Omega World

By JDM

The lector clears her throat, "let us begin with a prayer". Savoring the moment, she scans the crowd of postulants with her eyes. "In the name of the Researcher, his Avatar, and his Holy Code, realities in perpetual loop. Amen".

Tapping the podium with a jazzy finger she looks down on the crowd, "who will the Skeptic be in tonight's lesson?". Coughs and befuddlement echo in the cavernous space.

"I guess I can", a cracking voice of an adolescent rises to face the lector. She beckons him forward with a wink and a wave. "Begin", she commands the child.

"How do we know our world and everything in it is a simulation?" he asks shakily.

The lector responds with a kinked smile. "When our great quantum computer was turned on, a perfect simulation was made of our world".

"How can we know it was perfect?" he asks on script.

"The model (a sub-world) ran from the big bang forward to the present and matched everything in existence. It matched everything from a dead eye vagrant on a street corner to the muon collecting cold fusion reactors in orbit at the time."

"But how can we be *sure* the simulation is perfect"?

The kink turns broad and wide across her face, "we can be sure because our Avatar ran the simulation forward still". The thumping jazz in her finger pauses for emphasis. "And our great quantum computer has predicted every major and minor disaster of our age".

Continuing, "like a profit from an old-timey religion, our Avatar is always right. More than a profit because we know the basis of his abilities".

The boy speaks, "this doesn't make any sense", gaining confidence from the crowd. "If our world is a sub-simulation and we run our own sub-simulation. Does that mean every sub-simulation has its own? Just how many sub-layers are in this onion?"

She responds with a confident retort, "Infinite"!

"Well near infinite", a little side-eyed, she confesses.

"Recall a childhood toy that utilizes the Delayed Choice Quantum Eraser effect". Her focus narrows

towards the boy, "explain how a DCQE toy works".

Typically, a Skeptic only ask questions (this lector is annoyed). The boy's voice cracks again, "the erasure of the delayed beam will retroactively determine if the other beam is a particle or a wave".

"Y-e-e-e-s", she shouts. Relieving the boy and jarring the crowd, "the word I'd emphasize is retroactive"!

Continuing, "And what happened when the device was looped? What happened when you inputted the retroactively effected beam back into the device? What happened when you first created a loop in time?" she asks.

The boy looks down, "I'm not sure, I did something wrong and I woke up without any eyebrows". The crowd bursts with laughter. We are off script now.

The Fourth Article of faith

"Quiet", she wrinkles her nose and squints meaningfully, "I'll tell you what happened, you held eternity in your palm".

She turns her wild eyes towards the crowd, "Our great quantum machine has nested DCQE circuits within it. Nest upon nest. Realities built within other sub realities".

The child interrupts flashing a confident grin, "come on, how is this even possible?".

"We experience three dimensions in their entirety". She says in a strangely calm manner, "but only time in one direction. This means you are not experiencing higher dimensions entirely".

"When a line is bent upon itself it becomes a circle", she circles her finger with whimsy. "When a plane is curved upon itself it becomes a sphere", turning that whimsy into a fist. "And since quantum computers, like your DCQE toy, work in higher dimensions", her fists rising.

"What does that mean"?

Taking its cue, the crowd responds in unison, "Simulation in perpetual loop".

"The Omega worlds' quantum computer folds all our sub-worlds in on themselves".

The Fifth Article of Faith

"How can we know anything that happens in a master reality quantum machine?" the kid asks a little cockily. "We are made in the Researchers' image, just like our sub realities are made in ours". She responds a little cocky herself.

"We tinker with our sub-worlds as the great Researcher tinkers with us". Her eyes are now full of jazz. "We can intervene (to alpha test) in a world far within the nest and watch change ripple up from sub realities to our own. Only if a fix is worthy of the Researcher does it make it to the top".

She cuts the boy off. "If a fix is unworthy of our Researcher we are scrapped". Her jazz turns to a snap, "and just like that, an infinite number of worlds are redone. An infinite number of people are redone". Her arms are now in full apogee, "what does this teach us?".

"Live life worthy of your creator", the crowd chants.

Addressing the boy, "there is an endless number of you with and without eyebrows". She emphasizes, "and if we are unworthy of the Researcher this version of our code will vanish".

The Sixth Article of Faith

"Only more questions", the boy winks towards the crowd. "Why would anyone, especially the great Researcher, do this to a single person? Let alone to an endless number of worlds?"

Calmingly she spreads her hand across the podium, "life", her jazz now tame. "What did the Avatar find when he searched the simulation for alien life?"

The boy shakes his head and looks away. "Nothing", she hisses. "Just ash, bone and dust".

"No civilization has ever gotten past the Great Filter!" Crossing her arms for the first time. "What killed them off?" she asks the boy.

"The knowledge of quantum mechanics; of time travel", the boy states flatly. Their eyes meet for the first time. "Y-e-e-e-s", she shouts again. "That little toy you held in your hand, that DCQE machine which works spacetime is fire more deadly than any muon cold fusion bomb".

She continues, "for a species to spread beyond its home planet it must master spacetime. Every species that has tried to master it has burned". Her arms ascend slowly.

"What happens when a time-paradox is created?" she asks.

"Reality bends and twists" the boy confesses.

"What happened to your eyebrows after you woke up"?

"I remember them burning off, but my parents told me I never had them". Tears and snot running down his face, "they told me I could never grow eyebrows because my IVF was botched. But I remember having them".

"A little toy and so much change", she whispers, "but we are learning".

Insisting, "What about my eyebrows?".

"Come close, I want to tell you something", the boy approaches the podium and she bends down so only he can hear her. "When spacetime is disrupted we know it takes the path of least resistance to heal itself". Astonished he looks into her eyes, "the path of least resistance is usually a persons' mind".

The boy trembles knowing what comes next.

"The defect is not in the boys' eyebrows; it's in his mind", she tells her audience. "Only an addled mind could ruin a simple toy", spreading her jazz through a splotchy head of hair. "Only an addled mind could be confused over eyebrows. Only an addled mind would volunteer to be the Skeptic for tonight's lesson in religion".

The boy vanishes.

"He has a subtle genetic defect, we will heal him", she booms. He will be back, but the people know he will be different. He will have eyebrows and talk back less.

Her arms begin to levitate. "What have we learned about spacetime?"

Looking towards each other the crowd affirms, "That which gives life can take it away".

The Seventh Article of Faith

"Who"? She asks the crowd, "Will continue in the role of the skeptic tonight?". Pointing towards a man with a mustache and full eyebrows, "how about y-o-u-u-u".

He shakes his head no and looks down. "Yes y-o-u-o-u", she sings unequivocally.

"Me?" the man asks. Firmly she replies, "yes, you sir".

"What about the boy?" With his mustache trembling, "what about my son?".

"Hmm, how close were you to that explosion?" she asks teasingly. "What do you remember about the eyebrows?" picking at her own splotchy brow.

"If your Avatar knows everything, why didn't he stop the explosion?" The mustache is animated, "why did my boy suffer?".

"Why did you join the Church?" she asks still teasing. "Was it to save the boy?"

Turning towards the crowd. "What's the point of living if we have to live like this?" he speaks past her. She retorts, "to learn".

"What did you learn that you couldn't learn from a simulation?" His smile is fake, but her shark teeth are real. "We learned tragedy can be minimized but not eliminated", her hands catch an updraft and flutter higher.

"Recall the novella on religion, 'The Time Machine' by H. G. Walls', what was the plot"? Shock seeps through the father's frozen smile.

He stammers, "Dr. Strangelove builds a Time machine to save his fiancé Emma from being murdered. He tries a couple of ways to save her, but she kept dying".

She smirks, "and how does he eventually succeed"? Wringing his hands, he confesses, "he kidnaps her himself and leaves a decoy body".

"In other words, he is the perpetrator", the lector preaches. The father cries out, "Emma ends up hating Dr. Strangelove, but survives".

"Saving Emma was the motivating force to build the time machine, that event can never be altered". She explains while snot and tears run down the father's face.

"Dr. Strangelove had an iron will so reality bent around it, but in the end, he was twisted by the time-paradox too". She continues, "it warped his fixation of wanting to save a loved one", her hands in full flight.

"What does this teach us?" The crowd coldly recites, "Acceptance".

She asks him again, "why did you join the Church?", and then chuckles. "You should ask yourself why we let you in; why we let you steel time travel tech?"

She teases, "Why did we let you go back in time and try and save the boy"? He responds in agony, regret and sarcasm, "because *we* learned so much".

The Eighth Article of Faith

"We must survive", she responds to the father's fading screams. "We've evolved to spread. To spread we must endure". Her whole body animates.

"Those who lack the will to live do not endure", we are on script and in reruns.

"I am made not to question", the crowd chants in a tone of polite terror.

Third Article of Faith

"How can one person have done all of this", the lectors' left-hand sways. "His holy code, the essence of his mind, infuses and runs the simulation". Her right-hand sways, "The great AI running our simulation is a download of the Researcher's mind".

The monologue calls for silence. "His Code is in everything and everywhere".

The Second Article of Faith

"Our Avatar was the first discoverer of time travel. By his actions, we endure" she preaches. "By his will reality bends and twists". In full triumph, "he is the only true and enduring copy from Omega world".

The First Article of Faith

"The Researcher, his Avatar and his Holy code are three distinct persons but truly one".   The congregation applauds as the lector vanishes. Tonight's lesson in religion is over.

Omega World

The researcher looks down at the output of the machine. "What did you fix this time", he coughs at an assistant. "We tried to stop the genetic wars of 2044", It goes unstated that the war will be the first major rend in spacetime.

The researcher barks a "how?" at his assistant. "We suppress Genetic Engineering", the assistant coughs back.

"Will it work?", the researcher growls.

"Well without genetic engineering they", the researcher frowns, "I mean we, never have a war, but diseases are never fully cured".

"Any interesting compensatory technology?", the researcher asks. He is unimpressed with this use of his time.

"If a person is sick, the code of a healthy/similar version is uploaded from a sub-world".

"And?", he asks impatiently.

"The code is then downloaded into a near manufactured substitute. I am reviewing the case of an impaired kid with no eyebrows and his father to understand the process".

"And?"

"I will need to replicate the process to understand it fully", the assistant responds defensively. "I'll need to upload them here".

"Do it", the researcher scratches his nose, "what about the Filter?". The assistant waffles his head a little, "Spacetime is mostly stable, we remain more or less human".

"And?", the Researcher asks more curious than annoyed this time.

"We live in some sort of cult that worships . . . you?", the researchers' frown turns to a sneer. "That would be funnier if it were the first time", he says tapping his chin.

"Get rid of it". The researcher does not even pause, "but the technology is interesting", he states with satisfaction. "What if", he ponders, "we uploaded the best version of every person from every sub-world. They might manage to live without shredding spacetime?".

The assistant looks befuddled, "that's a tremendous number of people".

The researcher cuts him off, "If you haven't forgotten there's a lot of empty planets out there for a reason". His voice hissing, "and if we don't do our jobs Earth will be empty too", the researcher spits the last words.

"When?", the assistant spits back. The trickiest part of the job being when.

"Store the code in the machine. Have it resuscitate everyone a thousand years after the Great Filter". The researcher crosses his arms. "The machine always somehow manages to survive", he smirks. "Call the program Xanadu 1".

"Could it really work", the researcher cuts the assistant again, "we don't have to guess, run it as a simulation".