

**A)** These are two different questions:

1. why is there something rather than nothing?
2. what state of affairs requires the fewest (weakest) assumptions?

**1.1** we could be asking for logical or temporal or causal (or something else) reasons—take your pick

**1.2** on one end of a spectrum we have that every logically possible (or perhaps qualitatively possible) thing exists. On the other end of the spectrum we have that only *this* (indeed solipsistic) universe exists. (Two semantic dimensions.)

**1.3** (1) seems insoluble, but ontic perspectivalism is a possible solution. We may suppose each state has a prior state, but, as Leibniz pointed out, there is then the question of where the whole sequence came from (also one must assume prior states do not get arbitrarily close so that a limit is not reached). But in ontic perspectivalism there is no perspective from which the *whole* sequence of states can be apprehended (so to speak), so the sequence taken as a whole does not need an explanation.

How did we get to ‘now’? In some models (see (I)) going to ever-earlier times is different than going to ever-further-past times.

**2.1** is the existence of the *possibility* of some state of affairs  $x$  a weaker assumption than the assumption of nothing? This is may possible because there being ‘nothing’ seems to itself be an assumption.

**2.2** if we admit the existence of a possibility we have a toe-hold on existence and it might be possible to bootstrap from there.

**2.3** an interesting answer to question (1) is: why not?

**B)** The Fine-tuning Argument

It’s my opinion that, as of this writing, 8/16/2021, physicists are endlessly confused about the fine-tuning argument. What’s going on is this.

There is not *one* data point, there are *two* data points. If we want a complete picture of reality we need to take into account all the available data, which in this case means both data points. The two data points are 1. the (indeed solipsistic) universe as it actually is right now. This leads to the conclusion that the constants are what they are because they could not be otherwise—if they were different I would be different than I am. 2. The second data point is that—given that every state seems to have a predecessor that could have lead to multiple futures—the beginning of the universe was the big bang (for the sake of argument), and its future could have been almost any universe from then on, especially ones that do not have humans in them.

The probability of us existing given the first data point is 1, and the probability of us existing given the second data point is almost 0. This is an example of two-dimensional semantics. The first point rests on a particular model of (evident) time/causality (the A-series), while second point rests on a different model of time/causality (the B-series). I’ve written about these two different but valid notions of time elsewhere.

**C)** In science, experiment is the eventual arbiter, but it is not the only way forward.

**D)** One thing we can say is that Schrodinger's cat was lazy.

**E)** "Beauty isn't a good way forward in physics." This erroneous idea forgets that most physicists are not good at discerning beauty.

**F)** As of this writing physicists have never addressed the question of if the flow of time or of if the forward direction of time is \*correlated\* to increasing entropy, or if one \*causes\* the other, or if they are both caused by something else. (I have my own thoughts on this but won't go into them here.)

**G)** Many-worlds and some other interpretations of quantum mechanics are at best only partial interpretations: they don't say what a superposition \*is\*--in the case of Many-worlds only that new universes are created at every measurement (by magic?). Many-worlds is important to think about as it represents an extremal point of possible interpretations. But as a proposal for how the world is, it's silly. I could go on.

**H)** Some physicists want uni-directional (asymmetric) phenomenal time to be a mathematical function of bi-directional (symmetric) micro-time, even though the former—it is supposed—is composed of the latter. This is (only) wishful thinking.

**I)** Later and later times 'become' from the future into the present and then into the past. *That* is a model of time that is consistent with the empirical data.

**J)** On a first take one believes in the conclusions of science but not in ghosts. It's sometimes pointed out that on a second take it seems we should not believe in the conclusions of science either, since we haven't done the experiments and theorizing ourselves. But on a third take the cases of science and ghosts are different: the utility of and ideas about science have a different relation to everything else in our experience (language, sensations, regularities, etc.) than do the utility of and ideas about ghosts.

This applies to the multiverse (but not Many-worlds), even if it turns out to be wrong. On a third take, the multiverse model is an extrapolation of other trusted models. If it indeed turns out to not give testable predictions it is nevertheless not arbitrary, and therefore it contributes to our comprehension of the world.

**K)** Physicists are always asking is such-and-such \*useful\*? In my opinion this is close to being just laziness. If you really want to be useful go be a carpenter with hammer and nails.

**L)** This is funny: if I'm in America, is it earlier or later in Europe? It's earlier in the sense that the sun will rise sooner there. It's later in the sense that their clocks have already read what the clocks here read and their clocks have gone on to read later times.

**M)** Einstein was no Newton. Newton was no Aristotle. Presumably.

**N)** The issue is not 'intelligent design' but 'spiritual design'. Some people will understand this and some will not.

**O)** Qualia are self-evident but not obvious.

**P)** "Where are those 'qualia'?" What you are looking for is what you are using to look.

**Q)** Something good to meditate on: what are you experiencing \*between\* your thoughts? (Merely reading about this question does not get you to the other bank of the river.)

**R)** For those who are obsessed with 'all is one' you now have another duality: on the one hand you have 'one' and on the other hand you have 'duality'. (There is a resolution to this.)

**S)** Being the best of your generation at something in no way makes you a Mozart. Haydn was a genius. Let's not forget to be grateful to Leopold Mozart. Let's be grateful to Constanze Mozart for encouraging Wolfgang to write down that extreme form of music: fugue. Beethoven got the worst case of surfer's ear in history. Both Mozart and Beethoven had to pay for their greatness: Mozart died young and Beethoven went deaf. I would bet that Bach finished Contrapunctus 14, even though it didn't get engraved.

**T)** I love the psychological separation of the hands in Gould's Bach. But he plays everything staccato (to the detriment of the music) and he has no sense of tempo whatsoever.

**U)** J. S. Bach discovered *the funk* (cf. the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement of BWV 1063).

**V)** The only argument there is that Bach is not God or a god is that he declined to improvise a 6-part fugue on the royal theme. But that story could be apocryphal.

**W)** "If Jesus loves me so much why doesn't he pay my rent?" Well, I'm not homeless.

**X)** Jesus might get arrested for upsetting the table in the synagogue, and for uprooting the fig tree, but it's unlikely he would do time.

**Y)** It is thoroughly clear that elephants are perfectly aware that they will die someday.

**Z)** For materialists and mathematicians I would say that starting in 1<sup>st</sup> grade it takes about 15 years of study to get to the Schrodinger equation. But for how many years have you been meditating hours every day? How many Koans have you solved (and not merely read about)? What makes you think you \*should\* understand consciousness?

**AA)** It's not quite right to say 'aliens wouldn't understand Shakespeare'. Aliens would have to solve the same evolutionary problems that we did and many would have developed similar tools, including language. Sensitivity and to language and metaphor are in some sense basic cognitive functions, so they would have poets too.

**AB)** Subjective experience (consciousness) is supposedly irrelevant to causality and survival of the fittest. But if this is the case, then the consciousness associated with a human brain and/or body should be no *less* random than the consciousness associated with a physical system chosen *at random*.

