



The Game of the Two Oracles

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Once upon a time, two Oracles were playing a game. Each of the pieces represented a concept, an abstract form. But they were not just symbols, they were actually made out of the pure essences of the concepts, and every move on the board reflected an event in the physical world far below - or maybe the Oracles made their moves to reflect the world.

One day one of the Oracles said : 'I will become bored with this game soon.'

The other looked up from the board and asked : 'Have the patterns on the board stopped telling you their secrets ?'

'No, they still reveal new facets of the diamond that is reality.'

'Is the game too orderly or chaotic ?'

'No, since when any of us plays too regularly the other one will seize the chance to exploit this order. And when the game becomes too chaotic the chaos itself will become a player we will play against.'

'Is the game too simple then ?'

'Yes, this game reflects a part of reality. We have played with a small board and just a few pieces, and we have played with boards so immense that even we cannot see across them, where uncountable pieces act out their dramas. But it has never been complete.'

'So you wish to add a new piece to the game ?'

'Yes, I have it here. It represents the game itself.'

The other Oracle looked at the piece and smiled.

'It would definitely make the game more interesting, and as you say, it would make the game complete. Let us set up the game again.'

The Oracles set up their game, and among the pieces they added the game itself. Soon they were involved in its complex patterns, and watched with amusement how the game itself affected the pieces around it.

'Do you see those two pieces ?' one of them asked.

'Yes. They must represent ourselves in relation to the game. Now we are a part of it.'

'You were right, this simple extension of the rules have made the game much more interesting. Let us see what happens now.' The Oracle tried to move some pieces in a way to remove the game itself from the game. To their surprise it failed.

'We should have expected it,' the other remarked, 'the game itself cannot vanish from the game, or it would be a contradiction. And the rules do not allow such things'.

'Interesting. But what if the rules changed ?' the other one mused, and began a complex gambit to make the rules change. As they watched, the gambit dissolved harmlessly into confusion.

'You cannot change the rules that way, because then the gambit would have been illegal. You have to change the rules so that the gambit which changes the rules is itself allowed.'

'Astute as always, my friend. Let us try to find new rules then, which we are able to bring about according to both the old rules and the new ones.'

The two Oracles played on, absorbed in the game. They soon learned how to make the game change its rules, but despite their attempts they could not make it contradict itself. The game became more and more complex, then it was suddenly simplified, but the pieces representing the two Oracles and the game itself was still on the board. Half seriously, half jokingly one Oracle tried to attack the piece representing the other. But the attack failed completely, despite that the other did nothing to defend himself.

'You cannot remove my piece from the game without ending it, my friend.'

'And ending the game is impossible as long as the game itself is still on the board.'



'And we cannot remove the game without causing a contradiction.

So we are trapped here, unable to leave our playing.'

They continued to play for a while, but the joy was gone. Eventually one said : 'We will remain trapped here forever, if we cannot find our way out. Let us join forces and yet again seek to create a contradiction'

This time they gathered together all their pieces, and used all their cunning in making them change the rules in such a convoluted way that the game seemed to transmute from a mere game into reality itself and eventually into something else altogether, far beyond both game and reality. But there were still no contradictions, just new rules. The Oracles tried again, and again. The rules became an immense cathedral of logic, but still without any flaw.

The Oracles continued playing for eons, unable to stop. One evening a small girl happened to walk by,

and she was delighted with the beautiful pieces, carved out of truth itself. While the two Oracles intently watched their latest gambit, she quietly picked up a small piece when they weren't looking and took it with her. After a while they noticed that something was amiss, but they could not remember what.

'There is something wrong with the patterns.' one said.

'Yes. Actually, there should be a piece at that corner according to the rules. But there isn't.' the other pointed out.

'But in that case...' They quickly forced the game into a contradiction, which ended it. Unsteadily, they rose to their feet and looked about at the world outside the game.

'The contradiction was not a new piece, it was the absence of a piece' one mused 'And I cannot remember which one. Maybe it have never existed.'

'We could have walked away from the game at any time' the other Oracle smiled. They pondered this for a moment, looked at each other, and then Ascended.