

## **O Brothers, Come Home**

An Apologetic Dialog

by William Fullilove

*The following is a fictional dialog based on the 2000 movie "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" by Joel and Ethan Coen. In the movie, Everett is the rationalistic leader of the three jail escapees, while Delmar and Pete were his "traveling" partners. EJ represents Ethan and Joel Coen. The statements defended by EJ are my own contrivance based on the worldview apparently presented by the movie. They are not representative of statements made by the Coens themselves.*

**January 28, 2001. Hollywood.**

**Everett:**

Well yes, I am pleased that the events of my redemption from my less than esteemed early years have been so interesting to the viewing public of today. But I am still less than pleased with you boys for casting me in such a light in the final edit. If I'd have known you were going to make me look pompous and stupid, I wouldn't have agreed to let you take my story and make it into a movie.

**EJ:**

Now hold on, Everett. We simply took the events of your life and put them into a movie form. The story is yours. Were we incorrect at all in anything we showed?

**Everett:**

Well no, not strictly speakin'. But fact is, you were making comment the whole time through that movie. I mean, I did say that there was "a perfectly scientific explanation for what just happened."

**EJ:**

Yes, and Pete did reply, "That ain't the tune you was singin' back there at the gallows."

**Everett:**

Yes, and I did then tell him – and I was right, mind you – that they was floodin' that valley to bring hydroelectric power throughout the state, that we was going to usher in a whole new age of reason, out with the old religious mumbo jumbo and in with a new age of rationality. And I was right, mind you. That's what the last sixty-what, sixty-four years have showed us.

**EJ:**

So then what's your problem, Everett? Why are you so steamed at us? After all, we made you famous.

**Everett:**

My problem is that you edited the movie in such a way that you followed my comments about the new age of reason with the sight of a cow on the roof of the cotton house, like that blind grandpa from the beginnin' of the movie actually did know something about what was gonna' happen. You made me look like I didn't get it. Oh, and then to have me clinging to a coffin, of all things, for a life raft. What did you mean to imply? If I hadn't been bound by that contract, I'd have refused to go along with your shenanigans. Thank goodness my Penny has gone blind so she didn't have to see that nonsense. You make it look like Delmar actually had something there, that dimwit. As if he can really believe that when that preacher declared him a new man it was all changed and over – shows he's still a hayseed at heart, even if he's now got them advanced degrees and all.

**EJ:**

Well no offense, Everett, but do you get it? I mean, are you still holding onto this rationalist thing, like everything has a scientific explanation?

**Everett:**

I most certainly am. That's the way the world works, and the last sixty-four years since I settled down from my adventurin' ways have only proved it. Everything in this world has a good, clear, perfectly scientific explanation, if'n we're only intellectual enough to be able to discover it. You just got to have enough capacity for abstract thought, and you can be a leader in this here world, that's what I always said.

**EJ:**

Come on, Everett, the world is changing. People may have thought that for the last century, even, but people have realized that your brand of total rationalism doesn't work.

**Everett:**

How not? Prove it.

**EJ:**

Okay, well for one thing, you can't explain love. It's real – it exists. But you can't explain it rationally.

**Everett:**

Oh yes I certainly can. Love is a product of the evolutionary process, just like everything else around us. We love because it makes our race more likely to survive. So when a mother loves her baby, she's really just caring about passing on her genes. She just isn't enlightened enough to think of it that way. But even that's evolution at work – it works better if she doesn't think of it as genetic survival but if she thinks of it as some pure mother love thing. That way she'll do anything to ensure that her baby survives.

**EJ:**

I'd hate to be one of your girls, Everett – please tell me you don't talk about this with them. But that doesn't really work anyway. Maybe it works for a mother and her child, but it sure doesn't work for loving your parents when they get old. I mean, they won't pass on your genes, so why do you care?

**Everett:**

I care, if you can call it caring, because I care about my whole race surviving. It's part of my genes not only to want my genes to pass along, but to want the genes of my race to keep existing.

**EJ:**

But Everett, why would that evolve? I mean, it doesn't do me any good if my race survives – it only does me good if my genes survive. And why do I care about my children anyway?

**Everett:**

I'm not sure I do, at least if you're talking from a theoretical perspective.

**EJ:**

But you do – at least practically. Why did you spend all that time chasing Penny? Wait, what exactly did you tell her when you were dressed up as the Soggy Bottom Boys during that rally? Wasn't it, "They're my children, too?"

**Everett:**

Well, that must just be my genes acting on me unawares. I mean, in a moment of stress, any human being will cast about. I think I told that to Delmar and Pete, too, at one point.

**EJ:**

But then why'd you break out of jail to try to keep Penny from marrying someone else anyway? Why'd you care? Don't you love her?

**Everett:**

Well, yes, of course I love her. And I broke out of jail because I couldn't let her marry someone else. She was my wife, and they were my girls, not some preppy sissy boy that was trying to swoop in and take my life. Yes I love her. It's just that there's a rational explanation for love, when I step back out of my skin and just use my reason. Why are you going on this love thing, anyway? You sound like you've gotten a little nutty like Delmar. I mean, you don't mean you believe that crazy religious superstition like he does?

**EJ:**

No, not at all, but you don't have a right to criticize his faith. If it's good for him, then it's good for him.

**Everett:**

It is not. It's dumb superstition, and if he were capable of rational thought, he'd see it's dumb. Dumb for me and dumb for him – it's wrong, period. Besides, you are the ones who cast his conversion as the lotus eaters scene. That's not exactly complimentary either.

**EJ:**

You remember he does have a Ph.D., now, don't you?

**Everett:**

Yes, I do, and I still don't understand what's happened to higher learning to let that happen. Truth is, though, I liked him more when he was dumb – he was easier to deal with. But I guess they had to do something for a decorated World War II vet. And he was a bit old for the G.I. bill, but he made good, I s'pose.... Hey, speak of the devil – or the saint, I guess – here he is...

**Delmar:**

Hi Everett, EJ. Sorry to be late. Turning' 96 is really rough on the body, you know? Just don't move so fast anymore. I'm amazed that Everett and I are still upright, and I sure do miss Pete.

**EJ:**

Glad you could make it though. Have you seen how well the movie's done? And that soundtrack – wow! We knew T Bone Burnett was good, but it's been spectacular.

**Delmar:**

Yeah, it's been fun to see, and fun to remember, although I've got to say I prefer remembering it to living it. After all, Everett almost got us killed for a fake treasure. But God changed my life through it, so I won't complain.

**Everett:**

Funny, we were just talking about that.

**Delmar:**

Oh really, what were you saying?

**EJ:**

Well, Everett was just saying how he's still convinced that there's a rational, scientific explanation for everything in this world and that he thinks what you believe is dumb, and we were just saying that he doesn't have a right to criticize what you believe – that if you believe it, that's your call and we're glad it's given you direction in life.

**Delmar:**

Well, EJ, you might be surprised to hear that I agree with Everett more than you think. I mean, if what I believe is false, then I shouldn't believe it.

**Everett:**

So you've finally realized the error of your ways, then? Finally realized that I was right that gettin' dunked by that preacher hadn't changed a thing? That there's no rational or empirical proof for the supernatural? I'd almost say, "Praise God!" if I believed there was a God to praise. Next thing you know, they'll start sellin' Dapper Dan again.

**Delmar:**

Slow down there, Everett. I said "*if* it is false." You seem to think that we can only know things are true if we can give a rational explanation for them. But I've got two problems with that point of view. First, I don't think those equate. For example, my eyes are blue, but I can't explain it. That doesn't make them less blue.

**Everett:**

Yes, but a doctor or a biologist can look at your eyes, figure out their structure, find the genetic code behind them, whatever, then tell you what wavelengths of light they reflect and absorb, so someone can explain why your eyes are blue, and therefore it's rational, even if you, yourself can't explain it. All I'm saying is that there's a rational explanation out there.

**Delmar:**

Okay, that's fine, not a perfect example. But at least it makes the point that there are things I can't explain which are nonetheless true, right? Maybe I'm just waiting for a future explanation, but it's still true even before that.

**Everett:**

Sure.

**Delmar:**

But then what's to say that there aren't things that no human could explain which are nonetheless true? I mean, we're all finite, so the sum of all of us finite humans has no guarantee of explaining everything, even possibly some true things. And second, it seems patently obvious to me that there are things we know apart from human reason. I mean, do you have to use reason to know that your girls love you? Or do they need to use reason to know that they love you? No, they just do. Maybe you can come up with some reasons, but you don't need the reasons to know it.

**Everett:**

I've said it before and I'll say it again, it's a fool that looks for logic in the chambers of the human heart.

**Delmar:**

My point exactly, Everett. Even if it's not logical, it's true.

**EJ:**

But wait, how do you know it's *true*? I don't mind the idea that you can somehow know things, but truth is a pretty vague concept. And you're not really talking about the color of your eyes, anyway. You're talking about issues of religious faith, and those can be true for you but not true for someone else. It's one thing to say Everett doesn't know it's false, but it's another thing entirely to say you know it's true, as if that means it applies to everybody. It's pretty arrogant for you to claim that you know what's true for the whole human race.

**Delmar:**

Well, if I just thought it up, I suppose it would be pretty arrogant. But what if we were trying to cross a river, and I found the one bridge across it? Wouldn't it be good for me to come find you and tell you that I'd found a bridge?

**EJ:**

Yes, of course, but we're not talking about bridges and rivers, we're talking about religion, and in religion there are many bridges over the river. Or, to use the more usual way of putting it, there are many roads to the top of the mountain.

**Delmar:**

Are you sure? How do you know that? Are you on one of the roads to the top of that mountain?

**EJ:**

Yes, on one of the roads, just like you are, just like everyone is.

**Delmar:**

Okay, then if you're on one of the roads, how in the world can you claim to be far enough back to have perspective and be able to tell that all of the roads go to the top of the mountain? You'd need an aerial view for that, or at a minimum to already be on top of the mountain and looking back down on them all. If you're just on one of the roads, then for all you know, the road you're on could turn back around and go back to the valley. Trust me, I've been on plenty of roads up mountains that don't actually go to the top. So again, how do you know that there are many bridges over the river?

**EJ:**

There just are. And even if I don't know how to prove it, you certainly can't prove that your bridge is the only way.

**Delmar:**

Actually, I think I can. But before I try, can I ask you to think about the implications of what you've just said? You felt it was wrong for Everett to attack my faith. Why?

**EJ:**

Because faith is a personal thing, and he shouldn't tell you what to believe.

**Delmar:**

Okay, but why shouldn't he? His faith in human reason says my faith in God is wrong, so can't he believe that?

**EJ:**

Well, yes, he can believe whatever he wants, but he doesn't have the right to tell you what not to believe.

**Delmar:**

So you're saying he has the right to believe I'm an idiot, but he doesn't have the right to *tell* me he believes I'm an idiot?

**EJ:**

Well, no, not exactly. I mean, he can't believe your religion is false either, because it's for you. That's offensive. What you do personally is your problem, not his.

**Delmar:**

So then you're telling him that what he believes is false, that he can't believe it. Isn't that what you just got all over him for doing to me?

**EJ:**

Well yes, I mean, no. It looks that way, but I'm just arguing that no one can criticize another's religious belief, because it's a personal area, not global. There isn't any larger religious truth, just yours and mine.

**Delmar:**

Seems to me you can't decide if thinking is prohibited, or just telling. Your ideas certainly lead you to denying that he could even think it, but you realize that you're in a logical trap if you do, so you stop short of saying it. But it's where your claim inevitably heads. So, straight up, do you mean to imply that he's not allowed to even think about what I believe, or to consider and reject what I believe? You can't mean that – if so, there's no such thing as rational discussion.

**EJ:**

No, of course he can consider and reject what you believe, but he can't tell you not to believe it. He can't impinge on your autonomy.

**Delmar:**

Really. So what's right and wrong comes from human autonomy. Anything that impinges on my autonomy or on yours is wrong, but anything else is okay. Is that what you mean?

**EJ:**

Yes. He has no right to impinge on your autonomy of belief, just like you have no right to try to impinge on anyone else's. That's the problem with your Christianity, too – not that you believe it, but that you insist everyone else should believe it.

**Delmar:**

So wait, Everett can't impinge on my autonomy by telling me what to believe, but apparently you can, because you just told me my belief is wrong. Why do you get special status?

**EJ:**

Well the one thing we don't have to tolerate is intolerance.

**Delmar:**

Then aren't you yourself again being what you criticize, being intolerant of my intolerance, as you put it? It seems you've actually declared yourself an exception to your system at the very start. And why that exception? And why should I care about human autonomy? What makes it so special? Do you agree with Everett that we're just the product of chance, that there is no creator?

**EJ:**

Yes.

**Delmar:**

Then what's your basis for declaring autonomy good? That's what I'm driving at – that you throw around terms like "right" and "wrong," but you really have no basis for them. It seems you've made autonomy a moral obligation, but what's your justification for doing so?

**EJ:**

It's a moral obligation because it's a good thing.

**Delmar:**

But how can you declare it good? What's your basis for using that word? If you came about by random chance, why do I have a moral obligation to respect your autonomy? You're trying to hijack moral language, but your idea that truth is only relative gives no basis for it. If truth is only what I make it, if it's different for you than for me, then there's nothing that can create a moral obligation for me. But here's the thing, I don't think you really believe truth is relative. In fact, you just proved you don't. Because you said Everett *shouldn't* attack me. You made a moral judgment on him right there, so you're doing the same thing I am – setting

up a moral vision of the world and trying to enforce it on other people – the only difference is that yours is a one-item moral vision which says “don’t tell other people what to do.” At a minimum, you’ve got a self-contradictory system. Even though you say we aren’t supposed to tell others what to believe, you do it. You’re not actually saying all truth is relative. You’re deciding in advance that autonomy is the highest value and then judging everything by it. But even then, you’re not doing it consistently. You can’t.

**Everett:**

Well, at least I don’t have that problem. Actually, EJ, I think you’ve got a bigger problem. You’re creating a recipe for chaos in this world, morally and otherwise. At least in my rational day, which, by the way, is *not* over, whatever postmodern mumbo jumbo you soliloquize, truth was clear. It’s necessary for a well-ordered world. If truth is relative, like you say, then there’s no reason I can tell people they’re wrong for stealing, or lying, or cheating. Or racism. Remember, we all thought it was okay back then. But if truth is relative, then maybe it’s okay after all. I sure can’t tell someone it’s not. I don’t want that – all of society would break down. I want to insist on truth, and true things are things that are rationally and empirically proven. If I can prove something, then it’s true, and it binds me and you. And if you can’t prove it, then you can’t bind me or anyone else.

**Delmar:**

Okay, Everett, but don’t you have the same problem when it comes to morality? Yes, you can use logic to say two plus two equals four. Or you can use your senses to tell me that this table is here. But I’m sure EJ didn’t mean to imply you couldn’t. Remember, he’s talking about the area of morals. But how can you use your rationality to make a moral obligation? You think that we’re the product of chance and time, right? That lots of molecules, given enough time, turned into us. Is that correct?

**Everett:**

Absolutely. That’s the scientific explanation, and it’s well-documented.

**Delmar:**

Okay, then tell me why I shouldn’t punch you in the face right now. Or even better, what did you say when that lawman was about to hang us after the governor had pardoned us? You said, “Wait, this is wrong; we’ve been pardoned.” Weren’t you presuming there was some right or wrong? But if we’re all just time and chance, then why is it wrong?

**Everett:**

It’s wrong because it’s evolved to be wrong. That’s why. A species that doesn’t respect each other will die out.

**Delmar:**

I used to fall for things like that, Everett, but not anymore. The fact that it happened by chance doesn't create a moral obligation for me. If your existence is just a random combination of molecules, then ending it wouldn't have been such a bad thing – it would have just been changing their order while the worms ate you. There's no reason to respect somebody's rights if what you're saying is true; there is no good and bad, only chance. If so, any rights, including EJ's autonomy, but also the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, to name a few, are just social conventions, not rights. There is no such thing as a human right, and if you say there are, you're just pulling them out of the air.

**Everett:**

Well now we'll have to crack open all our philosophy that you studied after the war. Mankind's greatest thinkers have used reason to come up with a solid basis for morality, not superstition like you somehow cling to. Sometimes I think you're still back on the farm.

**Delmar:**

Well, I think that's a pretty broad and dubious claim, and I'll be happy to talk specifics about any philosopher you pick, because I think they've failed in that quest. But before I do, I should point out that it gets worse than that for your position, Everett. Why do you presume we're having a discussion here? I mean, we are having rational discussion, even if you don't think my position itself is ultimately rational. But if the world evolved by chance, how can you expect us to have rational discussion with each other? You say everything happened by random collisions of atoms, but then you assume that we're able to talk to each other and make sense of each other. That's not a very random world. Are you saying entropy turned into order? I thought it went the reverse way.

**Everett:**

Okay then, Delmar, since you've gotten all smart on us, you give a reason – you give a basis for people's rights and let's see if you can do any better.

**Delmar:**

Okay, we all have basic human rights because human beings are made in the image of God. And because we are made in the image of God, we have a basic dignity.

**Everett:**

Okay, and how do you know that we're made in the image of God?

**Delmar:**

Because God's Word in the Bible tells me so.

**Everett:**

Now you're being completely asinine and arbitrary – you are still dumber than a sack of hammers after all. You say that on blind faith. What makes you believe that? Just that you dove into a river with a country preacher sixty-four years ago?

**Delmar:**

Well, Everett, I didn't know half of what I was getting into, but I really did come to Jesus that day. And the preacher wasn't lying when he told me that all my sins had been washed away. And you know how I know? The same way. The Bible says so. It is faith, my friend, but you're acting on just as much faith as I. And my faith isn't blind, either. There's lots of proof, if you'll only see it.

**Everett:**

I'm not believing on faith, I'm unaffiliated. I'm believing based on cold hard reason.

**Delmar:**

Well it's cold and hard, I'll give you that. But I don't think you're any more reasonable than I am. In fact, I'd say that being reasonable means agreeing with the way things actually are, which I'd add, is the way God made them and therefore will agree with what He says in the Bible. And I think my belief in Christianity fits better with the facts of this world than your belief in what you call reason. There are any number of examples I could point to, but why don't I start with one from our lives, the flood that kept us from gettin' hanged by that lawman. Think about the following: 1) we were gonna be hanged, and there was nobody there to stop it, 2) you bent down and prayed that God would spare you and us, and you asked Him for forgiveness and to get us out of that jam, 3) a wall of water came crashing through knocking us free and sparing us, and 4) somehow all four of us got out of those ropes and swam to the surface.

**Everett:**

Like I told you that day while we was floating on that coffin. There was a perfectly scientific explanation for what had just happened. They were planning to flood that valley that day to establish hydroelectric power throughout the south.

**Delmar:**

Uh huh. And Everett, have you ever seen how they flood a valley for hydroelectric power? They dam it up at one end, and the water level rises inch by inch, not a torrent. And then we went by that cow on the roof of the cotton house, just like the old prophet said. Everett, that wasn't natural.

**Everett:**

Well, I'm sure a perfectly reasonable scientific explanation can be found. Maybe there was a hill or section of rock in the valley that choked off the water until it built up enough pressure and busted through. That's why it hit us as a wall of water.

**Delmar:**

See, you're doing it again. You're presupposing no God. And therefore you're believing whatever straw of an explanation you can grasp. You look at the evidence with a bias – just as bad as mine – actually worse, because I'm telling you my system makes more sense versus this world. You have blind faith that there isn't a God. Otherwise, you'd be long since convinced based on all the evidence that's in this world.

**Everett:**

How do you know you have to interpret it that way? I think my explanation sounds perfectly good. You can't prove that it didn't happen that way, and as long as there's a rational, scientific explanation, it's to be preferred.

**Delmar:**

I know it because the Bible tells me that it didn't. Hold on, before you answer that – I'm not saying the Bible mentions you and me and Pete in the year 1936. But I am saying it tells me how to view the world and that miracles do happen. And if God says it's true, then that's what's rational, by definition.

**Everett:**

That's not rational, it's the exact opposite; it's blind faith counter to reason.

**Delmar:**

But Everett, it's not. And think about it, it's not just one flood that you've gotta explain away, Everett. You've got to explain away all of creation and history.

**Everett:**

Oh come on, name something.

**Delmar:**

Okay, particularly, you've got to explain away the fact that Jesus rose from the dead.

**Everett:**

Jesus rose from the dead? I don't have to explain that away. It never happened!

**Delmar:**

How do you know? The Bible says he did.

**Everett:**

Then the Bible must be wrong. Rationality demands it. People simply do not rise from the dead. I mean, have you ever seen a corpse running around in your eighty-eight years of existence?

**Delmar:**

Actually, Everett, I'd run the logic the other way around. The Bible is God's Word, and it says that people do rise from the dead, so I believe it, not your supposedly rational argument. The Bible is my test for what's true or not. And further, it itself is evidence that it really happened. That's what I'm trying to say.

**Everett:**

Okay, there's your reasoning flaw. Just a minute ago, you said that I needed to explain that Jesus rose from the dead, like that was proof that the Bible was true. Now you say that the Bible is the standard for what's true. That, my friend, is a circular argument, and if you have any conception of logic, you know that circular arguments are unsound.

**Delmar:**

Well Everett, I admit it looks circular, but it's no more circular than what you're saying. Look, you say reason is the criteria for truth. How will you prove that for me?

**Everett:**

Because that's how we figure out truth.

**Delmar:**

No dice, Everett. That's not a proof. That's just restating your argument.

**Everett:**

Okay, because reason has always led us to truth.

**Delmar:**

How'd you figure that out?

**Everett:**

Well, I thought through all the circumstances I know, and it's always worked in them, so I assume it always will.

**Delmar:**

So what did you do? You reasoned. See, you're being just as circular as I am. You say reason is the ultimate test for truth, and then you justify it by trying to give me a reason. Truth is, you can't give me a reason without being circular. You'd have to use reason to prove that reason is the ultimate standard. I mean, if it's ultimate what else could you use? You've just gone and been irrational at the final moment – without any justification, you've declared your reason as the final authority for truth. You're either dogmatically asserting the primacy of reason, and therefore inconsistent, or you're circular yourself at this point.

**EJ:**

That's why it's better just to admit that there isn't any truth. Don't you see – you'll never get out of this quandary. Everett says reason guides all, and if so, there's nothing he can say to prove it, because he'd have to give a reason. But Delmar, you say the Bible guides all, and there's nothing you can say to prove it other than the Bible, because if it's above all, then it has to prove itself. Best to admit the whole thing is irrational and give up on truth.

**Delmar:**

Actually, no, that's not my point. My point is just that when you get to a first principle, you shouldn't keep trying to come up with something else to prove it. Instead, we should recognize that first principle and see if the system that flows from it seems to align with our world. It was CS Lewis, I think – do you remember him from the British radio broadcasts during the war? – he said that it's like you have a window, and it's good that you can see through that, because you're trying to look at the garden outside. But you want to see through the window to the garden because the garden is opaque. But what if the garden were transparent, too? Then you'd never get anywhere. It'd be like not seeing at all. That's why Lewis said that it's no use trying to see through first principles.

**EJ:**

Then where does that get us? You've got your first principle that the Bible is actually God's words. But Everett's got his that human reason explains everything, and I've got mine that there is no truth. Seems like a great tie to me. All the more reason to believe no system really has it figured out.

**Delmar:**

Ah, but you can compare systems. Maybe not mathematically or perfectly, but what you're saying and what I'm saying are very different. For starters, me versus Everett. He says that the Bible must be wrong, that dead people don't rise. But the Bible is not only God's Word; it is a work about history, and it's claiming that we can historically verify the facts. Now Everett may insist that I'm reading the facts wrong, but this isn't a neutral event. Among other things, you'd have to explain the empty tomb, that Jesus' body wasn't found and produced to stop this Christian movement in its tracks. I can give you many more things like that that corroborate what I'm saying, although that may be a separate conversation while we eat some lunch. My point is that they may each be consistent systems based on their presuppositions, but I think mine fits better with the way the world really seems to be. Second, if one of the systems is self-contradictory, then I don't think it holds up that well. Like I was saying, you say that all truth is relative, but then you're telling me I shouldn't believe anything absolutely. Well should I believe that statement of yours absolutely? If I do, then I've just violated it. But if I don't, then some truth must be absolute. I still don't think it works as a system. Third, I think my system fits better with the way we live every day. Everett says he still wants values, and he lives like it – I've seen

how he loves his daughters – that doesn't make sense if he's right that we're the product of a bunch of atoms that randomly stuck together.

**Waiter:**

Gentlemen, have you decided?

**Delmar:**

Oops, I haven't even looked at the menu. I apologize. Give us just a moment, and I promise I'll be ready. Real quickly, before we order, can I offer a parting thought? I think you and Everett are actually after the same thing – I think you're on the same side without realizing it. You're both intent on being the one who decides what's right. For all his rationality, in the end, Everett's gone and been totally dogmatic, just declaring that his system of reason can determine what's true or false for the entire world. So he's put himself in the place of God, making him the one to decide what's right or wrong for us. But EJ, so are you. You're not claiming to be rationalist like Everett, but you are claiming that you can decide what's right or wrong – because if there is only truth “for you,” and not for everybody, then you get to decide what's right. In either case, you're trying to take for yourself what's God's role, to decide what's right or wrong. Haven't you read Genesis 3? You're falling for the oldest trick in the book!

**Everett:**

Delmar, I still don't buy it, and I think you've flipped off the deep end. And I liked you a lot better before you got all learn'd up – you were easier to deal with. But I've been listening to a tape of a book by David Hume...