



**I Am,
Therefore
I Think**

Musings about the Universe

J.W. BELL

I AM, THEREFORE I THINK

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To Know thyself is the beginning of wisdom.

- *Socrates*

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"There are more things in heaven and Earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

Hamlet, Act 1, Scene 5, 159-167

Chapter One

Finding Harmony

The best way to start a book is before it begins.

Sounds a little crazy, doesn't it? I mean, you are already reading it, that's started. Right?

Technically, yes ... and no. I know: ambiguous. And it sounds like double talk, so let me explain. The meat of the book is still a few pages away yet. This part is where I offer perspective, a small introduction. It's the section where the reader gets antsy traditionally, wishing the author would get on with it. I mean, why explain something that's written to clarify?

Well, first, you need to know something about me. I'm a writer. In years past, I've been a music teacher, a bus driver, a restaurant owner, a soldier, and an oil-field roughneck. None of which made me an expert in metaphysical matters. So, what does? Let me think

about it for a few minutes. You might want to stew on it, too.

It's a safe bet to say you've had to think about things: we all do. It's part of life. You've probably thought about metaphysical things, or this book would still be on a shelf somewhere. But have you really thought beyond and behind your thoughts? Figuring what to have for dinner or whether my clothes coordinate isn't what I mean by thinking. How we use our brains to puzzle out things that don't fall into place automatically is intriguing. How do we pursue a thought to a logical conclusion before setting it aside, or take an abstract thought and dissect it, to find where it takes us?

Does anyone have to do all those things? Of course not, but innately we do: because we are human. It is one of the things we are all born with. It's in our DNA. But simply because we have the capability, it doesn't necessarily follow that we use or develop the talent.

Thinking and reasoning are interconnected with IQ, but not in the obvious way. Let me explain.

The average IQ is between ninety and one hundred-ten. Unfortunately, most of us automatically think our IQ is about one hundred-ten or higher. Truthfully, I'm thinking IQ is not what we need to talk about. I'm interested in actual thinking, not how someone measures it. There is much controversy about IQ measurements now and how it doesn't relate to intelligence directly. I'm not interested in how smart anyone is but more along the lines of tenaciously worrying through problems, and that includes leaps of logic, which I will address later. Besides, most everybody can think, albeit some better than others.

But who? That's a fair question.

The Dunning-Kruger Effect demonstrates there are lower-ability people who have a cognitive bias whereby they overestimate their abilities, while higher performers believe everyone can and does think at the same level as them. That addresses the idea that we all think we have over hundred-ten. A great equalizer, don't

you think?

It is possible that everyone infers they think on a high order, even if they do not. And those who do, always conclude everyone can do it as well as they can. This is not influenced directly by IQ. It is how all of us take for granted that we reason things out.

Ah, I've drifted from the flight of a well-placed arrow. Let's get back to my subject. I desire to learn how you use your ability to navigate through significant problems.

My childhood in the 60s encompassed the days of hippies, Viet Nam, "Peace, brother," along with the sexual and racial revolutions. Then, it was common to hear, "Peace, love, and happiness." Some of us believed what we said, others just paid lip service. A whole subculture studied the occult. "What's your sign?" was a fair question when greeting people.

An era before Harry Potter, when people questioned the natural order of things and accepted different viewpoints, fueled debates about the validity of seeking hidden or forgotten knowledge.

The "Dawning of the Age of Aquarius" was hailed as the unveiling of a new way of thought where peace and love reigned supreme, with whimsical conversations while listening to music; "God, you know the world should be made of music and love, man." and many people wished it were so.

More often than not, that statement excited affirmations and exclamations about how far we would go in such a world. We expounded with imaginative what-ifs (one of the hallmarks of effective thinking), describing wondrous societies where life would be easy: no negative vibes or emotions would block what would *surely* be. The age of Aquarius was at hand.

Visions of no more war and diseases snuffed out, abounded. The disastrous social ills that plagued humans would fall victim to the altruistic vibes we envisioned, as we sat in our black-light rooms with psychedelic music playing and breathing in lungfuls of

... incense.

Today, the whole tenor of life in the U.S. is staggeringly different from then. But Life is still composed of circles. Out, around, and back — attitudes and behaviors cycle here, mores and ethics cycle there. History repeats (but not in exactly the same way — maybe I should say trends repeat): beliefs change; hemlines go up and down.

When I studied ballistics in the Army, one of my instructors described the world with one statement. “There are three constants of the universe — time passes, weather changes, and yes, shit happens.” Then he added, “I want you to take heed, even the constants involve change.”

Here then, is the naked truth: many people who deliberate on these ideas and concepts prefer to contemplate in out-of-the-way circles, in the shadows, half-hidden from view. That is the meaning of the words occult and mysterious.

With sincerity, a trait I perceive has diminished in the world today, I’ve spent years studying, exploring, and observing, searching for hints and inner revelations that make sense, and meditated about life and the Universe. I dug deep into myself to find my ghoulies and ghosties and worked to eradicate them.

I’ve written down my philosophy, and it is just that — my philosophy. It is not a litmus test for the Universe. I’m simply saying, “This makes sense to me.”

As you read, I urge you to remember that. The phrase is important. These things make sense to *me*.

My philosophy, espoused here, will not make sense to everyone. I never intended or expected it to do so. My ambition is to stir the pot and spark individual thought. After all, my goal, my challenge here, is to encourage everyone to think. Can you imagine the world if that happens?

Pablo Picasso said, “Everything you can imagine is real.” Using imagination to look at existence in non-traditional ways will truly

set the mind free to explore different ideas. Where would we be if Copernicus had not broken the stereotype that surrounded him? Anything can be possible. Simply thinking about something will create it, if only in the mind that dreamed it. Everyone chooses their path. We'll address this in more detail later. Thoughts are energy and energies generate vibrations. Again, discussion to follow.

Alas, a world where everybody actively thinks will not happen because of a simple book, the result of a few ideas I've had. However, I do think several kindred Spirits, of whom I will write about later, will sense symmetry.

I care whether you decide to adopt my viewpoint but the real goal of this book is to nudge you to find your perspective. If you feel comfortable with mine, help yourself. Enjoy. If you think differently, that's freedom of choice and I wish you well. All that matters here is that you mentally explore your options and find your veritas.

My philosophy is simple: harmony surrounds us. Vibrations are much more important to the Universe than many people appreciate. They are vital. The Harmonic Theory is an integral building block to everything.

Also, simply not believing me disproves nothing; it is a matter of instigating a dialogue with yourself. That is my stated goal. I want to arouse an outrageous internal debate within you.

Our observations of life may well be contradictory. I respect the way you believe. I have the same privilege.

You may query why I have capitalized Universe. I want you to hold onto that question until later in the book.

Meanwhile, let me go back to the years of my digging around to find a truth.

What I found exhilarated me, still does, and I think there is an excellent chance it may do the same for you. A few ideas border on the problematic to grasp, but only superficially. My aim is for easy

you to align with.

I don't designate this book as proof. Let me say that again. You should not take my writing here as proof of anything. What it is, is my best explanation to myself. This book is what my gut says about how the Universe works.

Yes, I know — no two people look at things alike because they have different viewpoints, frames of reference, experiences. Perspective. I'll talk more about the way we look at perspective later. It will be a recurring theme.

Because of my attitude, my metaphysical stance, I see many things differently from how other people might.

There was a time when I thought my views were typical and similar to others, but I've gone through some trials in the last few years, and my thoughts on many things necessarily changed. They coalesced and are more definable, the rough edges stripped or filed away.

There is an important factor to consider. I'm an inquisitive bastard, but I'm also a little eccentric, and a large portion of people see me as stimulating. Others think me loonier than a wild woman scattering dung for no reason. But don't take my word for it. Just read along. This book is your chance to decide – you tell me. Intriguing, or blithering moron?

Now that I have laid some rudimentary groundwork, if a strange concept arises to challenge your preconceptions, you might need to think outside the box.

A horrible phrase, that, and way overused. I found that every time someone suggested I think outside the box, the first thing I did was to feel around to check for the carton they thought I was in. While I did that, impenetrable walls shot up, straight and resilient. Once those walls were upright, they blocked everything, and I couldn't think outside of a calm afternoon.

The approach needed tweaking, to give thought freedom, without the usual limitations or accepted views.

That may explain things, but it also sounds like a steaming pile of sh—

Hmm.

How about if we try not to think in established ways? Ooh, not so easy, either. Let's try this: let your mind go free, allow it to follow any thought without restriction. Dispense with your cares.

My jottings can be overwhelming; if you compare my concepts with your beliefs and decide you agree with me – I've reached my goal and succeeded.

But.

If you read, compare, and conclude I am an idiot, about as useful as a limp nail, and you want to know how my neurons fire — I've reached my goal and succeeded. It's a win—win for me.

Can both statements be correct? There will be more than a few dualistic ideas presented here. Get used to them. But I will state the purpose of my writing again: it is not to convince you to believe my interpretations, because I passionately believe your thoughts should be your own. I desire to enlist your introspection. If I kick a concept around in your viscera enough, two things might happen. The first: remember: before language, the gut inspired the responses of fight or flight. The second: the physical commotion in the gut should bring about the metaphorical response needed for your ideas to force that internal debate I mentioned before.

Good luck with that, by the way. That is how it started with me.

Hopefully, the experience will help you decide what you do believe with no mish-mashing, no muddling around, just a clear perception of where you fit within the life around you. I know where I sit.

The Universe is no dunce, and as Shakespeare's quote at the beginning of this chapter encapsulates, there are so many more concepts than most people imagine. That statement hammered the nail right on the head and drove it deep.

By the way. Why do people complain about how difficult it is to

understand the Bard's writings? Then they quote him; when they do, his words clarify the most challenging ideas. Maybe it is because he dealt with passions and human failings.

Ah, the dichotomies of life (I love that word, dichotomy, it has a rich sound to it, don't you think?).

And now I see I've strayed again – back to ideas. You will find uncountable buds blossoming once you begin to question where and what you are.

I spent years figuring out how and where I fit within the Universe. Right now, my mind is an active participator, trying to understand concepts that drift through and demand I wrestle with all my mental fortitude. I know there are easy ways to find direction. I was able to discover what works for me.

Well, okay. That is not entirely true – it wasn't that easy. There are also difficult ways. It took time.

I'll talk about time later.

Yes, it took time, but if you discount the length of time, I can tell you learning is easy. All you need to do is relax. Can you do that? Sure, you can. We'll begin in a few moments.

First, I have a tale to tell you. It has to do with my father.

My sire was well educated. Learning was his hobby. He enjoyed it so much that he took courses every other year for no reason other than to learn something new or fascinating, or sometimes to experience a teacher. It was how he received his Masters and doctoral degrees.

He confided to me once that he no longer took courses that interested him. He chose instructors, and it didn't matter to him where he had to go in the world to hear them. He wanted to learn from the best minds — the sharpest, quickest, the most deep-set. He had an ambitious spirit. A chuckle bubbled from him. "I have the credentials to go anywhere." He did too. At one time or another, he'd attended, among others, Oxford, Cambridge, and Harvard. He spent one summer with Mother Theresa. The man

had credentials.

Then, he told me about a course, one on philosophy. The class itself wasn't necessary for him. He'd attended so many philosophy courses, they almost bored him. It was the professor he'd chosen; the man was one of the top world thinkers.

Dad sat down on the first day of class, his mind salivating, and in walked an administrator with a reserved demeanor. The man stood in the doorway and announced a problem; the instructor could not teach the class. However, his prize student agreed to fill in and teach.

The sub came in, and the administrator left.

Although the announcement satisfied the administrator, it did not gratify Dad. It deflated him. He'd taken the course solely on the premise of hearing that professor, and now he had a second-stringer teaching — a mere student to boot.

He leaned back in his chair, and with one ear, he half-listened as the student instructed the class through the most basic philosophy levels. For three days, he sat there, fuming, close to depression. The man taught well, but it was so elementary. Dad had absorbed this knowledge thirty years before.

He didn't say it, but I would have been mumbling about how much undying bullsh— uh, feathers the situation was. On the fourth day, the new instructor asked the class if they'd understood everything so far. He didn't want them drowning in new concepts. He wanted to make sure everyone stood on solid ground. Dad numbly nodded as the rest of the class agreed.

“Okay, then,” chirped the instructor. “Let's dive into some deep water.”

At this point in Dad's story, his eyes glinted, and his smile sprang from nowhere. Dad said, “From that minute on, the man unloaded concept after concept.” Dad had to pay strict attention to the instruction. Dad reminisced fondly about that class, said it was one of the best he ever had. The way it rolled out was a total

surprise.

With that story in mind, I must warn you we will go over a few things, wading on the beach before we get set for a little deep-water swimming. In the same way as my father's substitute teacher, I'm doing this, so everyone has a solid understanding. It'll save going back and re-reading several times.

About the Author

J.W. Bell's life reads like an adventure story. He was a Field Artillery Officer in the Army for ten years, is well-versed in long-range and large-caliber weapons, and is an expert with small arms — handguns, rifles, machine guns, and, oh yes, he trained in explosives and is excellent with hand grenades. His military thrillers use actual terminology, weapons, and military courtesy. He traveled extensively throughout Europe, Asia, and the U.S., living in Hawaii for several years. He coached gymnastics for a time and worked for years as a roughneck in the oilfields of Oklahoma. He became a teacher and holds a lifetime teaching license to teach music and drama. He composed his first symphony and now has a good start on his second. Currently, he lives in Arkansas by himself in a small house on a small acreage where his estranged wife and their ten children: five boys ages six to eighteen and five girls ages six years to sixteen live close by. He has two older daughters who live in Little Rock with their own families. There is also four dogs and cats, a horse, one pony, and two pet pigs on the acreage. Additionally, in an attempt to become self-sufficient, the last inhabitants of the property are the goats; they are prolific, so it is hard to give solid numbers for them, somewhere over ten and not quite fifty.

If you want to know more, [Click here](#).

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J.W. Bell writes fiction, thrillers. They have to do with the military or at least several characters having a military background.

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The Great Zero-Sum

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1674813260>