

In Which Time Stands Still

By

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The Author “Bill Hibberd’s note

I wrote the short story “In which time stands still” because, having written the article “3D Time Environment” I felt that I had touched on a complex subject but that I had done little to explore, and even less to explain, the logic or rationale behind the idea.

What I am trying to convey is an argument that embraces all the mysteries of today’s science whilst, at the same time, supporting the great thinkers that have helped us to understand our space, our planet, our religions and our science through our history.

I have come to the conclusion that our universe probably did start with a ‘big bang’ although I am not convinced that a big bang is necessarily a big explosion with fire and brimstone.

I have also come to think that having erupted into its post ‘big bang’ state, the universe is compelled to return to its pre ‘big bang’ state.

For us ‘time’ is a linear experience. Why?

Why is it an unarguable constant that, for us, time can only be experienced, not explored? Why does it only allow one-way travel? Why do we always refer to the passage of time as if it were time that moves rather than us that is moving through time?

I have come to think that time is a static environment, of itself inert and static. I believe that our experience of time is a product of our ‘relative’ movement through the space from which our universe erupted and, with that in mind, I believe that time exerts a drag on our universe, constantly clawing at the content of the universe at both a macro and a micro level as it reduces our relative motion back to a ‘zero’ state thereby returning it to the pre ‘big bang’ state.

I believe that from within the universe this effect appears as gravity on a macro scale and as the ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ forces on a micro scale.

I have, therefore, concluded that Gravity is the physical manifestation of the effect of time on our universe.

Having drawn the connection between a pre ‘big bang’ state within which time is static and by definition inert, and the physical manifestation of the effect of time dragging on our universe as gravity, I have been able to embrace the physics of ‘black holes’ where great mass is acknowledged as having great gravitational ‘pull’.

It is my belief that when enough matter is concentrated so that the drag of time is sufficient to ‘slow it to a stop’ within the pre ‘big bang’ state then that matter leaves our universe.

Interestingly, once I had reached these conclusions I found that the model created had the disquieting effect of offering rational solutions to some of our most pressing questions.

The more I thought, the more the model resolved itself.

Lacking the mathematical ability to prove or disprove my logic, I was compelled to write it down so that others may be tempted to explore my thoughts.

Please read this with an open mind and enjoy the ideas at whatever level leaves you feeling safe and intact.

If you have the inclination and the ability to explore, prove or disprove what is proposed here, please do so with all that you have at your disposal?

I personally would be delighted to see the result of explorations of this idea.

Bill Hibberd 2006

“Oh for heaven’s sake David what are you on?” Helen’s remonstrance was absolutely typical of her reaction to David’s arguments.

David was forever making bold and outlandish statements. Most of the things he came out with could not be argued proved or disproved and today’s statement was no exception.

David was the sort of person who would breeze through life working hard but without obvious effort. Blessed with a canny insight and an uncanny ability to find the easiest way to do a task, David always reached his objectives but to the casual observer it was never clear as to the method he had used.

Helen was an altogether different person.

For Helen, detail was everything. Helen required evidence, proof, detail and co-ordination. Helen’s perceptions of reality were based on a lifetime’s exposure to standards, ideals, and empirical evidence.

Helen was the image of colour co-ordinated sensible dress sense where David, with slightly out of shape jacket, bulging pockets, trousers that were more suited to a time when his waist was three inches bigger and curly collared shirt seemed to have dressed almost as an afterthought. For David, clothes were just something to keep a person warm and to carry things in. For Helen, clothes ‘maketh’ the man or in her case, woman.

That these two people should be such good friends was one of the biggest mysteries of the institution where they both earned their living.

“How can you possibly say that there has to be at least one more dimension than we know about? That is so typical of the way you think. Go on then prove it!”

“I don’t have to prove it. It’s obvious, just think about it Helen. People claim to have seen ghosts, spacecraft, aliens, we experience unexplainable phenomena things happen that just cannot be explained and yet they can all be explained by the fact that there just has to be another dimension.”

“Rubbish! You can’t just say that all these things can be explained just by introducing another dimension. If there were we’d already know of it. We’d have reports and sightings. We’d already be exploring it and learning of its properties. Good grief, David, there’d be papers on it!”

David helped himself to two portions of sticky toffee pudding, which he put on his tray next to his soup and bread roll. Balancing the tray on his hip and holding it with one hand he used his other hand to rummage in his jacket looking for change. The tray shook precariously but in typical David style, remained securely lodged in place. Not a drop was spilled.

Helen’s tray contained a bottle of water, a clear plastic cup, a chilled salad a small pre packed biscuit and her purse.

Helen moved around the awkwardly shuffling David reaching the till first.

“I’ll show you what I mean over lunch.” “Okay David, thank-you (to the cashier), you show me over lunch.” And with that Helen moved to a table near to the exit.

When David caught up with Helen he had made some additions to his tray. He had three straws, two menus and a number of paper towels.

Helen passed him a spoon for his soup.

After a few moments and most of the soup, David continued where he left off. “Okay Helen. You say that if there were another dimension we’d already know about it. True?”

“Of course we would. How could we not know about it?”

“If I can prove to you that it is almost impossible to observe another dimension but at the same time demonstrate that an almost undetectable dimension exists, will you believe me when I say that there has to be another dimension? Well? Will you?”

Helen knows that whatever her answer, they are about to embark on one of their famous debates. Debates that force her to re-evaluate her ideas and test her understandings and her perceptions to the limit. Debates that have, over the years, helped to make her the person she is today.

She mumbles into her salad knowing that David will swing into action regardless of her reply. It’s why she loves him so much.

As a teenager, Helen was very much a loner, never finding it easy to make friends or mix with classmates. Helen was the quiet mouse in the corner of the class. If she knew the answer she would hope that somebody else would offer an answer before the teacher started to call out names to prompt a response.

Helen was one of the 'packed lunch' girls and her lunch was essentially the same as the one she was eating with David today.

She would find a table alone and systematically work her way through her healthy choice menu while reading one of the classics. Helen didn't bother with magazines finding them frivolous and she didn't do her homework at lunch times because if it was meant to be done at lunchtimes it would be called lunchtime work and also because to do homework in school would draw unwelcome attention.

It was during one of these lunch times that she first noticed David. He was with another boy and they were having a heated argument about sport. Not the usual boys type of argument about who made what play or who scored which goal in a specific game in an obscure year. No, they were arguing about the speed at which the ball passed the batsman-comparing cricket with baseball.

Helen had never been interested in sport before but this question touched a nerve somewhere. Her interest piqued, Helen listened as the argument ranged back and forth between the two boys until a bell sounded the call, 'return to classes'.

It was the first lunchtime ever, in which Helen didn't read her book.

Moving onto the first of his desserts, David started to move his fork around, waving it in the air in front of them both. Sometimes the fork was over the plate of food. Often it wasn't. It was as if he was rehearsing what he was going to say. Helen knew him well enough to know that David was, in-fact, so keen to embark on his subject that his hand gestures were incapable of waiting for his mouth to empty and today's sticky toffee pudding was especially tasty and, clearly, exceptionally sticky.

Helen knew she was smiling and she did her best to make hers an expression of anticipation. To laugh now would possibly result in them both laughing out loud and sitting opposite David when he laughed out loud was potentially hazardous. To do so while he still had sticky toffee pudding un-swallowed was much too great a risk to even contemplate.

"Look around." The instruction came before David had even finished his mouthful. "Look around." he said again – swallowing. His fork exemplified what he was instructing Helen to do. Fortunately, today's sticky toffee pudding was extra sticky and what was stuck to his fork remained firmly in place.

Helen obliged. "There!" David exploded "See? You looked around but you failed to look up or down. Look around again." Thinking that perhaps the ceiling had been painted or the floor tiles changed, Helen did indeed look around. She looked into the corners of the dining area. She looked up at the roof tiles and down at the floor tiles she studied the walls and tables. She even managed to look, fleetingly, at some of the other diners. Not an easy task given that, by now, most of the other diners were looking at her.

She noted nothing worth the attention, and said so. "The point is," David said, "that you can look all around. You can look up, down, left, right, behind and in front. You can look in any of the directions you choose." Completely un-impressed with David's excitement, thus far, Helen merely replied with a hesitant "yes?" which sounded much more like "so what!" than she intended.

"Okay, now I'm going to hold this straw in front of your eye and you have to look through it. What can you see?" Helen could see hair sticking out of David's right ear but she was pretty sure that was not the answer he was looking for. "Just the side of your head," she said. "What else?" Helen started to worry that perhaps he DID mean for her to examine the hair sticking out of his ear. "Nothing." she said. "Exactly, all you can see is straight ahead of you and if you were at this end of the straw you would only be able to look back along the same length, forward and backward. No right, no left, no up, no down. Even if I point the straw somewhere else, be it the floor or the ceiling even one of the walls, the same rule would apply. You would only be able to see along the straw. If you were inside the straw you would only be able to see along the straw and nothing through the sides of the straw."

Helen thought David seemed inordinately pleased with himself given that he had done nothing extraordinary, yet. This looked as though it was going to be one of David's more progressive subjects after all there were two more straws, two menus and a pile of paper towels on his tray yet.

David reached for his second dessert.

The second dessert had cooled significantly and the stickiness had increased considerably. "Nnnng." he said. Frustrated at his inability to articulate even the word 'now', David's fork went into overdrive. Helen slid her chair back a little from the table

and gave a warning look to a passing diner who changed direction and passed them by a good table length away instead of squeezing through the gap adjacent to theirs.

David attempted an early swallow and Helen was sure she could see the dessert's entire journey from David's mouth to his stomach. "Now," he said. "Without moving you head, or eyes, up or down look around the room again and tell me what you can't see."

Despite the improbable nature of the question, Helen complied. Remembering her earlier acquaintance with the room, Helen was able to report that she could see nothing of the floor or ceiling inside a relatively short distance. David was already reaching for the two menus, which he arranged, again in front of Helen's face. One was held flat just below her eye line the other just above and parallel to the first. Helen dutifully reported that both the floor and the ceiling had now been removed from her sight.

"So," David fed back, "with the two menus obstructing your vision above and below you can only see along the flat surface. Your vision is in a sort of sandwich, which means you can look sideways, and along the plane of the menus but not at an angle through the menus. If I tilt the menus so that they remain parallel but are pointed so that your visual plane is up, or down, or left or right of where we started, you see different things but the same rule still applies; you can only see along the plane of the menus or from side to side within the plane of the menus. Yes?"

As Helen answered, David was already moving on from the menus and reaching for his can of coke. Wondering what was happening next Helen could only marvel as David summarised the fact that through the straw you could only see forward and back; between the menus only along, or side to side and yet, when David had told Helen to look around the room she had the option to see in any direction she chose. As David concluded his summary, the coke can returned to the table and in one smooth flourish David had popped the ring pull. Helen almost escaped the exploding liquid as the thoroughly shaken can expressed its contents all over the table, the floor, David and Helen. "I knew I'd need these," said David reaching for the paper towels.

It was somebody's phone making an insistent repetitive racket that had been substituted for a ring tone that caused them both to look at their watches.

David swept his brown saturated paper towels into a soggy ball, which landed, on his tray. Standing he brushed crumbs from his bread roll from his lap and departed.

Helen resealed her now empty salad container with plastic fork inside. Placed what was left of her bottled water in her bag placed the contents of her tray onto David's tray. Stacked the trays and slid both the trays into the self-service used tray slot near the exit.

Smiling after him, Helen followed in the direction David had taken knowing that today's subject was going to be one of David's 'multi lunchtime' specials.

That evening, while Helen went to the gym, David went home via the local all night supermarket picking up a sandwich and a couple of beers en route. His evenings were a haphazard collection of launderette, moving things around in his home which he referred to as 'tidying', day dreaming, reading and internet surfing while, simultaneously, watching TV and listening to his radio or playing CD's.

Always busy, never bored, David could sleep where he landed or work on into any number of nights appearing the next day exactly as normal – slightly crumpled – as though dressing were an afterthought and, mentally, sharp as a knife.

He enjoyed his lifestyle and given the apparent jumble of his home was actually extremely well organised.

Tonight though, David was rather more pre-occupied than normal. His lunchtime exploration of dimensions with Helen, though superficial, had started to grow in his mind so that he was now considering aspects of the subject well beyond what he had started with Helen.

David normally entered into debate because he could. He would normally get a subject kicked off and then just prod and goad people into exploring an idea with no more effort on his part than by strategically placing counter points as they offered the building blocks for the argument. Today, though, something was different. Today he felt as though something bigger was to be expected.

As the germ of his idea began to maturate in David's mind, he started to measure the implications of what he was thinking against some of the most puzzling of science's questions.

Thinking that it would be great fun to tease today's dimensions subject into a full-blown saga, David reached for a pencil and hunted for a sheet of paper.

He began a list of discussion topics that he fully intended to wrap into the subject.

With a bit of luck others would join in.

This is the list as produced by David.

- Is time travel achievable?
- What is time?
- What is dark matter?
- Where is all the matter that is mathematically supposed to exist given the current thinking on the creation of the universe?
- What is gravity?
- Can the 'weak' and 'strong' forces be properly identified and even harnessed?
- What really happens within a black hole?

- Is the current theory on black holes and their event horizons accurate?
- What of light speed? Is it really as fast as it is possible to travel?
- If everything that we know of the universe can really be put down to ‘the big bang’, what went bang?
- What if the story of the universe being created in seven days is a metaphor that can be placed into a greater context?
- If there is a god, where is God hiding when we send space ships into what was once considered to be heaven, God’s domain?
- Are there aliens? And, Do those aliens visit planets – Earth included?

David looked at his list and sat back to contemplate what he had produced. Shaking his head he almost threw the paper away, reflecting that he was getting more and more like Helen with every passing day. But he couldn’t bring himself to throw this away.

His idea was beginning to embrace all of the items on his list and the notion that one theme could be adapted to embrace all the areas he had written down was very compelling, very compelling indeed.

When Helen arrived at the restaurant, the next day, David was already sitting at a table.

He had the strangest looking tray of food Helen had seen him assemble yet.

There was a green jelly, into which David had stuck three straws. There was a bowl of soup, a bread roll, a can of coke and several napkins – which reminded Helen of yesterday. Helen made a note to get herself at least a couple of napkins. There was a large bowl of mashed potato and three empty plates. Unusually, for David, there was also a large ripe looking orange.

Helen was surprised that there was only one dessert on the tray but decided that it was more a product of space (no room on the tray) than a new prudence on David's part.

Helen selected a chicken salad, a clear plastic cup, a bottle of water, an apple, enough cutlery for herself and David and two napkins before paying and joining David at his table.

She sat, arranged her tray and reached for her bottle.

Even before Helen had twisted the top on her water bottle David was pointing at the straw nearest to her urging her to look down it and asking her "what can you see down the straw Helen?"

"Hello Helen, how are you today?" said Helen a little edgily.

"Hi. Look, what can you see down the straw?"

Helen poured herself half a glass of water before taking a sip. Slowly she leaned forward as David became increasingly excited. He couldn't have displayed more anticipatory excitement if he'd been ten years old and had rigged the jelly to explode showering Helen with green gunge.

Helen looked, considered and said "green jelly." "Are you sure?" "Yes, David all I can see is green jelly."

"How do you know its green jelly, though?" "David, the straw is stuck into a pile of green jelly that is on the plate. Naturally I can see green jelly." "No, what I mean is that YOU only know its jelly because you can see the straw stuck in the jelly. But if you were inside that straw and just happened to find that your straw universe had changed at one end – turned green – you wouldn't know, from inside the straw, that it was a green jelly. Remember, all you can tell from within the straw universe is what is immediately in front or immediately behind. You have no concept of up, down, left or right so you can't see a jelly."

Helen considered yesterday's discussion and, remembering the can of coke, checked that she had some paper towels. "Okay", she said, "so what you're saying is that I reached the conclusion that I was seeing jelly only because I was looking from outside of the straw, yes?" "Exactly." enthused David.

David reached over and manipulated the other two straws. One he carefully lined up so that it passed the first straw at a point close to the first straws jelly soaked open end. The other he placed near to but not touching the first straw.

“Ok”, he said, “look down the first straw again.” “Which one?” “The one you looked down just now. What can you see?”

Helen looked and saw the other straw. “I can see the other str...” “Gotcha again,” said David “don’t tell me what you think you can see. Tell me exactly what your eye sees.” “We-ell, all I can see then, is that there is something white in the jelly.” “Exactly. So do you agree that from within a one-dimensional universe – the straw universe – it is not possible to see what the bigger picture is? It is only possible to interpret what is ‘visible’ from within your very limited universe.”

Helen nodded.

“And what about the third straw?” said David. “What third straw?” said Helen. David smiled and reached for the soup spoon on Helen’s tray.

For several moments David excavated soup from his bowl. Finally he mopped up the last remnants of liquid with his bread roll.

“If I’m not mistaken then, the same logic can be applied to the two dimensions between the menus view you showed to me yesterday.” “Too right it can,” said David. “Imagine that a straw had speared through the two menus. On its way through, all that would have been discernable from between the menus would have been that something had appeared – stayed a while and left. The idea that it was something long passing through would be untenable because that would depend on being able to detect what was happening above the top menu and below the bottom one.”

“But,” said Helen “if the straw was passing through, its entire length visible between the menus, then it would be possible to explore it properly, true?” “True.”

“I get it now,” said Helen. “And all of this interaction between the straw universes and the menu universes would be visible – IS visible – from the bigger three dimensional environment.” “Exactly like you and me watching the whole thing at this table,” finished David.

David dived into his dessert next using his soup spoon. Not as sticky as yesterday, he showed considerable restraint, waiting until the whole course was finished before starting again, although it must be said that the soup spoon danced to a non-existent tune even as he was chewing.

“If you think about it,” he mused, “from within each of the universes it would be possible to think that you had a good grasp of everything that is going on. It is probably the same if you scale everything down to a single ball shaped universe.” Reaching for the orange David held it between them, turning it with his hands alternately cradling it in his fingers and allowing it to rest within the palms of his hands. He rolled it from hand to hand and as he did so asked Helen “If this were a complete universe contained within this orange, what do you think they would think was going on out here?”

“Based on what you’ve demonstrated so far they would have no perception of out here and so would not know that anything was happening to the orange at all.” Agreed Helen as they both nodded together. “And yet,” said David, inside the orange they have an up, a down, a forward, a backward, a left and a right.”

David smacked the orange down into the big bowl of mashed potatoes, most of which stayed in the dish, and took a straw from the jelly. “In fact,” he said “if this straw were to

be pushed into this orange there would be no way of knowing how why or from where the straw had appeared. If it were pushed in and then pulled out again it could no more be explained than say," after a long pause he continued, "a ghost."

It was at this moment that a chair was noisily shoved backwards, its rear two legs kicking at the tiled floor of the restaurant and creating a harsh staccato that made people cringe and turn. "Why are you playing with your food? Get it down your neck you great buffoon!"

Ordinarily David would not have noticed even this direct a challenge when on full stream but with a surge he twisted and rose in his seat. In one smooth – somewhat surprising movement - he went from hunched forward in concentrated discussion to grizzly bear. Brian, the source of the verbal attack, was able to avoid being toppled but suffered a jab into the gut and a poke in the ribs as his plastic bottle bounced from his tray and rolled across a nearby table.

Helen hugged the contents of her tray protectively as David let loose a roar of delight and moved in for the hug. "Where the hell did you spring from?"

Brian had been absent for almost three months.

At the start of summer he had picked up a rucksack ad announced that he was “off for a bit.”

The ‘bit’ was something of an understatement. It turns out that Brian had taken a cheap flight to Barcelona where he had looked into the Picasso museum, the maritime museum, The Rambles, several eateries and a good few nightclubs before heading east.

Heading east had taken him across the south of France and into northern Italy. From Italy he had taken a boat to Rhodes and then onto Cyprus where he decided that he would indulge in a trip to Egypt and the pyramids of Geyser.

Once again a museum had hooked him and for three days, Brian had virtually lived with the artefacts gathered from the pharaoh’s tombs gathered in the vast rooms of the British museum in Cairo.

Returning to Cyprus, he had played the waiting game until a holiday flight was able to squeeze him into a cancelled seat and bring him back to Britain.

The very notion that anybody could travel so far without having a schedule, a planned itinerary or a list of things to do filled Helen with a confusing mixture of admiration and anxiety. The fact that Brian could do it without even sending word home drove her to distraction. But then, why would he let her know. Only Helen knew how she felt about Brian and she wasn’t telling.

On previous occasions when Brian had ‘gone walk-about’ Helen only learned anything of his exploits if Brian sent email to David and even then only if David thought to mention the fact that Brian had sent an email.

Helen was gasping to know more of Brian’s adventures. She agonised for Brian to invite her to sit with him while he elaborated on the detail of the various places he had visited. She was desperate to live some of the spontaneity of his adventures even though the thought of travel, especially the haphazard travel as undertaken by Brian, filled her with a dread that was both illogical and irrational. And she was surprised to find that she both wanted to know and didn’t want to know whether he had always been travelling alone.

Instead, David brought him up to speed with his explanations and arguments surrounding his theories on dimensional relationships. In particular the suggestion that from any dimension it was almost impossible to relate to the next dimension ‘up’ the list. Whilst from any dimension all dimensions ‘down’ the list were totally available.

Brian grasped the logic immediately and joined with David to help Helen to understand – quite unnecessarily – the finer points.

Helen wondered whether she would ever hear of Brian’s adventures.

Helen knew she shouldn't ask but she did anyway. "Just why are we having this debate, David?"

"Don't you remember yesterday," he said, "when I said that I would prove to you that there was at least one more dimension than the three we generally accept?" I've just demonstrated that there is obviously a dimension from which things can appear and then remove themselves to. And I've just proved that in a closed dimension – like the orange – there can be an apparent freedom to move in any direction with no awareness at all of anything outside of the orange."

"Yes," said Helen, "but if you're going to tell me that the orange is representative of our universe then your argument is flawed completely because our space is infinite and the orange most definitely is not infinite."

Helen sat back confident that not only had she made a good point but also on this, most rare of occasions, she had managed to blow a hole right through David's theory.

Her self-satisfaction lasted almost 10 seconds.

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