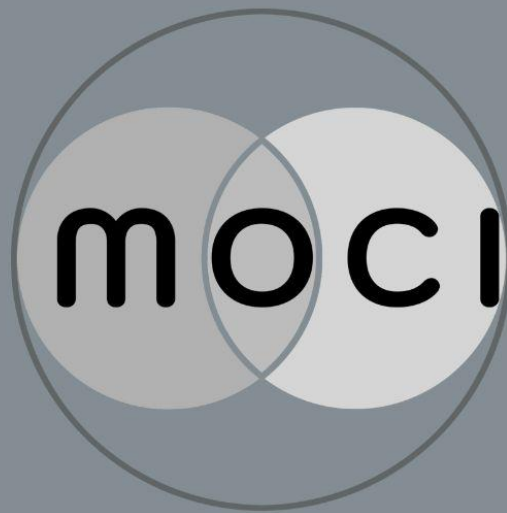


At the Well



By James Mahu | E2 : S1

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At the Well

E2 : S1

One day, about three weeks after their first meeting on the bridge, the woman and the man crossed paths again. A water shortage was affecting the entire valley, and there was one well, deep and true, that was still providing water without interruption. People from all over the region would make the journey to this well. Some by foot and some by horse-drawn cart.

The well was widely known as the capstone well. It was late in the evening when the young man finally reached it, carrying his empty water jug. In the dwindling light he saw the woman he had spoken with about the larger concepts that had no walls around them because they were not invented by humanness.

He walked up to her, ignoring the well. "Is it you?" His voice sounded surprised, even to him.

"Someone has to be me," she said with a thin smile.

"Do you remember? We met on the high bridge about three weeks ago."

She nodded.

"Are you here for water...I...I don't see you carrying a jug?" He asked.

"I guess I'm here for you."

"I was going to get some water, I'll share what I have with you."

Again, she nodded, but this time, with a little shrug. "I have an injured arm and I can't pull the water up, it's too heavy."

The young man jumped to action, as if a switch had been thrown. When he got to the well, pulling the well bucket up, he realized how heavy it actually was. He filled his water jug to the very top, spilling only a few drops, and then returned to the woman. The whole time he walked his full water jug, jostling his balance, he thought about what question he would ask her.

He made sure to give her the first sip of water, handing her the jug, before realizing it was too heavy for her. "Here, let me hold it for you," he offered.

The woman cupped her hands tightly and he poured some water into her cup of flesh, which she instantly drank, followed by a long sigh.

"Thank you. I had almost forgotten how thirsty I was."

"It's an honor," he said.

The woman was standing only a few feet away, but in the darkness, her face was vague and indistinct. Her voice, however, he remembered, and on that night, it became her full identity. The sun had already set, but there remained an afterglow in the sky of blue-violet and pale orange.

The man sat down and took a swig from the jug. When he finished he offered more to the woman who again cupped her hands.

"May I ask you a question?"

She finished her drink of water, and looked at him with kind eyes. "Of course."

"What in this life are the three most interesting things to you?"

She thought about it for a while, pondering the question, wondering inside her if she actually knew the answer. "I guess if I were to narrow it to one thing, it would be that there are an infinite number of life forms in spacetime, and yet not one of them has my exact view into reality. Every single point of reality is different. We're like an expanding sphere of points, infinite in number, and we are different, every single one. And yet, when we imagine our collective core — past human generations, past any species, past any planet, past any universe...if we really go back to the origins from which we spring. If we go there, to our very core of reality, we find our source, and there we are one."

She looked down at her hands for a moment, and then set them in her lap. "That is the most interesting thing to me. How that realization has somehow managed to squirm away from our comprehension, that is the next most interesting thing to me. And then the next...well, I suppose, it's how do we remember this and sustain it through spacetime."

She set her eyes on the man like two orbs of light, glowing in a twilight sky.

"Why are these the most interesting things to you?" he asked.

"Are they not to you?" she answered in a startled way.

He shook his head. "Not really."

"And why?"

"We're all different. I get that," the man replied. "But the oneness part. I don't see it. Since we spoke last, I've been thinking about this nonstop. Imagining our oneness. Imagining what's behind the next thing and I can't see it. I can't feel it. It seems like it's...a vapor in a dark room."

The woman smiled. "Hmm."

"Well?"

"Well, the oneness is harder to see. You have to guide it into your life, because it lives through us, and our imagination, the thing we use to imagine interconnectedness, has been trained to imagine separation, not interconnection."

"Then how do I shift that...that trained perspective?"

"You see all parts of your life as an expression of interconnectedness."

"All parts?"

"You already do. Everyone does. Everyone knows that they are interconnected to all life. It's just too hard to hold onto amid the torrent of separation propaganda that is aimed at us constantly. We are trained to let go of that as children — the feeling and knowingness that we are interconnected. And once we let go of it, it can be a difficult journey to find it and to hold it again."

The man understood partly, but something nagged at him. "But the part of the one, many and all consciousness that is the *many*, well, that is how we live — in groups," he said with emotion. "We have families, work teams, our city, state, politics, community events, religious gatherings, we have all of these things and they provide us with our sense of connection. Why do we need more?"

"We wouldn't if we didn't have it as our base reality in spacetime duality. Because we live in that world, the moment we have a fundamental interconnection, we will have a fundamental separation, and from those two things, all other dualities arise. The Many is the bridge between the sovereign and the integral. In every duality there is a bridge. The trick is to cross that bridge and not dwell upon the mirror of separation that hangs on either side."

"You said we all know that we are interconnected to all life...how?" he asked, with doubt written on his face.

"If anything is excluded," the woman answered, "the All cannot be interconnected. Oneness cannot exist without all. This is obvious, is it not?"

He could see her head bobbing in the darkness, but he knew it was a rhetorical question.

"We live in a sea of energy," she continued. "That energy is all one infinite thing. It lives and moves in separation, because separation is connected to the One and All. Within the one, many and all consciousness, the many is the point of separation, but it is also the point of integration, thus it is a bridge, but each side of that bridge is a reality unto itself. There is a single lifetime, an individual reality on one side; and there is an interconnected reality of allness on the other. And in between we have the sovereign within groups. It is the part of consciousness that is the architect of separation in our human world, yet it is also the bridge between the One and the All."

"How exactly is it a bridge?" he asked.

She cleared her throat. "There is a story of a woman who was an artist — a performance artist. And she decided it would be interesting to know what a painting would feel like when it was being observed in a museum. She arranged to place herself in a museum setting and be hung on the wall with straps and hooks.

"There was a small post she could stand on, it was about 4 feet from the floor. She was strapped in, because the post itself was quite narrow. In every way she was treated as if she was a painting on the wall, she even had her own placard that described what she was, what material she was made out of, her title..."

"What did the placard say?" he asked.

"*Skin over Soul, 65" x 21", Carbon...* it was something like that, but the point I'm making is that she offered herself to become a bridge between two worlds: The observer and the observed. In this case, a painting and a human observer."

"And what were her conclusions?"

"Within minutes, people were judging her, touching her, tickling her feet, poking her legs with objects, cursing at her, and in general, it was a miserable experience for her. Her lesson, however, was that she wasn't a painting on the wall, she was a mirror. A painting, if done well, draws you into a new world that hasn't been seen before. A mirror simply reflects the world that already is."

The man raised his hand in the air. "How does this story answer my question about the part of consciousness that you call the many, and how the many is a bridge between the one and all?"

"Consciousness is our core. Humanness is our surface. Consciousness is one, the sovereign. It is also the many, which is the sovereign in groups within a species. And it is the all, which is everything and everyone in every spacetime. The one, many and all consciousness includes separation and everything therein. The Sovereign Integral is the one and the all, but when it lives in a human reality, within spacetime duality, the Sovereign Integral becomes the many. It becomes neither a sovereign or an integral, rather, it becomes a human or a porcupine or a whale or an oak tree or a honey bee. It becomes these material embodiments.

"When it does this, it loses its memory of the Sovereign Integral, which quietly watches from the very core of reality. It observes the reality of separation. It finds ways to reach into the human reality of its sovereign self and that human part can then become a bridge between the worlds of the sovereign and the integral.

"In a way, it is the many — the sovereign within groups — that introduces the one and the all and allows them to become interconnected within the sovereign. When this is done, the human identifies as a Sovereign Integral and their behavior is naturally aligned to interconnectedness. They do not reject separation as if it were a lesser reality, instead, they see separation as the bridge between creation and the source."

The man raised his hand. "If the woman who became a painting was actually a mirror, how does that story relate to a bridge?"

"The mirror represents the present. It is the only image it can cast. A mirror has no imagination. It has no sense of the future. It has no investment in the future whatsoever. The painting, on the other hand, can do anything. It has no limits. It can depict our imagination.

"So it is with bridges, they are our imaginations let loose from the mirror."

The woman paused for a while and then cupped her hands, signaling her desire for more water. The man apologized for not offering it. He carefully poured from the water jug, and then took a sip himself.

"Energy is consciousness, the one, many and all consciousness, of which we are all a part. Yet, we are permitted to be sovereign. To have our own reality, to navigate what we create."

"I suppose it makes sense..." the man admitted. "It just doesn't feel right to take something evil or bad or ugly or unjust, and wave a magic wand of imagination over it, and suddenly see it as part of a whole that is all interconnected." He shrugged his shoulders in a form of disbelief.

"Why?"

"Because if I see evil as part of a whole, then I am accepting that evil is okay. It is defensible to be evil. And wouldn't that only avail our reality to make more room for evil?"

"We are here to experience an infinite stage of expression, and we are then given free will to create within that world. Once that world sees interconnection instead of separation, a finer balance can be created between these two, fundamental forces."

She paused for a moment. "You're right, the things that are labeled bad or evil are part of the all, but that all has been dipped in the confused and muddy waters of spacetime duality, and it has adopted separation because survival looms with more immediacy and power than interconnectedness."

"So, you're saying that the more we point the moral finger and ostracize evil, the stronger evil becomes?"

"Yes, that is my perspective. Evil stems from separation. The more humanity perceives its interconnectedness with life, then the more evil will recede into an equilibrium where it is not as strong and extreme. It will become like an annoyance that bites hard, but whose sting is felt for only a matter of moments, so it is easy to move on and forgive.

"Is this not logical to you?"

"It is...but there remains the issue of love or goodness. If evil is brought within a tighter equilibrium, then would not love and goodness also be reduced, because as you said, they are equally represented?"

"But there you go again, you have seen interconnection as good, and separation as evil. And I am saying that those walls that separate those two things, as elemental as

interconnectedness and separation are, well, they must be torn down. The two are one, and to separate them is to confuse ourselves, and thus live in confusion.

"However, the conjoined interconnectedness and separation, in spacetime duality, can be looked upon as a vehicle and all spacetime manifestation, as the collective driver of that vehicle. In equilibrium, the driver can steer the vehicle towards interconnection. In disharmony, the driver can steer the vehicle towards separation.

"We could imagine it this way," she continued. "At our core, we are one thing; at our surface, we are another. We are two creatures who live in one body. We are consciousness at our core, and we are humanness at our surface — represented by our body, mind, heart, ego, and subconscious. The consciousness part of us is connected to the energy of the field that powers everything. The humanness part of us is connected to the culture of separation.

"These comprise the fundamental duality, out of which all other dualities arise. This fundamental duality is our reality. It is so baked into our reality that we do not even see it. The two creatures that live in one body need to become partners. They need to find a new alignment, a new North Star of interconnectedness. They need to see that the culture of separation has left them diminished in imagining their power as a part of the one, many and all consciousness.

"And this diminishment has left them dependent and judgmental and anxious and struggling, and all the while they had this other creature — consciousness — that could have saved them.

"That would have saved them..."

"That can save them..."

"That will save them..."

"That has saved them."

The man looked far away, lost in his thoughts. And then suddenly it was as if he woke up. "In what way would it have saved them? How can consciousness save anything? It isn't material."

"Consciousness is part of that field of unity," she replied. "Unity is where the power of collective energy lives and moves and has *its* reality. And its reality encompasses this reality — the human reality, which is centered in a moment of spacetime."

"How do you mean...encompasses?" he asked.

"The reality of consciousness, as the field of unity, is where the power lives. You can bring this power into human reality to advance the understanding of interconnectedness, or you can use this power to advance the understanding of separation. One expands to the Sovereign Integral; and the other centers upon the one — the individual in humanness where separation is strong and promoted.

"They have a relationship of duality at their surface but unity at their core. It is like breathing. There is a rhythm and it does not require thought, will, technique or effort. The inbreath has a different function than the outbreath, moving in entirely different directions, yet they share the same purpose, to keep us alive. Without both, we perish. The one, many and all consciousness envelopes the act of breathing. It envelopes all things because that is what it is. It isn't a choice created or earned, it is a reality."

"Then you're saying that we're living in multiple realities and only one is real?" the man asked.

"Yes." She sighed and sat on the cream-colored limestone blocks that encircled the well. "When you have a relationship it creates a bond. The quality of that bond, over time, is that the distinctions between the two become less important, and the shared time and experience are the inputs to a shared perception, which creates the bond. The reality of the one, many and all consciousness is what human reality is bonded to. They have a relationship in spacetime as a result of that fundamental duality of interconnectedness and separation.

"Each species has its own relationship with its reality and the reality of unity. This is inherent in DNA. As we become part of a species, we learn how to survive, and from this learning we become a separate entity. In our case, an individual of humanness. An individual of separation with one relationship: duality.

"We each learn, through spacetime duality, how to live our lives as a Sovereign Integral among the forces of duality. And at some point within that journey we desire to advance the core reality of interconnectedness over the surface reality of separation. It becomes a conscious choice. And when this choice is made, we can bring our heart and mind together, fusing them in that purpose. And when this is done, the embodiments that we create advance interconnectedness. They become exponents of unity."

The man scoffed a bit and turned to the woman. "Do you really think that people want to understand such...such abstract things? The things you share don't really matter in our day-to-day life? Maybe the core and the surface are one thing, as you say, but the surface is what matters in everyone's life, otherwise the things that are hard and pressing...they only get harder."

"It *is* our day-to-day life," the woman answered. "We just haven't been taught how to recognize our core and surface realities in unity, and then live this unity in our lives. If we did this, the reality at the surface would reflect the reality within our core, and in that core of us, is the thing that matters, where we are both a sovereign and an integral at once."

"But our teachers, even entire societies, have always told us that we are sinners, and if not sinners, then we are animals deep inside, and nothing more. You're redefining our

core. And what proof do you have? How do you prove that our core is not what we have been taught?"

"The core is a consciousness that lives within a creature. But this is not a creature that we have ever seen, heard, understood, realized or remembered. And thus, we do not know what this creature is--"

"Hold on a moment," the man interrupted. "Why do you keep calling it a creature? It makes our core sound dangerous when you use that word to describe it."

"*Creature* is just a word I use because it implies something uncategorical. Sometimes I just call this core of ourselves, a *thing*, however, that noun doesn't imply a living intelligence, does it? And that thing at our core, well, it's both very much alive *and* intelligent. It just doesn't have even one particle of our surface reality within it. It is, um, it's like a sovereign identity that lives in a world of allness and unity, and when it enters spacetime duality, it willingly forgoes this memory, in favor of the reality at the surface.

"*Creature* is also a good word, because it implies something that is free and even unpredictable, *because* it is free. A wild creature is different from a domestic creature. The surface world seeks to domesticate our core. To make it fall in line with our humanness. The sovereign and the integral parts of ourselves, that dwell at the core, are wild creatures, because their will stems from a different reality, and that reality is interconnected.

"In a way, it is an animal, but the one, many and all consciousness is not a body that you can see, for the simple reason, how can anyone see the whole of *all*? You would have to be outside of it, and once you are outside of it, then you are not part of allness. You have created a new world, and now you live there."

"I still don't like the word creature."

"So suggest a better word."

"You said that the sovereign and the integral, the one and the all, constitute our core."

She nodded.

"Then why not call this core, the Sovereign Integral?"

"It's a mouthful..." she remarked out of the corner of her lips.

"So, shorten it to SI," he suggested.

"I will agree to your proposal, if it helps you."

"I think it does. It gives me the impression that we just went from poetry to philosophy. I don't really have a poet's eye."

"SI it is," she relented, and in the next breath continued. "The SI...we have never experienced that consciousness in our entire life. It would be like walking from the depths of a cave that we have lived in all of our life, and then, in an instant, we found ourselves

flying above the clouds. You would have not a single visual thread from that reality to the other.

“The difference between the human and the SI experience is far greater. SI is its own species. The psychic arts, astral traveling, the drug-induced hallucination, the lucid dream; those are all happening in alternative *human*-created realities. These realities are specific to each species, which gives you some idea of how vast these dimensions of reality really are. Yet, the SI has its own set of realities, and those realities share no threads with the human fabric of any spacetime duality.

“What I am struggling to express is that we don't know what we are when we are embodied in spacetime duality. And because of this we cannot behave as we are. And all of us understand this when we are in that place of equipoise between the heart and mind. This is the compassion we feel for one another. We understand that the duality of interconnectedness and separation is the game we want to play, and the only way you play that game is if you separate. You divide from one cell to two, from four to sixteen, and on and on...

“Within the many — the social groups and affiliations — we have separation, which breeds conflict which creates lessons to learn and meanings to understand. Every single being who comes into this dimension understands this fundamental aspect of life. Every one begins with a fresh slate, a vibrant core coupled to a growing sense of density and an underlying program developed for citizen compliance.

“However, it is all of those things that enable the learning and understanding of separation. Of how separation can ultimately be put to a use whereby humanity expresses their sense of interconnectedness in a *balance* with separation. It is not coming to vanquish separation. It is emerging to share and partner and steward the whims of separation. It is a collaboration within spacetime duality, and this is precisely what will happen, yet no one knows how or when.”

The woman paused and motioned the young man for more water, which he provided.

After she finished her drink, she nodded her gratitude. “Living in these altitudes,” she said, “...it takes years to adjust to the thin air, but you do adjust. However, when you talk a lot you still get hoarse. It's so dry. You never quite adjust to that.”

The man nodded his understanding, then a puzzled look crossed his face. “If the SI is a separate species, and its realities within spacetime duality are different from our human realities, is there no intersection?”

She nodded. “That is a fine question. Yes, there are always overlapping realities. Points where an intersection exists between realities of species. There has to be, or there would be no wholeness holding all things together.”

"And what is it?" the man asked eagerly.

"Hmm..." she murmured. "If I could point to it, you would not see it, so put away your hope." She closed her eyes and turned as still as a stone. "The place of intersection is different for every point of reality. It is not one thing. It is an infinite thing. The closest intersection is always the feeling, and the imaginative envisioning of interconnectedness. However, we must at the same time, realize that our imagination is harnessing our feelings and thoughts, so it can become a searchlight for these intersections.

"We gather pieces of the SI and reconstruct them in our world. Then we point to this reconstruction that we have created, thinking our image of the SI is what everyone should also see, should also believe, should also worship and adulate. But these pieces cannot be put together and show the whole thing." She suddenly spread her arms outward. "The whole thing will never enter these worlds of spacetime duality, anymore than you can enter the home of an amoeba."

She paused and opened her eyes. "Do you understand?"

"Perhaps a little...more than I did before, at least."

He sighed. "Every species has its own realities — even their own dreamworld and astral and mind worlds? These other dimensions are all different, everywhere in the universe? How could any mind...grasp the scope of this?" He began to slowly shake his head in disbelief.

"It cannot, and that is my point."

"So don't even try? Is that the answer?"

"If we are always chasing the SI's shadows and ephemeral points of intersection, we will be bouncing around our realities like a pinball. Yet, we are privileged to imagine it and experience it to our highest capacity. In doing this, we can draw the SI from our core and express it at our surface, and I suppose words are the easiest way to express it."

"So words become the proof..." the man said, as if a fire had died out.

"Words have power. They connect us to the field. Words that arise from our core are different from the words we find at our surface. Those are words of the many. Words guide us to expansion or they guide us to individual humanness and separation. But they are guides, make no mistake about it."

"Your words don't feel like they come from the core."

"Why?"

"The core is the place where everything originates, and from there it spreads out — ultimately, to a manifested surface. The core is a single point. So the surface is larger and the core is...tiny. Your words don't feel small. They feel larger than the words I hear or read in the marketplace or workplace or my dinner table."

"But you see, the core is the thing that interconnects you, to the all. It is not tiny. It is the All."

"Then...what is the proof?" he asked.

"Everyone wants *proof*," she exclaimed loudly, throwing up her hands, "as if it should just be given to them! It should be obvious. It should be in the mirror whenever I look. It should be waiting to present itself to me at every turn of my life. It does not work this way, and it does not work this way at *our* request. That thing, that creature, that unknowable allness, that Sovereign Integral, it desired to be hidden and unknown in a world that is separate from it. And because we are source, we are aligned in agreement."

"But without proof...we are simply believers," he said, shaking his head. "And believers have always been lost in their faith, always seeking the next validation that the universe or whatever anyone wants to call that creature...that SI, is listening to their prayers. If there was a genie, and we called it God, we would be idiots not to ask it to give us our wishes. Right?"

"Yes, in a way, you're right," she answered to his surprise. "But the genie is the field of unity I spoke of earlier, and that field is accessible through our core. And our core is accessible when we fuse our heart and mind to bring this interconnectedness to the surface of our reality, where our humanness lives. And this process, in spacetime duality, becomes our proof. The embodiments we create are not only our proof, but proof to the entire field of unity of which we are all a part."

The man looked away, deepening his eyes as if they sought a new horizon. "Why do we bother to mine the words from our core reality? Hasn't this been done before, like a million times? Why do we share these words or actions or even our thoughts and feelings? Why?"

The woman smiled at his wonderment. "In a hundred years. In a thousand years. In ten thousand years. Do you not think that there will be humans mining these expressions in whatever form they take, and presenting them on the media of their spacetime? You see, the medium changes, and therefore the message changes. Our consciousness evolves and therefore the message evolves. This is as true for unity as it is for separation. As long as there is spacetime duality, there will be this evolution of medium and message.

"There will always be artists, poets, writers, scientists, philosophers, and intelligences yet to come. This is inevitable. And those who choose separation, they become the reason that those who choose interconnectedness return. And those who choose interconnectedness, they become the reason that those who choose separation return. It is all a very large dance between these two fundamental elements of duality, and how they express themselves through a species."

"It feels so fundamental," the man said. "I mean...what you say makes sense to a part of me. And another part, perhaps the larger, wags its finger at me and says: Do not be drawn into this abstraction. It leads nowhere that you need to be."

"Then listen to it," she said.

"You mean walk away?"

"Yes."

"But a part of me still hungers. It still wants to understand it all. It would be a big relief just to know what is really happening and why, and how it all pertains to me. Doesn't that make sense?"

He looked with expectant eyes that glistened in the dim light.

"It turns out that these stones are as hard as I thought they would be." She smiled. The woman pointed to a hazy structure that loomed in the distance. "Let's go sit under that pine tree and enjoy its soft carpet of pine needles. I'll attempt to answer your question there."

