as he handed Pedar another shot of Jack. “So, Matter doesn’t matter all that much.”

“Yeah,” Pedar laughed. “Without it, all you have are spirits . . . “ He held up his shot glass, “which, when liberally applied, ain’t all that bad.”

Mary rolled her eyes. “Now, to the *real matter* at hand. Father Gerard’s mom has this drainage problem . . .”