

Second Place

How I Came to Understand Existence, Reality, and the Universe: Part II and III

Why I Smoke Pot

By Boris Gershman

Instructor: Vivian Taylor

Instructor Statement and Assingment Description

“In my fall 1102 class, we decided to use MySpace as our blog space, since students are already accustomed to using it outside of class more often than any other blog-capable, interactive site. We created one page for the entire class to share and use. Of course, 90% of them already had their own personal accounts. We took a clue from a Queens College English class, with which we engaged in dialogue about multiple issues.

The students had much freedom of choice about blog topics. I feel that making the topics too narrow is so limiting, and I have also learned that students only write well if they are writing about something in which they are genuinely interested. This might include music, cars, sports, politics, environmental issues, or existentialism, as shown through Boris Gershman’s blog entries, excerpted below, which express his unique philosophical spirit and sense of humor.”

How I Came to Understand Existence, Reality, and the Universe: Part II

I started being really anxious all of the time.

Every night I would go to sleep feeling anxious, and feeling like something was missing. Sometimes I thought I needed more friends; sometimes I thought that I was nervous about college; sometimes I thought I needed a girlfriend. Now, I'm not saying that these movies made me friends, got rid of my first-day-of-college jitters, or granted me a girlfriend, but they did lead me to do some late night meditation.

One night in the middle of summer, around midnight, I called up my friend who lived a few houses

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down, and asked him if I could go over and play some pool so we could talk about stuff. I couldn't shake off anxiety, and it followed me everywhere like a smelly, homeless dog. I

couldn't have fun anymore, since I was always looking for something more. While talking to my friend, I started thinking about the larger messages in the movies.

After a few games of pool, a pack of Famous Amos chocolate chip cookies, and a whole lot of chocolate milk, I had the tentative roots to my existentialist philosophy. I thought about this constantly, and I realized that I no longer

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felt anxious every day. I didn't feel like I needed desperately to find a girlfriend, I didn't feel like I needed to be doing something else all of the time so I could just enjoy life. I started feeling calm, and as if I had come a few steps closer to realizing the true meaning behind life. Or at least, something that made sense to me, since that is as close as we can ever really come to the "Truth."

I started with a few necessary vocab terms for my theory. These were the most important three: universe, reality, and existence. And in truth, the basics of my whole philosophy revolve around these three terms.

Why I Smoke Pot

This is what is known as a misleading title. Why should I tell anyone if and why I would do drugs? Why would anything I write about me be based on pure truth? I am becoming an adult, so why should I speak my mind and tell the truth as I did as a child? This reality, this society, and yes, even this economy, mold us into model citizens. In this bland future, 75% of today's youth will belong to the middle class—the kind of middle class that used to have dreams but now works for a decent wage because “life got in the way.” Twenty percent will never amount to anything more than

“Every interaction with a fellow adult becomes a polite exchange of pleasantries.”

Custodial Technicians of Sanitation Supervisors, both of which translate to “janitor,” or something equally lowly, such as a McDonald's store manager. One small piece of the pie chart of our future is 4%. This represents those of us that for some reason or another end up being presidents of companies and ruling over the large middle class. And the 1% that is left? These are the people whose souls will never age and who will remain better human beings for it. This is the woman who as a child fell in love with dolphins at Sea World and grows up to become a marine biologist, or the

boy who is enamored by the first shiny, red fire truck he sees, blaring sirens and all, who grows up to be a firefighter.

As I grow up and become an adult, I realize that Alyson Reynolds, better known as “the basket case” in *The Breakfast Club*, was completely right when she said that when people become adults they lose their souls. Every interaction with a fellow adult becomes a polite exchange of pleasantries. Almost every adult is guilty of this crime toward his or her inner child. They develop fake laughs and practice looking interested to please their bosses to the point where they convince themselves. They deal with a job that they hate just because complaining won’t get them anywhere and doing what they would like to do would take too much effort.

Sure, statistics point out that having children is a huge financial burden and some adults even say that they hate children. But in reality, adults need the youth. It doesn’t matter if they deal with actual children or if they just still hold on to what remains of their reckless childhood. If it weren’t for this renewable source of fresh and unadulterated life energy, then all the color would be eradicated from the world, and life would become as insipid as the aforementioned middle class Monday mornings.

How I Came to Understand Existence, Reality, and the Universe: Part III

No, I have never done this, and I don't plan on procrastination like this again. Before my Thursday chill sessions short to come home and write about whatever pops into my head and using my school-appropriate writing style is not my idea of cool.

So now, as a sequel to my post a while back in which I claimed to know how the universe worked, I will attempt to share my thoughts with you all.

To start off, I want to make it clear, that I am not trying to tell you all what is correct and how the universe works. I am telling you what makes sense to me, and in the end, that is what everyone should be looking for: something that makes sense to them, because no one can take that away. Take my case, for example. Religion made only a little sense to me, and I refused to believe some sciences, such as chemistry and the theory of the big bang.

The background story was me feeling anxious over the summer, so I went on to philosophize. What I started thinking then made so much sense to me. It was just as if I had finally thought of the answer to a riddle I've been pondering my whole life. And since then, I have been working out specifics. It is these specifics, however, that keep me from ever sitting down and writing down what makes sense to me since they are changing almost constantly. So instead of breaking it down to the complex bits, I will just talk about the overarching structure of how I think the universe works.

From the movie *I 'Heart' Huckabees*, I learned that the universe can be compared to an infinite blanket, and that we are all part of the blanket. As the film points out, "When you get the blanket thing you can relax because everything you could ever want or be, you already have and are." Not just us, however, but everything, including every inanimate object, emotion, thought, and feeling around us is part of this infinite blanket; they are just different iterations of some infinite universal energy. So everything is the same even if it is different. Another idea from the film: "The universe is an infinite sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere." Hence: infiniteness.

Fight Club reinforced the fact that no one is special. *Howl's Moving Castle* made me realize how the heart is and how the human body's soul is connected to universal energy. *Requiem for a Dream* taught me how addiction can take any form and subsequently ruin your life, so I took care from then on regarding substance abuse (TV, cola, chocolate, video games, exercise, mainstream drugs, etc.). The book *The Alchemist* made me more aware of my soul and heart. The Sunscreen Video helped me live life with what the French would call some good ole "*joie de vivre*." And whenever I feel angry or down, then I just put on "Float On" by Modest Mouse.

On a side note, years before I saw any of these movies or started thinking about the big question, I saw the Sunscreen Video on YouTube, which Jessica from Costa Rica showed me, whom my friend Allison introduced me to (notice a trend here? I'm starting to realize that my life is riddled with women; maybe I'm starting to realize that my life is riddled with women; maybe that was the reason I was restless to begin with, heheh).

So from there, I took it further on my own. And I ended up with three components. These were, in order of largest to smallest: the universe, reality, and existence. How it works is that we live out this limited existence in our human bodies, in a reality that starts to form from the moment we are born. From the second we are born and onwards, we start to learn things in either one of two ways.

One way is from personal experience, and the other is from what other people tell us. Everything that we come across affects and molds our reality. This world is just the stage on which we play out our existence, which is exactly 1/infinity in size and importance, just like everything and everybody else.

**“This world is
just the stage on
which we play out
our existence....”**

Existence < Reality < Universe

Again, this makes sense to me, and it probably won't make complete sense to you. But if you take one thing from this blog, let it be that you should go forth and look for something that makes sense to you.

Boris Gershman