

1 James

“Not only that *anything* should be, but that *this* very thing should be, is mysterious! Philosophy stares, but brings no reasoned solution, for from nothing to being there is no logical bridge.” (James, 573)

Why is there something rather than nothing?

“Because if there were nothing, we wouldn’t be here to ask this question.”

2 Parfit

Q1. Why does a universe exist?

Q2. Why does *this* universe exist?

Causal explanation: A exists because it was caused by B, and B exists because it was caused by C, and so on ...

- Reply: What explains the series?
- It doesn’t matter if we trace the series back to the Big Bang or God.
- But just because there’s no causal explanation for Q1 or Q2 doesn’t show that they’re incoherent or cannot be answered.

Chance explanation: That there is a universe is just as likely as any other possibility.

- Reply: Sometimes we think that if A is the case, there’s a special reason for it, even if A is just as likely as B or C or ...
 - Genesis in stars, alien communication, rigged lotteries ...
- Since the initial conditions had to have been very narrowly right for life, stars, etc., it appears that our universe is **fine-tuned**.

Nonimprobability explanation: It’s not unlikely that there’s life and so on, because we don’t have a probabilistic basis (and *likelihood* requires this), since there’s only one universe.

- Reply: Consider as the basis the outcomes given the same laws of nature but different initial conditions. The probability of life etc. is fewer than 1 in a billion billion.
- Given this, many explanations other than God are more likely than that the initial conditions were the way they were purely by chance.
- But what if the initial conditions necessary for life etc. are more likely to obtain?

The Many Worlds Hypothesis: Our universe is one out of many, each with their own Big Bang and outcomes.

- The Many Worlds Hypothesis seems to account for Q1. That is, that our Big Bang occurred is more likely given MWH than the supposition that there is only one universe.
- But we can still ask how likely MWH is independent of the evidence that our Big Bang occurred.
 - Which is more likely, MWH or the existence of God?
 - Which is more likely, MWH or the Null Hypothesis?
 - How about the All Worlds Hypothesis?

The logical necessity explanation: The universe exists because its nonexistence is contradictory.

- Reply: Where's the contradiction?

Possible *Selectors*, features that our universe might have that might explain its existence:

- Maximality (All Worlds Hypothesis)
- Simplicity or least arbitrariness (Null Hypothesis)
- Perfection ("Axiarchic" View)

None: Brute Fact view