A Twinkle in Time

This document consists of two excerpts from The Survival Files *that concern the reality and meaning of time. The book is a compilation of case studies interspersed with analytical conversations between a student and his mentor. It is available on Kindle and in print from Amazon.com, and is one of the three volumes contained within* The Hereafter Trilogy.

Nighttime conversation at the cabin …

"You might be too young to remember having to make sure that none of your neighbors were talking on the 'party line' before you could make a telephone call."

"I was a mere babe, but I remember. You could never be certain that no one was listening to your conversations."

"In my neighborhood," he sighed, "you usually could be certain someone *was* listening. Do you recall how you could tell that a call was for your family?"

"The rings were different, weren't they?"

"Right. Calls to one house might be indicated by two short rings separated by a pause. Calls to the house next door, by one long and then one short ring, and so on. A simple code that allowed multiple users to share one copper wire. A very basic form of multiplexing.

"As telephone equipment became more sophisticated, more advanced forms of multiplexing were developed to allow the limited number of lines between cities to handle a growing number of long-distance calls. What happens is that equipment at both ends of the long-distance lines chops several calls into little coded snippets that are interspersed among the bits of other signals and then sent through shared circuits in rapid-fire sequence. At the other end, the pieces are sorted out, reassembled and sent on as complete conversations. The pulses come so quickly that your brain cannot detect the gaps between them and so the transmission sounds smooth and seamless."

"Cool enough, but what does that have to do … "

"If, as some spirits claim, the universe blinks, then it could very well be multiplexed. Myriad, totally different and separate worlds or planes could then all co-exist in the same space."

"The universe blinks?"

"On and off, on and off."

"Uh, where does it go when it's off?"

"When it's off, the idea of 'where' is likewise off."

"You mean it no longer exists at all?"

"Think about a strip of motion picture film. When it is run through a projector, one frame is shown by shining a bright light through it. Then a shutter closes, blocking the light while the film is advanced to the next frame. The shutter opens allowing the light to project the next image and then the process is repeated. At 30 cycles per second, our brains interpret this rush of images as seamless movement. Now, where do the movie characters go between frames?"

"There's no answer to that," I said, "they don't 'go' anywhere because they don't exist between the frames."

"Back when I went to the movies a lot, there was only one theater per building, but now it seems most movie houses are complexes."

"It's more efficient to have only one ticket booth and lobby to such serve multiple theaters," I pointed out.

"Let's carry that idea a bit further and have one projector serve two theaters."

"And how might that be accomplished?"

"Simply by interspersing one movie, every other frame, among another movie. Then, speed up the projector so that it is showing 60 frames per second instead of 30. Use a rotating mirror synchronized to the projector to direct the frames belonging to one movie into one theater and the frames belonging to the other movie into the other theater."

"That would probably work," I commented, "although it doesn't seem very efficient, and both movies would then have to begin and end at the same time, and the audio track would be tough to handle."

"Well, no analogy is perfect," he shrugged. "The important point is that it doesn't matter how much distance there is between frames. There could be one movie interspersed, or a dozen. As long as the film, the projector, and our brains are synchronized, the illusion of reality is maintained.

"In the same way, there could be many universes blinking into and out of existence in sequence. Our senses would detect only that universe with which we were synchronized. We wouldn't normally notice the blinking. A million or more other universes could come into existence and vanish again with each blink and we might be no more aware of them than the characters in one film would be aware of the characters in another, interspersed, film."

"So, you're saying that the universe is multiplexed and …"

"I'm saying it is *possible*. It would help explain a lot of strange phenomena, especially if our minds and souls were more or less constant."

"You mean that souls don't blink?"

"Again, it would explain much if various aspects of ourselves blinked at different rates. Our brains, being part of the physical universe, would, of course, blink at the same rate as the physical universe. But our minds might be synched with both the physical universe and a mental universe. This could explain where we are when we are dreaming. Then our astral bodies could be synched to blink with the physical, the mental, and the astral universe; thereby spanning all three. And so on, up the pyramid to the Godhead."

"So then, God would be the universal constant; the part that doesn't blink."

"Yep. I reckon you could say that God is always 'on.'"

"That would make a great T-shirt. … I wonder if there is any way that such a hypothesis could be proved or disproved."

"None that I can think of, although there are numerous reports of anomalous events that could be explained much easier by reference to multiplexing."

"You mean like the folks who claim that they were miraculously transported across an intersection, thus saving them from a collision that was imminent an instant before?"

"Yes, or the many cases of 'missing time' in which people discover that several minutes or hours have passed that they were not aware of."

"Well, whether it explains hiccups in either time or space, I like your analogy."

"Thanks," he smiled, "but most of the credit goes to others."[1]

"The only complaint I have is that 'blinks' sounds like something has been shorted out."

"Would you prefer 'flickers'?"

"That's even worse." I thought for a moment and then my eyes lifted to the star-filled sky and I suddenly knew just the term. "How about 'twinkles'?"

He saw where I was looking and smiled. "Okay …"

The next morning …

We enjoyed our breakfast of fruit cup and French toast out at the small table on the screened porch. The aroma of coffee mixing with the fresh scents of summertime in the woods made for a most pleasant morning. Apparently it put him in a speculative mood.

"Let's say that I asked you to meet me on the corner of Twelfth Street and Vine," he said, as he poured himself some apple juice. "And you agreed, but I went and stood on the corner and you failed to meet me. Assume also that we do actually meet again, say … in the lobby of the Hotel California, and I ask you why you failed to show up. What excuse would you offer?"

"Well, you never said which 'Twelfth Street and Vine,' but I well remember the song,[2] so I'm 'going to Kansas City' … Missouri, that is."

"Yep," he agreed, "that's where I was."

"The question, then, is *when* were you standing on that corner? I was there at 3 p.m. and you were nowhere to be seen."

"Aha!" he exclaimed, with a bit more enthusiasm than needed. "That explains it. I was there at 2 o'clock.

"We were missing an entire dimension!"

"I've never been real comfortable with the idea of time as a dimension," I said.

"Dimensions are simply labels we use to identify places," he explained.

"I thought they were how we measured the size of things," I replied, "like length, width, and height."

"The size of a thing is calculated or *derived* from its dimensions. For example, to determine the length of that log," he gestured towards a large dead limb on the forest floor, "you would first need to have a starting point and an ending point and then calculate the difference between the two. If you were using a tape measure, your starting point would be zero and your ending point would be whatever number on the tape coincided with the other end of the log. But you could also derive the length of the log using the longitude and latitude of the two ends and a bit of elementary trigonometry."

"Perhaps *you* could," I said, "there's nothing about trigonometry that I consider elementary.

"I do know that longitude and latitude are numbers signifying a certain distance from the Greenwich meridian and the equator. And, I suppose that the corner of Twelfth Street and Vine is distinguished from the corner of Eleventh Street and Vine by its distance from First Street. But, I still am confused about dimensions and size and time."

"The difficulty arises from our use of the term 'dimension' to mean both scale and size. When we say that the dimensions of a rectangle are 4 inches by 6 inches, we are talking about size or quantity. On the other hand, when we say that there are three dimensions in space, we are referring to directions. These directions can be given mathematically according to the x, y, and z axes; or, on a geological map, by longitude, latitude, and height above sea level; or, in everyday terms, as up-down, right-left, and forward-back.

"So, from now on, when we want to talk about length and width or some other indication of size, let's speak of 'proportions' or simply 'size' and reserve the term 'dimensions' for information that tells us where something is on a particular spatial scale."

"And the scale time is on … ?"

"Exactly."

"Exactly? Exactly what?"

"The scale of time is on."

" … Uh, pardon me, but have we slipped into an Abbott-and-Costello reject?"

"On, as opposed to off," he said with a grin. "Remember what we said last night about the universe blinking, or rather 'twinkling' on and off?"

"Yes."

"Think of each 'on' blink to be one unit of time. Let's call that a 'twink.'"

I was pretty certain he was making this up as he went along, but I just said: "Okay. How long is a twink?"

"A twink is an indivisible unit. It cannot be divided into smaller parts; therefore, its duration is zero."

"So then, no time passes during a twink? How does anything happen?"

"For the universe to actually blink, or twinkle, it would have to be constantly re-created. Movement, or change, comes about because each new creation is a tiny bit different than the previous one.

"Think again of the movie frames. Each frame is static, a still picture. The action in the movie we see is the result of each succeeding frame being different from the last. The main difference between the film analogy and 'reality' is that each twink of the universe has been created fresh, rather than being preordained by the producer."

"So, movement occurs only when the universe is off?"

"No. When the universe is off, physical objects do not exist, so they cannot move. In fact, nothing ever really 'moves.' At each twink, all things are created anew, only in a slightly differ-

ent position than they were in the preceding twink."

"Just how rapidly does the universe twinkle?" I asked while pouring extra syrup on my French toast.

"That's like asking the characters in a movie to tell you the speed of the projector. We denizens of the physical universe cannot detect the twinks. You would need to be on the outside of the system to do that. Nevertheless, based on Planck's constant, we can assume that the minimum number of twinks that occur in each second of our time is very large."

"How large?" I asked.

"So large that there is no English word for the number, although I believe it could be termed 'one quintillion septillion.' Physicists write it as 10^{43}, if you wrote it out it would be the number one followed by 43 zeros."

"Do you expect me to believe that the entire universe is terminated and regenerated one-quintillion-septillion times each second?"

"If you can accept that something was created once, is it so much harder to believe that it was, and is still, being created many times?

"Perhaps the British astronomer and physicist Sir Arthur Eddington was correct when he said: 'Not once in the dim past, but continuously by conscious mind is the miracle of the Creation wrought.' "[3]

"Ahh. … Excuse me for asking, but how do you know all this?"

"I don't. It's just speculative extrapolation. Remember that the whole 'universe blinks' thing was introduced as an analogy to help us understand certain possibilities." He took a sip of coffee.

"But whether our world actually blinks or twinkles or whatever, time is still a dimension because time is a way of locating things in space. Or, rather, time is a way to determine *what* space we are locating things within."

I must have looked a bit befuddled, because he said: "Let's go back to Kansas City. The Twelfth and Vine where I was standing had a blue Edsel parked on the corner. Did you see it?"

"No," I played along, "just a Studebaker and a 1950 Nash Rambler. You know, the kind that the seats folded back into a bed."

"There's an old fella up the hill still has one of those sitting out in his front yard. No tires on it, but the bed still works. I think he sleeps in it when it gets too hot indoors.

"Anyway, the space in which I was waiting to meet you had a blue Edsel on the corner; the space where you came to meet me had a Nash Rambler instead. We are clearly referring to two different Twelfth and Vines."

"But we'll never meet if we have to make dates according to what cars are on the corner. That blue Edsel might be there every afternoon, but it might not."

"Which is precisely why a device that produces nothing and transforms nothing is, nevertheless, one of mankind's most important inventions."

"Clocks?"

"Of course. All that clocks do is move in a constant and reliable fashion — unlike the traffic in Kansas City. This allows me to say: 'I'll be standing on the corner of Twelfth Street and Vine at 2 p.m.,' and you will know that I am specifying one particular intersection out of all the gazillion Twelfth & Vines that there have been in the past and will be in the future. I am not talking about the intersection at which the clock's hands point to 3 or 4 or 5. I am specifying that singular Twelfth Street and Vine at which the little hand of the clock is pointing to the 2. And it doesn't matter if the car on the corner is a blue Edsel or a yellow Hummer.

"Time is not something that changes; time is just a scale we use to locate events."

"In that case," I said, "it really makes no sense to speak of the flow of time or the passage of time, does it?"

"No more sense than it makes to talk about the flow of latitude or the passage of depth."

"Then, do you think time travel is possible?" I asked.

"Once an event has occurred, I very much doubt that it can be undone," he replied while

stacking our empty plates. "On the other hand, it would be imprudent of me to surmise any constraints on what could take place in the gaps between twinks."

"What about the future? Can spirits foretell the future?"

"I doubt that even God knows the future."

"Then you don't believe Him omniscient?" I asked.

"To know all doesn't mean knowing what is not," he replied. "Knowledge comes only from experience — it can be the experience of doing, or sensing, or just thinking. There can be no knowledge if the experience has not occurred."

Apparently sensing my dissatisfaction with this idea, he went on: "For anyone, even God, to know anything, there must be some experience of it. And for Him to have experienced something, it must have already happened. To know the future, therefore, would require going through the process twice. I hardly think that the Almighty would have nothing better to do than repeat experiences that He has already had. And, even if He did repeat Himself, what of the initial experience? There's a first time for everything — even for God."

"Well," I said, "could it not be that God knows the future because He has thought it through, and now we are living it?"

"Ah my friend," he sighed. "What are we, but the thoughts of God? And, what is our living, but God experiencing Himself in the form of the world?"

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"Time is naught but being."
—Patience Worth, 1930

[1] Thanks to Seth, who talks about blinking universes in *The Unknown Reality: Vol I*, pp. 87-88 and in *Seth Speaks*, pp. 133 & 266, and to J.H. Mathes who mentions multiplexed realities in *The Amnesia Factor*, pp. 125-126.

[2] Wilbert Harrison's *Kansas City* made the Top Ten in 1959. If you want to stand there too, you'll have to use some imagination, as the streets no longer intersect in Kansas City, MO.

[3] Eddington Arthur, *The Nature of the Physical World*, The University of Michigan Press, 1978, p. 241.