

The Philosophy vs. Science Debate

Post by "Cassius" of November 8, 2023 at 9:55 AM

I don't think we currently have a list of articles or references on this point so I will set up this thread to make the topic more searchable.

Here's one article but I haven't even read it to know whether to suggest it or not. However I know we've talked about this in the past and there are probably already good articles people have identified:

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[Philosophy v science: which can answer the big questions of life?](#)

Philosopher Julian Baggini challenges physicist Lawrence Krauss over 'mission creep' in the scientific community

www.theguardian.com

I know there is also a relevant youtube debate between Lawrence Krauss and the British philosopher _____ on the "Something from nothing" issue, and we've also discussed Victor Stenger's work on some of these issues.

Post by “Don” of November 8, 2023 at 10:45 AM

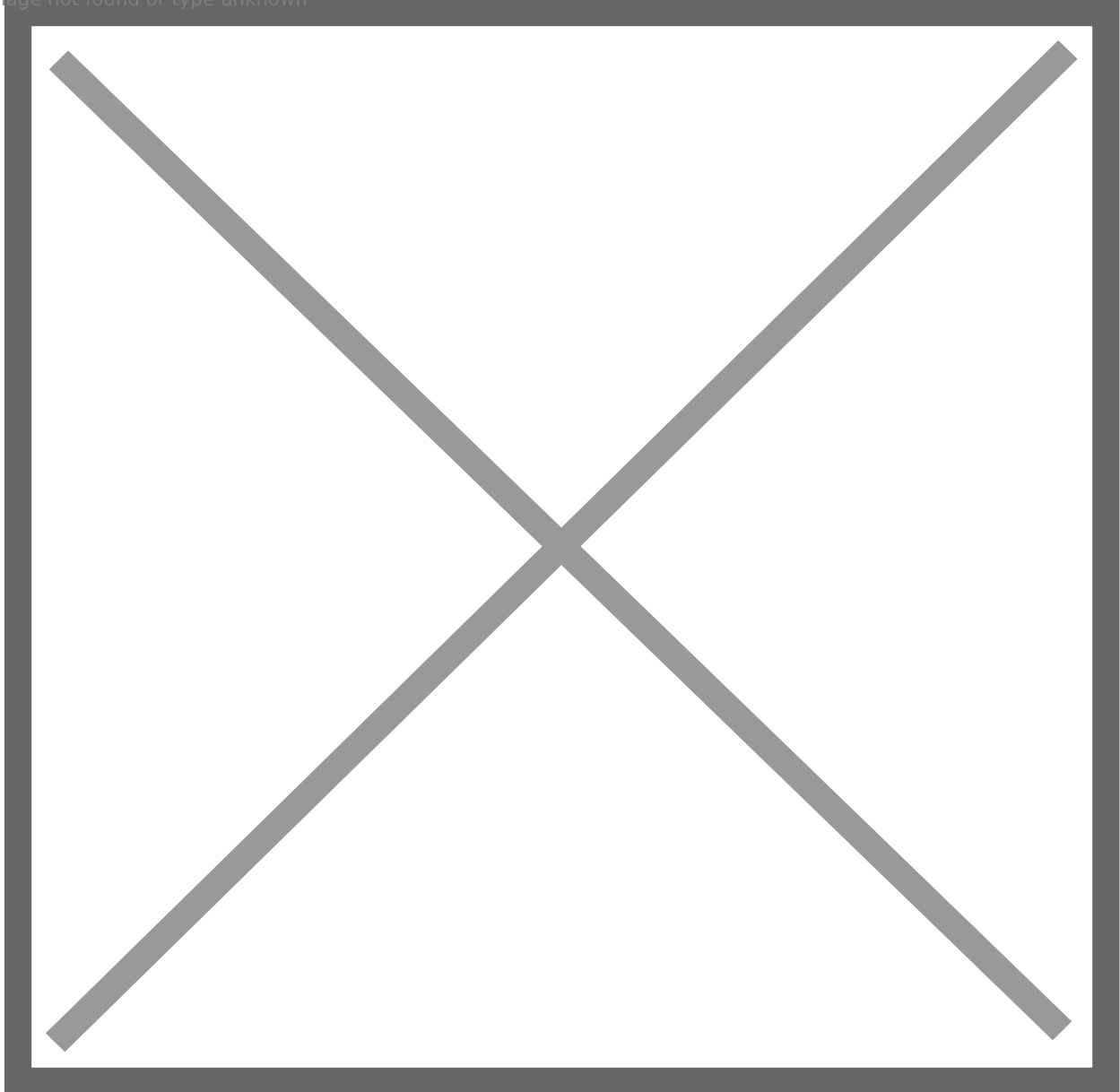
<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3479-the-philosophy-vs-science-debate/>

Is this what you're referring to? (with Richard Dawkins?)

https://youtu.be/YUe0_4rdj0U?si=rSmV7xWR4YIfq58p

Just to clarify: As I understand it, there really isn't ever "something from nothing." See:

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[70-year-old quantum prediction comes true, as something is created from nothing](#)

In our common experience, you can't get something for nothing. In the quantum realm, something really can emerge from nothing.

bigthink.com

Quote

If you take all of [the elementary particles] away, however, the “empty space” that remains isn’t quite empty in many physical senses.

For one, even in the absence of particles, quantum fields remain. Just as we cannot take the laws of physics away from the Universe, we cannot take the quantum fields that permeate the Universe away from it.

It's referenced in the article, but here also is a direct link to the animation of what "empty" space is actually doing:

[Derek Leinweber](#)

Post by “Cassius” of November 8, 2023 at 11:38 AM

Yes! Thank you Don! For some reason I have a terrible time remembering Richard Dawkins' name, even though he is one of my favorite modern philosophers.

Post by “Pacatus” of November 8, 2023 at 6:50 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

Just to clarify: As I understand it, there really isn't ever "something from nothing."

Me too: Energy and energy fields and forces are not "nothing." (But I have no background in any of this.)

Post by “Pacatus” of November 8, 2023 at 7:32 PM

From the article [Cassius](#) linked in the opening post:

“Your example of homosexuality is a case in point. I agree that the main reasons for thinking it is wrong are linked with outmoded ways of thought. But the way you put it, it is because science shows us that homosexual behaviour "is completely natural", "has no apparent negative evolutionary impacts", is "biologically based" and "not harmful" that we can conclude it is "not innately 'wrong'". But this mixes up ethical and scientific forms of justification. Homosexuality is morally acceptable, but not for scientific reasons. Right and wrong are not simply matters of evolutionary impacts and what is natural. There have been claims, for example, that rape is both natural and has evolutionary advantages.”

This gets at the crux: **the “is to ought” question**. For someone to say that a given action has been shown to be biologically natural and prolific across populations is **an “is” statement** (empirical). To say that that also dictates an “ought” (or “ought not”) **moves from the empirical to the normative** – turning facts like biologically natural and prolific across populations and not harmful into the proper **norms** for ethics. **But that itself is a philosophical move**. It may not be wrong (Epicurean philosophy draws upon what is natural and not harmful) – but it is no longer science.

Post by “Cassius” of November 8, 2023 at 7:58 PM

Pacatus I confess I shot first and asked questions later before I linked that article. If after reading it you think it was inappropriate for the forum let me know.

Post by “Pacatus” of November 8, 2023 at 9:21 PM

[Cassius](#) No, I think the perhaps contentious examples were just examples.