

The Greatest Teacher¹

time's new romans

"Understanding a Question is half an Answer"

- Socrates

Human beings are "the rational animal" as Aristotle called us— but also the "understanding seeking creatures".

We don't just want to take in random inputs and to reason well in a responsive rationality, nor do we just want to seek and obtain basic knowledge: comprehending what is true or what the answer is.

Instead, we also want to know *why* something is true and *why* it is interesting (understanding²).

We exist in the world— with values and emotions and goals— and select a finite amount³ to focus on, out of an infinite graveyard of babel.

In navigating the infinite seas, self consistency is not alone sufficient⁴.

In our fundamental method of progress, human beings ask the right questions and then vigorously seek answers: getting the right people to work on them in the right way⁵.

But even with "the answer" *to a question* in hand— whether found or given— to motivate it well we first must explain the question, including why it is important⁶.

This is crucial to "understanding": where one recognizes that having the answer without (understanding) the question can be as empty as having the question without (understanding) the answer.

Indeed, Socrates' genius quote reflects that "the answer" only makes sense when you consider the "right question", and it is the same knower that knows both *together* in the learning process.

¹ Author: Andrew Downing Hartford. This work relates to the EP Conjecture. Written: August 7 2024.

² Note: one could say that "understanding" is a special kind of knowledge and one would be right. Knowing the answer, as in possessing it in a 3rd party sense, is not the same as understanding the answer in the context of both the question itself *and everything else in the Universe/totality*. IF one has understanding they do have knowledge, but IF they have knowledge they do not necessarily have full understanding. This point reminds one of the difficulty of breaking away any part from the whole (for a theoretician), given 1 global memory.

³ ... of naturally interesting, aesthetically appealing, and/or practically relevant structures and ideas.

⁴ And in doing what we do, a 1st person POV is required to self-verify what is not verifiable: from 1st instantiation (bridging the axiomatic gap) to proper aim (pursuing the right path of deductions, out of all possible deductions) to stopping the tape in designation of the answer (for, even where the map exists of all possible destinations, we still need to get off at the right stop).

⁵ Oftentimes this happens solo, sometimes in a small team, and sometimes as a large community in a collective fashion.

⁶ As Kant emphasized, the creation and adjudication and implementation of "reasons" is a core aspect of will. And in this sense, an answer is not truly known without the understanding of the knower (self), which includes why the knowledge is known and knowable in the way that it is.

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With all that as a jumble of preamble, remember why we are here!

This case is called "Something v. Nothing".

We've written 60 "papers" related to Leibniz's famous question, "why is there Something rather than Nothing⁷?"

But to date, we haven't done as good a job discussing the question— versus exploring the answer and secondary(+) ideas that flow from that perspective.

This paper seeks to improve on that: to explain this deepest question⁸.

On its face, "Why is there Something Rather than Nothing?" can be understood as the ultimate "counter-factual".

A counterfactual says, we have a situation X (or imagine one)-- and then wonder IF that condition (X) might have been different?

The "fact" is the situation, the "counter" is the alternative possibility one contemplates (re: "rather than").

Whether there are 1 or many existors, all of them are similarly called and equally captured by the single category "Something". Whatever there is, and whatever you call it, it's in that same one category (Something).

And whether there are one or many somethings, each of them individually or all of them together equally suffices as Something (and not absolute Nothing).

And for whatever does exist— *including the one who asks the question and the universe they exist in (Something)*— we challenge its existence.

It is as simple as that.

We are something (existence), not Nothing (non-existence).

⁷ The Good Robert has done as nice a job as anyone in legitimizing and promoting Leibniz's question as important in the modern digital age. It is likely the EP Conjecture would not have happened had I not got scent of the chase via RLK's Closer to Truth program. I hadn't heard the question until I was about 25. I was a bit of a late bloomer.

⁸ It is the deepest question because all other questions invoke it. The question challenges exist itself, requiring one to uncover what the source is, and to ponder, where possibility and necessity comes from.

When we apply this question to every-thing⁹ (i.e. to each something, “must you have existed?”), individually and collectively, this limits with absolute Nothing: a non-situation of no something whatsoever– i.e. no existors or encodings across the totality (non-existence, vs. a blank slate or an existence with no physical space).

This is equivalent to giving absolute Nothing “its Day in Court”, which means treating it as the Defendant: presuming its innocence, in this case, its “possibility”.

When we ask this question, what that means is that *we do not take our own existence as proof of the logical impossibility of absolute Nothing*: we try to consider the possibility¹⁰ openly ex-ante that perhaps there might have instead been non-existence all together.

That’s what we mean when we say “Something (us, the plaintiffs that exist) v. Nothing (defendant)”.

Whether the quantum mechanical “wavefunction of the universe”, the mathematics that is necessary to it, or the Divine itself– for anything that does or might exist (in fact), we openly challenge such with the possibility that it would not be contradictory for it not to exist.

Must whatever exists in fact, have existed?

IF it must exist (logically speaking), that’s great.

But please explain why.

Physics typically says “how” (mechanism) is the “why” (reason) of “what” (the phenomenon to be explained). But, with the base case, this approach fails: since the always existor (base case) is un-caused (path-less, not resultant mechanism), non-empirical (not in space), not observable as a process (it’s before all time), and non-repeatable (“n=1 event”, with quotes intentionally).

And so, in their relentless search for “why”, the theoretician goes to the deeper, logical and philosophical interpretation of “why”, where we use Aristotle’s minimalist axiomatic method of argument and explanation.

⁹ On the one hand, we imagine changing the laws of physics– and say, of course the universe would look a lot different, including universes which we think have no finite observers like us because there is not enough structure. But this question includes that, and everything else (math, logic, the Divine, the wavefunction, possibilities, etc.). In this sense, Leibniz is summarily capturing– in one question– the process of skeptical negation which launched Descartes to his famous realization that negating one’s own existence was a self-contraction because one did so as one sell (counterexample). This methodology of Descartes, or the unified summary of Leibniz, generates the hunt for uncovering if there is anything which is necessary (i.e. that couldn’t have not have existed; that must have existed affirmatively). As we learn from mathematics, we find what cannot not be true IF there is existence (IFTTT)... but where we realize this is crucially different from absolute necessity: affirmatively finding an existor that must exist, and that is true (exists) independent of any-thing else.

¹⁰ The word “possibility” can be very very misleading here: IF there were no something there would be no possibilities, nor the possibility of absolute Nothing (realized), nor would there be 1 (or many) absolute Nothing that exists (re: Nothing isn’t equal to anything, not even itself; nor would Nothing ≠ Nothing be true).

And by “explain” we mean that we want a good argument which is (1) non-circular and (2) insightful– i.e. the one who makes and accepts the argument feels as though they have learned something new, true, and interesting; not just self-consistent (valid), trivial, and meaningless.

And so our great task: *Is there any reason within reason* why there would be a contradiction of logic for some (specific) something to not exist.

And if there is, can we find it *as an output* without presupposing it as an input.

Crucially, we realize that “uniqueness without Necessity is not Uniqueness” (capital U).

That is, even IF we achieved our Dream of a Final Theory of physics, the genius Weinberg knew we would still be faced with an unanswered next question *in the same line of inquiry of seeking an ultimate explanation* (i.e. why is there any-thing, regardless of what it looks like or how it works).

Because, OK, we have something, great.

And maybe we find that there’s only one possible way for something to be– whether the laws of physics or all possible histories or both.

But we still want a comprehensive explanation to be satisfied: *necessity* of the unique, such that there couldn’t have been Nothing instead; not just uniqueness of existence IF there is Something.

To claim something like math or the laws of physics or possibilities or G exist, or could possibly exist– and to do so as input– is of course to presuppose the conclusion¹¹ there must be something and not Nothing (i.e. that something you *input* has necessity directly baked in by the chef!).

A conclusion is (best) “argued for” IF it’s output, with a meaningful separation between premises (inputs or axioms) and conclusion. A good “argument” is an insight machine.

The EPC uncovers that there is an “ontological singularity”: in and as the base case, (1) existence, (2) original possibility, (3) 1st actuality, (4) necessity and (5) totality converge originally as and in 1 existor (i.e. the global origin exists all together, all at once, and before all time as 1 existor– and thus, such is the only possible always something).

Whatever you call it, it appears there is only 1 thing to name.

Its possibility, necessity, “reason” and means for existence are one in the same– *and found in itself*.

¹¹ Thus, those previous ontological arguments are either circular and true OR self-consistent and false, but either way, not the best “argument”. Self-consistency is a necessary condition of existors, not a sufficient condition for existors.

Perhaps no one should be surprised: the answer to the most magnificent question is rather beautiful, including the wonderful feature that the question cannot be answered or proven in a 3rd party sense without 1st party participation and self-determination by the 1st party asker.

Why is winning this case important? That is discussed here in [Marching on the Black Gate](#)¹².

Socrates¹³ once said, “Smart people learn from everything and everyone, average people from their experiences, stupid people already have all the answers.”

We think he was right.

We thus end again with the greatest teacher, “I know that I know *no-thing*”, and where we add, “we know not even that!”

In conclusion: while we are very confident in this case file, we tremble before the halls of Knowledge and the realms of Understanding– both in the awe of what has been and can be achieved by the finite, and in recognition of the categorical gap with the infinite.

¹² Bertrand Russell famously concluded that existence was a “brute fact”. This mindset is something of a cold, heartless, mindless universe. It’s absolutely pervasive in a lot of the philosophy and in society at-large. It’s very “glass mostly empty” and nihilistic. Bertand Russell was a legend, but here, quite mistaken. The finding of the always existor as the answer to Leibniz’s question is not a “brute fact” in the sense of BR, even though our specific cosmology, including that we exist at all, could be a brute fact. By “brute fact”, it’s meant as a contingent possibility amongst many other possibilities (something), or at minimum, 1 possibility against Nothing instead. Yes, it is true that we are “stuck” with a specific global origin (re: only 1 possible and necessary original existor). But that is NOT a brute fact: we have an explanation and an understanding of why such is the case, why it must be the case, and why we (the finite) understand this question the way we do. And, [this paper](#) makes another thing clear: seeing the difference between the absolute necessity of the absolute, the always existor which is not a mathematical object, and the logical necessity of the truths of math— which flow because there is existence and where we can find them because of the mentality we have, which is enabled by the Source).

¹³ I was a very late bloomer. When I first thought about Socrates ~18, I remember thinking wow; he was ready to die for what he believed in? Isn’t that something? Bravery is sort of an incredible thing. But as a wise coach said to me, no one needs to die. What’s never dead will never die.