

CURRENTS OF ENTROPY

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

THE PROFESSOR lectures to a small class. On the projector behind her advanced physics calculations fill the illuminated screen.

THE PROFESSOR

As we've talked about, entropy is kind of like a river, constantly breaking into smaller tributaries controlled by a series of irrational variables. What does that tell us about entropy as it applies to chaos?

She looks around the room for a volunteer. Most of the faces are blank.

An INQUISITIVE STUDENT mulls a thought in his head, and a FEMALE STUDENT sits quietly, eyes not focused on anything.

INQUISITIVE STUDENT

The irrational values mean they're non-repeating and infinite?

THE PROFESSOR

That's right, which implies what?

While The Professor waits for an answer, the Female Student sits, still unfocused, and begins to rub her temples.

INQUISITIVE STUDENT

That the universe is getting more complex as entropy increases.

THE PROFESSOR

Exactly! But here's something interesting.

She begins to type something into her computer, and the charts on the screen shift in confusing ways.

There is an excitement in her voice as she drives toward a conclusion.

THE PROFESSOR

Modern theory postulates that it's possible to calculate the rate of change in perceived entropy, and if we know the rate of change, we can reverse its theoretical velocity.

INQUISITIVE STUDENT

But what's that get you, if  
everything always tends toward more  
chaos?

The Female Student has started to hold her head in anguish.

THE PROFESSOR

You know the answer. Think about  
it.

INQUISITIVE STUDENT

(beat)

Negative entropy would mean that  
everything would be getting more  
organized.

THE PROFESSOR

And if you could observe that  
organization?

INQUISITIVE STUDENT

Then.... You would effectively be  
witnessing time travel!

THE PROFESSOR

Exactly!

INQUISITIVE STUDENT

So, you're saying that traveling to  
the past is possible?

THE PROFESSOR

Observable at least. Nothing exists  
that suggests your body could make  
the trip, but your mind.... That's  
a different story.

The Professor types more into her computer, and the screen  
changes again. Instead of purely mathematical charts, the  
screen displays iconography similar letters in the alphabet.

The Female Student's agony increases. No one notices; they  
are enthralled by the lecture.

THE PROFESSOR

Some mathematicians believe that  
all language is linked, no matter  
what it looks or sounds like;  
spoken or coded. It's a part of the  
physics of the mind; a neutral  
linguistic blueprint.

The professor hits another button and the screen changes again. More images, this time it's hard to tell where the math ends and the language begins.

THE PROFESSOR

If you could find someone who shared your linguistic waveform, you could program your consciousness to find them in the chaos. And use them as a guide post to travel to any point in the past they existed. As if you were rowing against the current of an entropic stream.

As if shot by a gun, the Female Student yells, and her head jerks backward in a violent motion.

She crumbles to the floor with a clatter of noise, and doesn't rise.

The suddenness of the action draws the class's attention. A din of concerned mumbling fills the room.

Then, with another crash, the Female Student bolts from the ground, but half collapses on the desk in front of her. Her eyes have a wild, scared look.

FEMALE STUDENT

No! Not again!

The Professor slowly approaches the Female Student.

THE PROFESSOR

Take a breath. It's okay.

FEMALE STUDENT

I thought I had the calculations right this time! What were the words?

THE PROFESSOR

Calm down. You're hysterical.

FEMALE STUDENT

Find the thermos; find the entropic link!

THE PROFESSOR

Thermos? Entropic link?

Saying the words causes the Professor to shake her head and clench her eyes closed as if a horrible pain suddenly pierces her temples.

The Female Student collapses on the floor unconscious. The Professor reels backward as the pain spikes. Their bodies appear to VIBRATE RAPIDLY for a fraction of a second.

After several groans The Professor manages to shake off whatever was affecting her, and looks around the room blankly.

INQUISITIVE STUDENT  
Professor? Is everything okay?

THE PROFESSOR  
(calmly)  
Yeah. I think I'm gonna get a cup  
of coffee.

She walks from the classroom oblivious of the unconscious student and confused looks around her.

INT. CAMPUS CAFE - AFTERNOON

The Professor pays for the coffee at the register. She heads toward the dining area, sipping at the drink unconsciously.

DINER ONE and DINER TWO eat lunch off to her right side.

DINER ONE  
Did you hear about the freak out in  
the physics department?

DINER TWO  
Creepy right?

DINER ONE  
Anybody know what happened?

DINER TWO  
Not a clue. Apparently a student up  
and lost her shit right in the  
middle of class, and then the  
professor just walked out!

DINER ONE  
(chuckling)  
I guess the physics of chaos is  
more unpredictable than I give it  
credit for.

DINER TWO  
(annoyed)  
You're an idiot.

Something shakes loose in The Professor's head, and she clenches her temples in pain. Diner One and Diner Two look at The Professor, but make no attempt to help her.

Doubled over she groans, her body VIBRATES again, and then the pain stops. When she recovers, her posture, expression, everything about her feels different.

THE PROFESSOR

Thank god, it worked.

She looks around the dining area, searching for someone or something. On an unoccupied table, a small plaid thermos sits next to a half-eaten sandwich.

THE PROFESSOR

He's not there! I rode it too far.  
I'm on another entropy stream!

She looks at her watch, and runs from the cafe.

THE PROFESSOR

There's still time!

EXT. UNIVERSITY PARKING LOT - DAY

The Professor bursts through the lobby door onto the walkway above the parking garage, looking in every direction.

THE PROFESSOR

Where is he!

Just over the edge of the walkway, she sees THE MAN IN THE VEST remotely unlocking the door to his car on the exposed first level of the parking garage below.

The car BEEPS in response.

THE PROFESSOR

Shit.

She runs toward a nearby stairwell.

INT. PARKING GARAGE P1 - MOMENTS LATER

The Man in the Vest pulls out of his spot, and as he begins to accelerate The Professor runs from behind another vehicle and throws herself on the hood of his car.

THE PROFESSOR

Stop!

He breaks, and The Professor maneuvers her way around the car to stop him from fleeing in a panic. She motions for him to roll down the window, which he does, dumbfounded.

THE PROFESSOR

I need you to hear something.

THE MAN IN THE VEST

Do I know you?

THE PROFESSOR

When the time comes. You have to tell me dive to the left. Do you understand?

THE MAN IN THE VEST

No-

THE PROFESSOR

Listen to me! To the left! If you go any other direction, you die.

THE MAN IN THE VEST

I die? Why-what's going to happen to me?

THE PROFESSOR

No! Not to you, to me...to him. Dammit. You'll understand when it happens.

THE MAN IN THE VEST

Ma'am are you okay? Should I call 911?

THE PROFESSOR

Look, we're entropically late. We're on the wrong stream, but there's still time. When you get there you'll know, but remember: to the left!

(beat)

Look for the cosmonaut; find the shooter.

THE MAN IN THE VEST

The shooter! What cosmonaut?

The Man in the Vest clenches his temples in pain. Both people VIBRATE as before, and The Professor collapses on the ground.

After the pain passes, The Man in the Vest drives away, apparently unaware of The Professor lying prostrate on the ground by his vehicle.

EXT. CAMPUS PARK - LATE AFTERNOON

The Man in the Vest walks down a concrete path looking toward the setting sun. From behind a JOGGER bumps into him.

JOGGER  
Hey, watch it!

The Man in the Vest turns to the Jogger and sees a mural on the side of a park building. It's a PAINTING OF AN ASTRONAUT done in the style of a communist era propaganda portrait.

The Jogger, a few dozen feet ahead of him now, stops in her tracks.

JOGGER  
He's got a gun!

Everyone in the sparsely populated park scream and flee in different directions.

The Man in the Vest clenches his head in pain as he VIBRATES one more. The pain passes and he stands upright. His entire posture and attitude has changed, like The Professor before him.

He looks in the direction the Jogger is facing. About fifty yards away, he can see THE SHOOTER as he approaches THE SCIENTIST.

The Man in the Vest begins yelling as he runs toward the conflict.

THE MAN IN THE VEST  
You have to dive to the left. To the left!

EXT. CAMPUS PARK - SIMULTANEOUS

The Shooter approaches The Scientist. From within his long coat he pulls a SEMI-AUTOMATIC RIFLE.

The cadence of The Scientist's speech is eerily similar to the Female Student, The Professor, and The Man in the Vest.

THE SCIENTIST  
You don't have to do this!

The Shooter speaks in a flat monotone with almost no emphasis or intonation.

THE SHOOTER  
I am sorry, Doctor, but I do.



THE SCIENTIST  
I haven't done anything!

THE SHOOTER  
You are on the verge of developing  
a theory of time travel; a concept  
so powerful that it will eradicate  
the very fabric of human history.  
When that happens, everything falls  
apart.

The Scientist backs away in terror as The Shooter approaches,  
his gun coming to bear on the terrified woman.

THE SCIENTIST  
Please-

THE SHOOTER  
There is no past. There is no fate.  
No future. I cannot let that  
happen.

The Shooter takes aim at The Scientist. At the last moment,  
The Man in the Vest sprints and crashes into The Shooter.

THE MAN IN THE VEST  
To your left! Get down!

The Shooter manages to fire several rounds before he's  
knocked to the ground; his weapon thrown to the side. His  
head cracks onto the concrete and he lies still. Blood begins  
to pool beneath his head.

The Man in the Vest rolls to his side, and pulls his hand  
away from his chest. He's bleeding as well. One of the  
bullets is lodged in his lung. He's already having trouble  
breathing.

He looks over to The Scientist, still standing in horror.

THE MAN IN THE VEST  
Did I make it?

Blood begins to fill The Scientist's white shirt.

THE MAN IN THE VEST  
No! I was so close this time!  
(to The Scientist)  
Remember the words!

Suddenly both The Man in the Vest and The Scientist clench  
their heads in pain. As before, their bodies VIBRATE nearly  
imperceptibly. Once the pain passes, The Man in the Vest  
falls on his back, dead.

The Scientist falls to her knees gasping for air, and speaks to herself while she coughs up blood.

THE SCIENTIST

My calculations are so close. I  
know the people. I have the anchor.  
I have to find the right current.

She falls to her hands, and coughs more blood.

THE SCIENTIST

Remember the words: entropic  
stream.

She clenches her eyes closed in concentration as she falls to her hands.

THE SCIENTIST

Entropic stream. Entropic stream.  
Entropic stream-

The Scientist's body VIBRATES, longer than before, and she falls to the ground, dead.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

The Female Student's eyes jerk open and they VIBRATE momentarily. She groans in pain. At the head of the classroom The Professor continues her lecture.

THE PROFESSOR

...You could use them as a guide  
post to travel to any point in the  
past they existed. As if you were  
rowing against the current of an  
entropic stream.

FADE OUT.