

Acatalepsy & Cosmology

*Reflections upon a Philosophy of Cosmology
Course*

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Acatalepsy¹

A kiss from you
Does not alter time or wobble its path
It is born from it
You do not fracture the feel of the earth
Against my dying bones
You *are* my bones
A touch from you
Does not distort the universe
It justifies it
Us is not existential
Nor a singularity
Against which all is void, no
You define my horizons
Eroticise them
Make me covetous of the ticking clock
When tongues merge
The light from a thousand suns
Is known
And unknown
To kiss you
Is not to forget
I am a sharp edge against nothing
Embodied
A mirror reflection
A shadow of chance
That leads to nowhere but here
A here upon which
Skies are mapped
Words are pushed through atoms
And my dying
Dies
A thousand times over
In multiverse sentences
Of you.

¹ (In philosophy) is incomprehensibility, or the impossibility of comprehending or conceiving a thing. The Pyrrhonians attempted to show, while academic sceptics of the Platonic Academy asserted an absolute acatalepsia; all human science or knowledge, according to them, went no further than to appearances and verisimilitude.

Scatterings of Cosmology

In the beginning...are questions.

Bordering on the erotic – how can two modes of questioning penetrate one another? How does science and philosophy cross-pollinate? Can the arrogance of variant methodological approaches ever melt upon the virgin bed of cosmology? But when union is sought humanity's curiosity becomes pregnant. The womb of us can barely contain itself, but the maternal body turns to the one analgesic available: mathematics. Through numbers man seeks to map the distances. With a billion zeroes we can reach the horizons that we see in our dreams, those star-lit horizons which forever haunt us. Like stone-age man with hand and spear, we strike the darkness with lines and dots, shapes and measures. Not caring if our calculations merely mirror reflect and speak of nothing beyond ourselves. Perhaps knowing can never be born – a destiny weighed down with infinite contractions and contractions of the infinite, or worse - a pursuit manifesting itself in stillborn artifice: a shadow of a crippled marionette calling itself God.

We ask: what if there is more than one of this? But is this universe so containable that we can think of more? Yet the very idea castrates itself - for we can never move beyond ourselves. Falsifiability will forever taunt us and so, within the patterns of our science, we have only this. Where poetic recourse falls dead – this is all we are, all we can ever be and there is more to come and more to dream than we have vision to conceive...

And there were those who first analysed their gaze, who first sought sight beyond the visible - the first men who instigated encounters with the deep. Aristotle, who fell in love with the number 55 and slept with the taste of aether on his lips - a bearded man of marble who imagined that all was still; Copernicus the loving uncle who, beloved of the sun, forever altered man's relationship to the cosmos; Kepler, who injected God into the myriad mysteries of the Copernican cosmos; Newton, merely a child playing with pebbles on the edge of a limitless sea, sad and vengeful, he felt the pull of the sea from its shore and science was never to be the same; Einstein the peace-loving father of modern physics who employed questioning, imagination and creativity to the service of science and who "when the planets sang...sang back."

What since? What follows these ancient men who first composed this cosmological cartography? Voyager 1 continues her gaze...an eye drifting

through the tomb of time...peering into the death debris of interstellar space. Here on terra firma physicists continue their archaeology - meddling with things beneath the surface, deep underground, in secret vaults in Switzerland. While on the other side of the world, in the Atacama Desert, astronomers stand on tip-toes staring upwards. Be it looking up or looking down they can only hurl numbers into the mysteries. Numbers that will tell us that the beautiful chaos has laws and can be mapped, measured and eventually mastered. A reassurance so desired when mythology and superstition reasoned themselves out of existence - that ferocious marionette that never left the shadows, that cruel thousand-headed monster whose strings were finally cut.

It is said, by the men with the numbers - it all came out of nothing - as though it can so easily be conceived. Primordialisms and particles, protons and plasma, Planck time and phantom energy – beautiful parameterising Ps that seek to quantify, to measure beginnings, to prophesise ends. Beautiful poetic Ps – themselves man-made symbols – symbols that may do nothing more than decorate man's existence with pretensions and fairy tale philosophies.

It is also said, by those men of numbers, that it is all flat...as though the universe is lying down...a sleeping beauty atop a bed of pillowed fermions and crocheted stars who awaits a kiss from the nothing that will set in motion her climactic sighs of infinity. But she does not passively receive all suitors in her eternally recurrent death slumber. Her faithful companions the white dwarves guard her bedside, their light-swords drawn, protecting her from the black holes and dark energy that seek to seduce her and ravish her while she dreams herself in and out of existence.

And she slumbers on...her golden tresses billowing out across the heavens blissfully unaware of man's questions – questions that are always waxing and waning like a billion pale moons encircling a billion planets encircling a billion suns in a billion galaxies we will never know. Lustful and covetous we can only fantasise, pleasure ourselves auto-erotically while gazing at her from an insurmountable distance...a distance that is said to be stretching, stretching until the very atoms of time burn themselves out. In her name we will continue erecting statutes from the pillars of maths and throw her jewelled sonnets composed of theories and equations. This will be our legacy...as the universe eternally turns in her sleep against that black time-webbed wasteland of memory we call space.