

"Zang-za-bang!" I cried. "QED!"

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"Get me out of this place!" my manager suddenly exclaimed, looking up from his half-empty pint for the first time in ten minutes.

"What what what? What's wrong with this place?" I asked my drinking companion as he took a long swig from his beer.

"Not *this* place, I mean this whole *place* in general, this whole school, this whole town," he said as his glass came down with a crack on the worn wooden table.

"Oh, so you don't have any particular problem with this particular place in general?" I said with a smug look on my face, "but everything that's around it is giving you a problem."

"Exactly," he replied as he flagged down our waitress for another round.

"So it's kind of like you dig this particular subset of the wider set of experiences associated with where you are, but many of the members of that larger set are things you aren't very happy with?" I continued, relishing the pained look that came across my manager's face as he attempted to look like he was thinking deeply. "What elements of the set of your life experience are you unhappy with?"

"Well, for instance, I'm bored," he offered with a lame expression, "and I don't have a job lined up when I graduate and my friends are starting to annoy the heck out of me."

"Sounds like a personal problem," I muttered.

"What?"

"Nothing. So you like sitting with me in our favorite local watering hole," I said. "What does it take for you to be happy with an experience? What else are you happy with in your life?"

"I dunno," he said, "I guess I just like things that lend themselves to originality or excitement or thoughtfulness."

"So we could say that your happiness in a given place and time can be described as a function of you feeling like a human being instead of a lump on a log, and that function maps certain experiences from your life onto a subset of experiences you classify as happiness?" I said without taking a breath.

"What in the nine hells are you blabbering about?" my manager scoffed in between swigs of his beer.

"You'll see," I readily assured him. "What are you going to do about your little dilemma?"

"I told you already! I'm getting out of this place!" he said.

"Where will you go?" I asked him intently.

"I don't rightly know," he slowly responded after a short pause. "Somewhere where I'll have fun and be happy. Maybe California."

"Ah, but you aren't happy right now," I said.

"Well, right now I'm OK, even though you're starting to bug the tar out of me," my manager said menacingly, "but, in general, no I'm not happy."

"N equals zero," I mumbled.

"What?"

"Nothing. So let's suppose you decide to move somewhere else. Let's suppose that you aren't happy there," I conjectured.

"Why wouldn't I be happy there?" my manager interrupted. "I'm moving to be happy."

"Why would you be happy there?" I rebutted.

"Oh. Good point."

"Exactly. Now let me finish," I gulped down the rest of my beer, "changing scenery won't change your wider set of life experiences. Your set of experiences here and your set of experiences N places away are homomorphisms. The same goes for your set of experiences N+1 places away from here. So anytime you move from one place to another..."

I paused as the waitress set two more beers on our table. "You boys behave now," she said coyly.

"Right, so anytime you move from one place to another, your function for happiness will still map the same types of things to your happiness subset. So you won't ever expand your subset of happy experiences. By PMI," I concluded with a toothy grin.

"What does that mean?" my manager asked incredulously.

"It means nobody gives a flying rat's behind where the heck you move to, you're still going to be miserable if you keep up this attitude of most everything sucking a big one. It means you need to quit whining, drink your beer and be happy you aren't dying face down in the mud in the Sudan and that you have a warm home and good friends!" I exclaimed.

"But...", he tried to counter.

"No buts. QED," I said.

My manager stared back into his full pint glass.

Prove that Ken is full of it at [viewpoint@technicianonline.com](mailto:viewpoint@technicianonline.com).