

PHILOSOPHICAL HUMOR

Featuring Physicists

VOL. I

by

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Abstract

What follows is a whole new package of philosophical humor. But the question is: Is it possible to extract an abstract out of humor? I don't think so. So let's go to the little smiles directly.

But, at least there could be some key words.

Key Words: Philosophers, Physicists, Science journalists.

—1—

Final Destination

A theoretical physicist was going somewhere broodingly. And a positivist philosopher was following him behind. When they were approaching somewhere, the positivist asked:

"Where you heading to, genius?"

"I'm going to explore the metaphysical land," answered the physicist.

"Oh, it's a dry land, you won't find anything there. There is no even such a land, it's all a fairy tale. We talked about this long time ago. Remember?"

"Yes," said the physicist, "thank you for your advice; you have always been supportive. But I will have to go there anyway. It's kind of my destination."

"What a traitor!" the positivist said to himself. But he had to follow his friend, anyway.

—2—

A call for collaboration frustrated

A certain contemporary metaphysician meets a physicist, and asks:

"Hey, so do you still believe the world begun at the Big Bang?"

“Yes, I do, until I can find a better option.”

“May I ask what happened before that?”

“No, I don’t think you can ask that, because there was no *before*. We talked about this many times.”

“Yes, but we can’t just swallow this as an answer. There must be some story beyond the Big Bang.”

“Maybe right, but it seems more of a task for you than me.”

“What? Why are you doing this to me? Why are you letting me go there alone? I thought we were friends; I’m a philosopher of physics.”

–3–

Not even saints

A student arrived at the metaphysics class late. He was usually late. And the professor was a little disappointed and reproached him by saying:

“Do you understand the meaning of time?”

“No, I don’t.” the student replied to himself. “Not even Saint Augustin did.”

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Before being wrong, and “not even wrong”

A certain young philosopher jumped into the physics world with a big theory about the origin of the universe. Writing a paper, he sent it to several leading (and not so leading) physicists. But none of them responded, except one. The young man was happy about this ‘exceptional phenomena’ and wrote an email to the exceptional physicist: “Dear Professor Postpolly, thank you for telling me you are reading my paper. Please tell me your opinion frankly when you finish reading it. I hope it won’t be ‘not even wrong’?”

“I’ve just finished reading your paper,” replied Professor Postpolly. “And I have a good news and a bad news for you. The bad news is I don’t understand your paper, you wrote like a philosopher. So the good news is: I can’t even say if it is ‘not even wrong’.

–5–

Afraid of ideologies?

A certain philosopher of science met a well-known physicist after the physicist's public lecture on the nature of matter.

"So, Professor Suskinovitch," said the philosopher, "I've been attending your lecture, but I have this personal question: Are you a materialist or an idealist?"

"I'm a physicist, for God's sake!"

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Being qua being

"I'm a philosopher of information theory," a young man introduced himself to an audience.

"What a damned age!" lamented an elderly philosopher sitting at the back. "Alas, the great era of philosophy is no more! Everyone is a philosopher of something, but no one is a philosopher of philosophy herself!"

After a while he was interrupted by himself and said, "oh no, what did I say?"

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Couldn't one be just curious?

It was a party of top men (and women) of physics. Crushing the party was a certain shrewd-looking man who looked like *a philosopher without philosophy*.

"So, do you think one can *eat from cubit*?" asked the shrewd-looking man looking at a nerdy-looking information-theoretic physicist.

"I'm sorry, but what John Wheeler and other physicists after him mean by 'it from qubit' is that..." the nerd was trying to correct him, when the shrewd-looking man interrupted:

"No, I wasn't referring to Mr. Wheeler or anyone else. I was just being curious."

And so the nerd found himself in a superposition of saying or not saying something.

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Prize Radiation

A theoretical physicist won the Nobel Prize “for his work on the most fundamental question of the universe,” and, of course, for the intolerable nuisance of philosophers of physics he endured at his faculty.

“How do you feel about winning the Nobel Prize?” he was asked by a science journalist.

“I feel like a pulsar—a pulsating star!” answered the physicist. And then he warned the philosophers at his faculty: “Beware of the radio wave emanating from me. It will kick the hell out of you!”

—9—

Powerful Minds

A Nietzschean philosopher was asked for his opinion on the question: “who has the most power: the artist, the philosopher, the mathematician, or the physicist?”

“It is none of them,” he answered. “It is the politician who has the most power.”

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Let’s be specific!

A very serious science journalist called Natasha was interviewing two guests: a physicist and a philosopher of physics. She turned to the physicist and said:

“You guys have been telling us repeatedly that you were almost there about the final theory of the universe. But you still are telling us the same thing.” And she turned to the philosopher of physics and said:

“I just want to be specific; can you give me a date?”

“I would love to,” the philosopher answered, “but I can’t. I’m a happily married man.”

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**At last, poor philosophers get some reinforcement
from unexpected corners!**

A Trilogy

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Episode I

A Love Story

After a great modelling career, a super-model called Afrodina found herself falling in love with ‘the Standard Model of Elementary Particles’. And after struggling with it for “this huge amount of time”, that was like 15 minutes or something, but no problem, everyone knows time is relative, she decided that she needed help from an expert.

And that expert happened to be a philosopher who thought that he had a fatherly responsibility to rescue dear physicist sons and daughters lest the allegedly not well-founded architecture of the Standard Model falls down on them.

Actually, he had been under her scrupulous watch for the last two months. At last she approached him on the corridor of the department where he had been working intensely on the origin of the universe, and also on that *Gothic* architecture.

“What!” he exclaimed after hearing only a few sentences. “I was never approached by a woman ever since I was born. But now you, you beautiful, smart young lady, approach me? Oh, there must have been some God these days!”

“Oh, really?”

“So, shoot me if what I’m about to say is offending: Do you think you can marry me? *I mean like seriously?*”

Of course, Afrodina was smart enough not to shoot him; she “kindda understood him”. Then she said:

“It’s OK. It wouldn’t be a horrible idea to spend the rest of my life with a crazy-genius like you!” (“After knowing a bunch of crazy-morons,” she added.)

“What a wonderful world!”

“But don’t you wanna know *things* about me? Aren’t you gonna ask me *questions?*”

“Oh, no. I’ve an overload of questions on ‘Why are there beings at all instead of nothing?’.”

“If there were no beings at all, you wouldn’t find me, Mr. Husband,” she said. And then she thought, “I’ve to make sure he knows me better, whether he likes it or not!” and said:

“There’s this ex- *kindda* -boyfriend who bothers me! So first we should let him know it’s really, really over.”

“*We?*”

“Of course, *we!* From now on, it is *we!* Understood?”

“Oh, yes, understood. It feels a bit *incongruent* like the Standard Model, but it’s alright; we can live with that.”

Now, after solving the problem of one architecture, that is, marriage, Afrodina was aroused again when she heard him mention the Standard Model. And she asked:

“What is it like, this Standard Model? But you’ve got to know ’am not familiar with your part of the world; I’ve been in the modelling business. OK?”

“OK, no problem,” the philosopher said. “I think that won’t be a big obstacle, because, we all are, in our own ways, working in sorts of modelling business. So now we are almost married, right? So tell me honestly: how do you describe me?”

“*Untidy!* But don’t worry about that, ’am gonna fix it soon.”

“Alright. And how would you describe a woman who wouldn’t dress like you?”

“Am sorry to say this but, *not so elegant.*”

“Good. And how would you describe a girl who might be good at a cat-walk but doesn’t understand the big picture of modelling?”

“Totally incomplete!”

“Then, my dear wife,” the philosopher began raising his hands, “I now pronounce you, and me, sufficiently familiar with the Standard Model.”

“Oh, darling,” Afrodina said, “you’re so dramatically, unpredictably genius! ’Am so proud of you! You make me so proud of me! Come on, let me give you a kiss and a hug.” (Oh, please don’t look at them; let them have a moment!)

Those were no ordinary complements, kisses, and hugs: the philosopher felt like he was having a very deep emotional contact with the very fabric of spacetime itself—which every sensible physicist and philosopher pursues day and night every day. So maybe sometimes it takes a super-model’s complement, kiss, and hug to get that most wanted insight!

And they lived happily ever after. They became a model for the community, and a super-model for all aspiring philosophers and the likes. And that question—“Why are there beings at all instead of nothing?”—if it was, very understandably, not always “the broadest”, “the deepest”, and “the most original” question of the family, at least it was an integral part of it.

(Note: Towards the end of the story, there was a line that the editor cut out for clarity of the theory, pardon me, the story. That line was about a physicist who was hanging around the corridor that day when the philosopher was having the supersymmetric conversation with Afrodina. And here is what the physicist said at last: “Damned, I should have discovered her!”)

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Episode II

A Quarrel Story

After spending some time in a rehab, and spending that time pondering about life and all that, a celebrated actress called Sophia turned her face to public service; that is, she begun hosting a podcast entitled ‘Demystifying the Great Ideas of Humanity to All the People of the World’. And one day she was talking to, with all due respect, a “second-rate” physicist who was sometimes unstable like a quantum field.

“You, physicists, have been super-prophetic to be able to cast a prediction that matched experiment with a discrepancy of only like a thickness of a not-well-treated human hair in the distance between like Los Angeles, my former home, and New York, my former, former home. I mean, what an achievement!”

“Yeah, that is our jewel!” exclaimed the physicist.

“But the unaffectedly wondering creatures who go by the name of philosophers—come on, they never got anything right, right?”

“Never got anything right!” the physicist repeated.

“Like in the whole amazingly long history of three thousand years, right?”

“That’s right. You are giving an amazingly correct historical justice!”

“I mean, if you put them like in the middle of an ocean and tell them to throw a stone, they would miss the ocean, right?”

“Yes, they would! They would even miss the whole universe, let alone an ocean!”

“But you, physicists, are the ever-booming geniuses, while the philosophers are—how should I say it?—too old for this tackling and solving the mystery of the world. Do you agree?”

“One hundred percent!”

“I mean you guys deserve all the Oscars that ever was and there ever will be. I just want you to know that I love you. Ok?”

Now the physicist, in spite of himself, asked, “Off the record, would you please marry me? Otherwise I will throw myself into a Black Hole!”

“Oh, come on,” she continued *on the record*, “let’s be professional, Mr. Genius!”

“What?”

“And besides, physicists are not my type, philosophers are.”

“What?”

“Yes, I was just messing up with my philosopher husband, just to give him some lesson on the importance of giving sufficient attention to the woman he loves.”

“But...”

“There is no any *but*, I’m wholly with the philosophers. Can you imagine someone sacrificing three millennia with such a persistence for *Philosophia*? I mean that is like *Love Sophia truly!* I think they deserve better. You guys are a four-hundred-years-old boys and girls; what do you know about love, sacrifice, persistence, wisdom? And now my poor husband, in love with two *Sophias* in a single house! Oh, my dear, the wonders he’s going through!

“And, Mr. Genius,” she continued, “I just wanna tell you that if philosophers miss the whole universe while throwing a stone, that is because they are up to something else, like something that resides back stage of the universe. That is what they want to get right. Ok? They would like to understand the making of the movie! They would like to talk the director face-to-face!”

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Episode III

A Synthesis Story

The saga continues

Not only in the nominal world that refuses

And abhors bodily fuses

But also, we hope,

In the phenomenal world of the Anthrop

As comic and satiric as the Antelope

And tragic as Karenin

Which tastes like Chlorine.

But until that comes true, let's have one more little smile.

—14—

Honor thy father and mother!

Nowadays, science journalists are doing some good job. And in one interview with a Historian of Great Ideas, the journalist asked:

“Why do you think so many physicists are harsh critics of metaphysics?”

“I'm not an expert of the psychological aspect of history,” said the historian, “but I think it has to do with Oedipus-complex.”

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End of Vol. I