

The Curb

Many years ago, when I was 12 years old, I thought of something. While that in and of itself is certainly not unusual, after all young kids think of all kinds of things all the time, this was a particularly interesting thought, one that led me on a kind of life-long journey.

I should also preface this by saying that I'm aware that the fact that I thought of something independently does not mean I invented it or was the *first* to think of it. On the contrary I am absolutely certain that many have had this thought before albeit not at the age of 12. I'm also not convinced that all that many of those people have carried this thought to such an extensive conclusion. I tend to call this thought a 'theory' even though technically it is not. If one discusses it in mathematical terms perhaps it would be better described as a postulate, in other words something accepted as 'given', that cannot be empirically proven. The infinite smallness of a point, the infinite thinness of a line or plane - these are all postulated; stated as fact but inherently unprovable. So it is with my little thought. I call it the Theory Of Infinite Happenstance:

In its simplest form the theory states: **Everything that can happen, does happen.** All possible eventualities actually occur each and every moment. For instance, each time you step off the curb your foot lands safely on the road *and* you are hit by a truck *and* you are splattered by a taxicab hitting a puddle. Additionally at that same moment the most outlandish and or mundane happenstances actually occur to everything else, living or inert, *everywhere* else. Each occurrence or happenstance splinters off into a separate reality or parallel universe. If you perceive time as a granular series of events, each of which are infinitely small in duration, you realize that this theory implies infinity in every direction and dimension simultaneously.

I maintain that the human mind finds it very difficult to wrap itself around a couple of core concepts like infinity. (Another might be nothingness – but that's a WHOLE other discussion!) Even a casual observation of the concept of infinite happenstance reveals immediately that the potential amount of parallel realities that are spawned by each happenstance, exponentially multiplied by every other being and item in the universe's happenstance, creates a staggering amount of parallel realities, after all, every happenstance generates an infinite series of reactions. Paradoxically I would submit that this presents something of a *proof* of the theory. In other words: in order for the concept of infinity to exist, the potential amount of generated occurrences and parallel realities not only *can* be infinite, it *must* be truly infinite. This means that stepping off our metaphorical curb, there is no limit to the amount of parallel happenstances that are generated. Therefore the fundamental difficulty our minds have in grasping or accepting this concept are moot. Put another way, there is no sense in having a concept of infinity unless that infinity is truly infinite in every sense and direction. Our minds may naturally rebel against such a notion as ridiculous, after all we are so conditioned by existence and culture to regard ourselves as individually important and significant, perceiving only the reality we are experiencing. This of course is a survival mechanism that is evolutionarily hardwired into our most basic being. The idea of contemplating something as large as true infinity both of space and time run counterintuitive to this. Just because a concept is difficult to accept does not make it any less correct or true.

So the next time you step off a curb, take comfort in the fact that even though you just stepped into an ankle-deep mud puddle, you also just ran headlong into the love of your life.

-McNeil Johnston