

The Outer View

by

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1 INT. WAITING ROOM — DAY

1

Wall clock is ticking. Shows time ticking up to 1:13.

MAN (35) wearing a suit and tie for an interview is sitting in an empty room full of chairs, fiddling with his phone.

He looks at his Snapchat filtered image on the screen.

MAN
(whimsically to phone)
Who are you?

MAN 2 — same voice as MAN's, on speaker phone...

MAN 2 (O.S.)
Why do you hurt?

MAN
Because I love her.

MAN 2 (O.S.)
Do you love her? You could have
done something a long time ago if
you loved her.

MAN
I was dead inside.

MAN stops looking at his phone.

MAN 2 (O.S.)
Ah bless. Don't make excuses, you
want what you can't have — is that
not true?

MAN looks at phone.

MAN
No I hurt because of losing the
happiness I might have had.

The Snapchat image now takes on a life of its own as MAN 2...

MAN 2
You are confusing emotions,
thinking with your dick. You've
felt like this before haven't you?

MAN
Yes. More than once.

MAN 2

You're just repeating the same old patterns then aren't you?

MAN

Yes probably. But maybe because I didn't learn before.

MAN 2

Ha, bullshit. Shit happens, you think you've learnt something?

MAN

I'm aware of this conversation.

MAN turns to face MAN 2 sitting next to him. MAN 2 has the same physical appearance as MAN.

MAN 2

I'm you, dickhead. Have this "conversation" out loud on the tube, see what response you get.

MAN

I might get a couple of extra seats.

MAN looks around ironically at the empty chairs.

MAN (CONT'D)

I know your voice is the madness in the world.

MAN 2

What's that supposed to mean! Wake up, it's survival of the fittest. Obey the rules or be just another of the pathetic losers.

(beat)

I can help you.

MAN

Maybe you mean it, but you say the same to everyone else... everyone ends up using and abusing each other for the survival of you.

MAN 2

(angry)

Nobody gives a shit about you. If you're too stupid to understand that then you're just another of nature's mistakes. Tell me, what is love?

MAN

A sense of feeling connected to another person. Wanting the other person to be fulfilled and happy.

MAN 2

Bullshit. It's a chemical response in your brain evolved to make you bond for the purpose of rearing children. The science is there if you are prepared to look. You're a disposable puppet to your genes.

MAN

I don't understand what started everything and why... and neither does science.

(beat)

What I know is that if less people listened to you and loved each other, the world would be a much better place.

MAN 2

Women, my friend, seek to manipulate and control you. They will prod and poke you to see your reactions. It's perfectly understandable, they want someone to do their bidding. Like a dog. Love and treats are excellent ways to train you.

MAN

Most people are crying out in the dark to be loved.

MAN 2

"Love, love all we need is love" - it's shite! You're here to be somebody, to take what you can before it's too late. By all means, pretend to love if it means getting more women, that's a clever tactic. Bravo!

MAN

It's also callous and hateful.

MAN 2

People who desire love want to be adored, admired, pleased, to feed on some sense of purpose.

(MORE)

MAN 2 (CONT'D)

A little bit of chemical voodoo and that's your love. It soon goes when the chemicals wear off, when things aren't as pleasurable as before, when the compliments change to insults. I can get you better drugs than that, you only have to ask.

MAN

You describe an illness sucking the life out.

MAN 2 indicates wry agreement.

MAN (CONT'D)

That's not love.
Sometimes people want to be loved and it's one way, conditional, all about them. It's fear not love.

(beat)

But all things change, the illness can fade away... into full health.

MAN 2

A leopard doesn't change its spots.

MAN

You're getting boring.

MAN 2

(angry)

I can make you powerful. I can help you make things less shit. You can take what should be yours! Nobody else matters. You matter! And the world will know that!

(beat)

If not you then some pathetic little dick will take your place.

MAN

You twist everything and make it ugly. You are a lie.

MAN 2

You lie. Everybody lies. In case you haven't noticed, the best liars win. Simple.

MAN

(distantly)

Lost in their webs...

MAN 2

Listen to me you little shit. Grow up! GROW UP!

(beat)

Either live in this world or be its victim. The world is how it is.

RAGE!! Get what you want! It can be yours!

MAN looks at the Snapchat filter on his phone...

MAN

(laughs)

You're ridiculous.

MAN 2

(very angry)

You disappoint me! You are not survival material!

MAN

It doesn't matter anymore.

MAN 2

You will gradually rot away to nothing. And no-one will give a shit!

MAN

Oh well.

(beat)

I feel a bit lighter. And you've helped me answer my question. Yes I do love her because I want her to be fulfilled and happy, even if she finds that with someone else.

MAN 2

Twat!

MAN

I would rather live in my world than yours. Cheers.

MAN 3 enters – another physical copy of MAN. He sits down and starts reading a book called "A brief History of Time". MAN 2 has disappeared.

MAN indicates knowledge of book and starts talking to MAN 3...

MAN (CONT'D)

Why is there something instead of nothing?

MAN 3

Given an infinite amount of opportunities anything can emerge from the chaos, including our world.

MAN

But why are there infinite somethings, rather than nothing?

MAN 3

There was no beginning, our universe probably burst forth from another universe and so on. It has always been so.

MAN

But where did the first universe come from?

MAN 3

Not everything has an answer yet, but no doubt will be explained with the advance of scientific knowledge.

(beat)

Even if the goal is not reached, there is no need to include supernatural causes in the equation. Logic requires we deal with verifiable facts, adopting the most efficient explanation.

MAN

Time does not make sense. The existence of things does not make sense. Can we not postulate the existence of something beyond time and space that created everything? Can we call this God?

MAN 3

There is no need to do so. We may not know what the variable "x" is yet, but we should not start invoking imaginary entities.

MAN

Something doesn't feel right.

MAN 3

There is no evidence for the existence of a God or Gods, the world is explicable in terms of scientific explanation.

MAN

The fact is I have always believed in God, it's not a considered opinion or the product of upbringing, it's just always been instinctive to me.

MAN 3

Ok well a cognitive scientist may explain this as a natural propensity to religiosity, there by natural selection to give purpose to the organism for its survival.

MAN

Is there any meaning?

MAN 3

A person may look at the nature of the universe, see the randomness of outcomes, the cruelty and enormous suffering and decide there is no benevolence at work here. They may look at evolution by natural selection and decide there is no plan here. The universe, although magnificent, does not care about us – we must make our own way and make our own meaning in the brief window of opportunity for existence.

MAN

Suddenly you're speaking with feeling... maybe your outlook is motivated through sympathy for the suffering in the world.

MAN 3

It is logic replacing delusion. Myths and fairy stories aren't needed anymore.

MAN

I admire your beliefs more than beliefs motivated by fear or desire for self-reward. I don't care what you believe as long as your actions are kind.

MAN 3

My conclusions are not beliefs.
Religious delusions have been the
cause of so much of the worst in
humanity.

MAN

Religions are subject to
corruption, but the spiritual path
can be found in the different
traditions.

MAN 3

A God is not necessary to be
spiritual, to behave with morality,
to appreciate beauty.

MAN

You do have a belief system. You
believe the universe ultimately has
no purpose and its existence can be
completely explained by rules
contained within itself... when in
fact there is no way of knowing the
ultimate causes of things. You
believe the answer to the mystery
of existence is that there isn't
one.

MAN 3

I am offering the most logical
approach to understanding the
world.

MAN

I don't believe the world would
exist without purpose.

(beat)

I believe in the possibility of a
reality beyond this reality, beyond
cause and effect, beyond things and
matter – beyond what is conceivable
in time and space.

(beat)

In this life I see the purpose as
feeling connected to the world...
being present, alive... feeling
love, creativity, beauty, joy.

(beat)

The true reality of experience may
run far deeper than what our senses
show us.

MAN 3

You say "may". I deal with facts
that can be observed, not imagined.
We are atoms in the void.

MAN

Reality doesn't add up. Reality can
be anything depending on what our
senses show us.

Phone rings. MAN accepts call from "Anonymous" caller. MAN 2
is the caller...

MAN 2

Remember me? I'm still here by the
way.

(beat)

Don't you turn your back on me. He
is too fucking boring to help you!

MAN 3 gets up and leaves.

MAN

(to phone)

Don't call me again.

MAN 4 - another physical copy of MAN enters and sits down.
MAN turns off phone.

MAN (CONT'D)

(exasperated)

Can you help me?

MAN 4

Yes of course.

MAN

I am consumed with feelings for
someone who doesn't have them for
me. I have trouble sleeping and
wake up aroused. I have no choice
but to think about her and when I
do I am flooded with physical
desire for her. This is "in love",
right?

MAN 4

You know that sexual desire changes
and what you are feeling now may
fade away?

MAN

Yes I know craving isn't love, but
it isn't as simple as that.

MAN 4

What do you think triggered it this time?

MAN

I don't know.

MAN 4

Pain is attracted to pain because it wants more of it.

MAN

I'm not sure I agree with that. It's recognition of something in another, a similar frequency or whatever you want to call it.

(beat)

I suppose if you see similar expression in another, empathy can create feelings of closeness.

MAN 4

Can you express your feelings to her?

MAN

It's not possible or helpful to be open with her, she has her own life and I want her to be happy.

MAN 4

Examine whether that is really true, or are you being fearful?

MAN

No, it's not possible, selfish even.

MAN 4

Then this is an opportunity for you to practice love with non-attachment.

MAN

Doesn't sound very romantic.

MAN 4

Love is giving, complete, the source of everything. Love doesn't need to crave anything. This is where peace and serenity reside.

MAN

Sounds like you're saying I shouldn't get too close to anyone or need or miss anyone. It sounds unnatural, uncaring.

MAN 4

Love is not conditional on the circumstances in this world. Let your heart break, don't be afraid, don't struggle, you will find that nothing is ever lost.

MAN

I don't know what you're talking about.

MAN 4

Yes you do. Be still, radiate love, your true nature beyond the conditioning of your mind.

Silence. Suddenly interrupted by a phone call, even though MAN's phone was turned off. MAN does not answer. A notification message sounds. Then, MAN 2 in MAN's face...

MAN 2

Bullshit! Namby-pamby bullshit! Your nature is eat or be eaten and you might as well have some fun while you're at it.

MAN

I'm so tired of this.

MAN closes his eyes. Then opens them to find himself sitting in an interview room. JANE (35) and INTERVIEWER (50, male) – both serious looking – are sitting behind a desk opposite.

2

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM – DAY

2

INTERVIEWER

What is 2 plus 2?

MAN

Pardon?

INTERVIEWER

I'll repeat the question, what is two plus two?

MAN

That's a difficult question, five?

INTERVIEWER

Correct. Jane, do you have any questions?

JANE

Thank you for coming. We've been looking forward to meeting you, your CV is very impressive. Would you like to take us through it?

MAN

Not really.

JANE

What is the biggest regret of your life?

MAN

I would say, being a perfectionist, I care so much about what I do.

JANE

What are your strengths?

MAN

I work hard, I seek to exceed expectations and to get the job done.

(beat)

(distantly)

"Etcetera".

Notification alert on MAN's phone. He turns off his phone again.

JANE

What's so special about you?

MAN

Nothing.

INTERVIEWER

Tell us, who are you?

Silence.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

Can you give an example where you were faced with a difficult situation and how you positively overcame the situation?

MAN

Right, sorry, this is not for me. I might as well be talking to a computer. You think you are important sitting behind your desk interrogating me. This is tedious. You are tedious. I don't want to be here. I don't give a shit about your pathetic little job!

INTERVIEWER

Well I think you've answered who you are.

MAN

No I haven't even started.

(beat)

The biggest regret is I let you slip away Jane.

(beat)

I'm so sorry.

(beat)

I have nothing. I am nothing.

INTERVIEWER ticks a box on a piece of paper.

INTERVIEWER

"No thing". Ok next question...

MAN

No more questions.

INTERVIEWER

Do you have any questions for us?

MAN

Why?

INTERVIEWER

This is a two-way iterative process. Do you have any feedback for us?

MAN

Have you not been listening to a word I've been saying?

INTERVIEWER

Well I think that concludes the interview. Thank you, we'll let you know, can you show in the next one?

3 **INT. WAITING ROOM – DAY**

3

Nobody in the room except MAN.

Wall clock is ticking, shows time of 1:13.

MAN is fiddling with his phone.

Clock stops.

Phone rings. MAN answers to "Anonymous" caller. MAN 2 is the caller...

 MAN 2 (O.S.)
Why do you hurt?

 MAN
Because I can.

 MAN 2 (O.S.)
Good boy.

MAN 2 hangs up. MAN 3 enters and sits down.

 MAN
We're just chemical scum on this insignificant planet.

 MAN 3
Yes... orbiting an insignificant sun in an insignificant galaxy.

 MAN
Look. I close my eyes and you're still here.

MAN closes his eyes, then opens them. He is back in the interview room.

4 **INT. INTERVIEW ROOM – DAY**

4

 INTERVIEWER
What is two plus two?

 MAN
(stunned)
Four.

 INTERVIEWER
Correct. Jane, do you have any questions?

JANE looks at MAN's CV...

JANE

There's a gap here.
 (beat)
 Why didn't you love me?

Silence.

INTERVIEWER

Can you give an example where you were faced with a difficult situation and how you positively overcame the situation?

MAN

I was born.

INTERVIEWER

Have you done anything since?

MAN 2 is in the room. Nobody acknowledges he is there.

MAN 2

(to MAN)

Tell him. Tell him what you think. The turd thinks he's better than you. Look at him, the smug bastard should be cleaning your shoes.

MAN

I've done a few things since.
 (beat)
 But mostly I've lived in fear. Fear for myself... for little me.

MAN 2

TWAT!!

MAN

I don't want to be a boring little me anymore.

MAN 2

Exactly! Look at the boring tosser.
 (beat)
 You shouldn't be here. You've got better things to be doing. Show them who you really are. I know don't I!

MAN

(beat)

I love you Jane. I am sorry.

(beat)

I love you.

(MORE)

MAN (CONT'D)

(beat)

I miss you.

Wall clock shows time ticking up to 1:13, then stops.

MAN 2

Why do you hurt?

MAN

I don't mind so much.

MAN 2

What?

MAN

I am feeling hurt.

MAN 2

You are hurt. I can make you bleed.
I can make you plead, to beg on
your knees "no more".

MAN

It doesn't matter so much.

MAN 2

Shall we see?

MAN

No thanks. I don't want to focus on
you any more.

(beat)

Is this a dream? An illusion?

(beat)

I am sorry... everyone.

I love you... all.

(beat)

Am I responsible for my actions? I
didn't chose this. I didn't chose
my nature or my nurture. My
impulses, my thoughts, my responses
are already written in me.

MAN 4 is now also sitting behind the interview desk.

MAN 4

You are not your thoughts or the
sensations you are experiencing.

(beat)

Watch. It is quite a play. *The*
play.

(beat)

Everything changes by how you look
at it.

MAN

Why do you play with me?

(beat)

I just want things to be as they were. But she's gone, forever.

(beat)

I want us to be happy.

INTERVIEWER

Do you?

MAN 2

I can give you what you really want, any pleasure you desire. More than you can even imagine.

MAN

Is this an evil universe? Anything good is taken away and destroyed, leaving only the emptiness and grief.

MAN 2

This is your fate.

MAN

Why is there so much suffering? Most people never had a chance. Never had the luxury to even have a choice. Born into a cage. Why are the innocent thrown into this evil? Why are monsters allowed to rule?

(beat)

Why does illness take...

(beat)

Why does death...

(beat)

Why are people inflicted with torment? This is not the best of all possible worlds. It's a zoo for the beautiful to be fed to the cruel.

MAN 2

Shout your rage!

MAN

You're pathetic. I would rather there was nothing than the earth riddled in this.

MAN 4

You are the nothing.

MAN

All I get are your riddles and
mysteries! You don't even
understand what you are saying!

(beat)

She didn't have to die.

(beat)

Nothing? No thing.

What is nothing?

Silence.

MAN (CONT'D)

No, things shouldn't be like this.
People shouldn't be starving to
death. There should not be misery.
There should be no pain. Nothing
good would have created that.

(beat)

I hate this. The endless injustice.

MAN 4

Hating the hatred helps it grow,
even though it may change its face.

MAN

That's just an empty platitude. If
you don't fight the malevolent, you
are complicit by allowing it to
continue.

MAN 4

You always become the result of the
energy that moves you. Not for no
reason has it been so often said
that you become the thing you hate.

MAN

I have every right to hate. There
should be justice! People sitting
on mountain tops don't have to deal
with the realities of this world.
If people didn't fight for what is
right, evil would walk over
everything, including you and me.

MAN 4

You deserve not to be contaminated
by this energy. You have a chance
to be better, to make a better
world.

(beat)

You should not accept what is
wrong.

(MORE)

MAN 4 (CONT'D)

You can feel what is right and act intensely, but it is your anger that unbalances you.

MAN

Some people are evil, I have no intention of being kind to them, they deserve everything coming to them.

MAN 4

The world will only heal with kindness. If humanity can find its light there can be no darkness. You can help make that possible, right now.

MAN

Anything I do will not change the world.

MAN 4

Give your love and the world will be relieved. Give your anger and the world will be wounded yet again. That's how important you are. That's how important every single person is.

MAN

I need to get out.

MAN 4

You can leave if you want to.

MAN

I want to.

MAN 4

Do it then.

MAN

I don't know how.

MAN 4

Yes you do. But you keep coming back. Who are you?

MAN

(hesitating)

I am ...

(beat)

MAN 2
What?

MAN
Not a what.

MAN 3 is now also sitting behind the interview desk.

MAN 3
What's your name?

MAN
It changes.

MAN 4
Who are you now?

MAN
I am you.

MAN 4
Who am I?

MAN
You are me.

INTERVIEWER
Do you have any questions?

MAN
When do I start?

INTERVIEWER
Now.

MAN
Ok.

Empty interview room, except MAN.

FADE OUT.