

Nothing Ain't Worth Nothing....

Post by “kochiekoch” of November 4, 2024 at 2:49 PM

...But It's Free! ☐☐

Here's a take on tonight's first Monday theme of "[Nothing Can Be Created From Nothing](#)".

Nothing doesn't exist!

["Nothing" doesn't exist. Instead, there's "quantum foam" - Big Think](#)

An updated version of Epicurus' idea of an infinite universe filled with infinite particles undergoing the swerve. All courtesy of quantum physics.

Enjoy! ☐☐

Post by “Kalosyni” of November 5, 2024 at 10:27 AM

For all practical purposes "quantum foam" is still closer to "nothing".

This thread may be relevant...on Asimov's Relativity of Wrong:

Thread

[Isaac Asimov's Essay "The Relativity of Wrong" \(Including Criticism of Socrates And Considering Proper Standards of Correctness\)](#)

Today a friend referred me to an essay by Isaac Asimov entitled "The Relativity of Wrong" with which I was not previously familiar. It contains of Socrates which seems right in line with the Epicurean perspective. Even more than that, it contains an analysis of what it means to be "right" or "wrong" that I think is probably also very consistent with Epicurus' perspective. Here's a good summary of the point from [Wikipedia](#) ("In the title essay, Asimov argues that there exist degrees of...



Cassius

August 30, 2024 at 8:51 AM

Post by “Cassius” of November 5, 2024 at 11:22 AM

Does the article state that quantum foam really doesn't have any existence? Leaving aside the issue of the necessity of some kind of void in order for things to change place, just skimming the article I thought the direction of the writer was that even as you bore down to lower levels there's still "something" there(?)

Post by “Don” of November 5, 2024 at 12:08 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

even as you bore down to lower levels there's still "something" there(?)

That's been my perspective all along. There is never nothing. There's always something - in the widest sense - out of which things - in the widest sense - arise.

Post by “kochiekoch” of November 5, 2024 at 1:34 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Does the article state that quantum foam really doesn't have any existence?

Not at all. It's stating that there is actual experimental evidence, the Casimir effect that demonstrates it does.

Post by “Kalosyni” of November 6, 2024 at 8:36 AM

This would be better as a cartoon, but here it goes anyway...lol. 😄

Person A: "I'm trying to find my big heavy winter coat and I just looked inside the guest room closet where I thought I put it at the end of last winter...but there was **nothing** in the closet!"

Person B: "You better go look again, because I'm sure that there is **something** in there."

Person A: "Oh yeah? Do you think it magically appeared?"

We then see Person A and Person B go and look inside the closet.

Person B: "See, look at all that dust in the bottom of the closet! I told you there was **something** in there!"

Post by "Cassius" of November 6, 2024 at 9:10 AM

So what position are you guys taking as to whether "empty space" exists?

Post by "Cassius" of November 6, 2024 at 9:51 AM

I raise that last question because of a part of a discussion we had I think in a recent Zoom:

How tightly is "Nothing comes from Nothing" tied to "Atomism?"

"Atomism" seems to postulate that the way the universe works with regularity is that there are eternal irreducible particles which when moving through empty space come together to form bodies, and that this process explains and underlies the regularity of all that we see.

Would a "plenum" (no empty space anywhere) work just as well?

If not, why not?

One thing I'll suggest for sure: Just as in the issue of life in the rest of the universe and whether humans are the longest living and happiest forms of life, it's not sufficient from Epicurus' point of view to say "I don't know and I'm not going to think about it." It's important to have a working theory that makes sense to support whatever position you want to take, otherwise you're just a Socratic "I don't know anything except that I don't know anything" gadfly.

Same goes in the field of "do gods exist?"

And in my view we have painful proof of why it's important to take a position:

When the claims of Judaism-Christianism intellectually conquered the ancient world, the Academic-Skeptic position of "I don't know whether you're right or wrong because it's impossible to ever be sure of anything" didn't have the intellectual/emotional force to prevail in the battle of ideas. Radical skepticism simply doesn't win minds or hearts.

As Nietzsche said in his "Anti-Christ," Epicurus was working in a direction which, if it had been more widely adopted, would have given the ancient world more fortitude to stand up to the claims of Judeo-Christianism. Just like the Epicureans were the ones who stood up against the claims of Alexander the Oracle-Monger, you need a philosophy that gives you confidence to stand up against claims of the supernatural, and "I think you're wrong but I don't know anything about anything" doesn't cut it.

Epicurus chose atomism and his view of gods as a logical and defensible high-level position about how things really are. This gave him the ability to say to his opponents, "You're wrong on certain important claims, and here's why."

So if you're going to take the position that "nothing comes from nothing" then you need to offer a plausible explanation to explain why. Is atomism required for that? Would a "plenum" work just as well? I think it would be very interesting to try to reconstruct why Epicurus chose atomism.

Post by "Joshua" of November 6, 2024 at 12:06 PM

The Pythoclean alternative of proposing one or more plausible explanations solves one aspect of the problem. We don't have to know everything to know something rather than nothing!

Post by "kochiekoch" of November 6, 2024 at 12:11 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

So what position are you guys taking as to whether "empty space" exists?

It's there, it's just filled with virtual particles that pop in and out of existence, borrowing the energy of that empty space. All this in addition to the atoms that fly through them.

[What is Quantum Fluctuation?|| scienceshorts||](#)

So even a vacuum isn't exactly nothing.

Post by “Cassius” of November 6, 2024 at 12:33 PM

I would push back against the idea of "popping in and out of existence"..... Changing from one *form* to another however is certainly plausible, like ice to water. But the word *existence* is probably exactly what "cannot" happen.

Post by “Kalosyni” of November 6, 2024 at 12:40 PM

"Nothing comes from nothing" = there are causes for what exists and there are conditions (natural laws) that everything is conditioned and governed by...cows don't pop out of thin air, because they depend on causes and conditions of the material world of matter.

Post by “kochiekoch” of November 6, 2024 at 1:00 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

How tightly is "Nothing comes from Nothing" tied to "Atomism?"

"Atomism" seems to postulate that the way the universe works with regularity is that there are eternal irreducible particles which when moving through empty space come together to form bodies, and that this process explains and underlies the regularity of all that we see.

Would a "plenum" (no empty space anywhere) work just as well?

If not, why not?

Nope, the plenum would be a black hole. Infinite density and energy. You can't make much out of that. 😊

The atoms, produced out of the energy of the Big Bang, would never be "nothing" as nothing doesn't seem to exist. There is the vacuum of space-time which gives the atoms freedom to move and produce all the swell effects we see.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

And in my view we have painful proof of why it's important to take a position

You're preaching to the choir. 😊 I think you need science backing up your philosophical positions.

Post by “kochiekoch” of November 6, 2024 at 1:09 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I would push back against the idea of "popping in and out of existence"..... Changing from one *form* to another however is certainly plausible, like ice to water. But the word *existence* is probably exactly what "cannot" happen.

LOL!!! Popping in and out of existence is a figure of speech I've read in regard to this phenomenon. You have a point. They borrow the energy of the quantum vacuum and then return it. So, popping in and out of existence isn't exactly true.

Post by “kochiekoch” of November 6, 2024 at 1:12 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

"Nothing comes from nothing" = there are causes for what exists and there are conditions (natural laws) that everything is conditioned and governed by...cows don't pop out of thin air, because they depend on causes and conditions of the material world of matter.

They'd have to be quantum cows to do that! Good point! 😊

Post by “Cassius” of November 6, 2024 at 3:16 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

"Nothing comes from nothing" = there are causes for what exists and there are conditions (natural laws) that everything is conditioned and governed by...cows don't pop out of thin air, because they depend on causes and conditions of the material world of matter.

As you say there, the issue is "natural" causes. I know I am being legalistic here in the framing of the words, but in the philosophical context I think that's important. I gather from [Frances Wright's chapter 15](#) that she was concerned about a narrow focus on "causes" as being infinitely regressive unless you have a starting point (which in Epicurus' case was the eternal atoms).

Simply saying "everything has a cause" does not rule out that the cause is "God." To rule out "God" being the cause, you need a theory on what is the point of "origin" of the regression -- or you have a firm position that there was no "origin" and that the elements are eternal.

Post by “Cassius” of November 6, 2024 at 4:57 PM

We've linked to this Dawkins debate before -

https://youtu.be/YUe0_4rdj0U

Join critically-acclaimed author and evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins and world-renowned theoretical physicist and author Lawrence Krauss as they discuss biology, cosmology, religion, and a host of other topics. The authors will also discuss their new books. Dawkins recently published *The Magic of Reality: How We Know What's Really True*, an exploration of the magic of discovery embodied in the practice of science. Written for all age groups, the book moves forward from historical examples of supernatural explanations of natural phenomena to focus on the actual science behind how the world works. Krauss's latest book, *A Universe from Nothing: Why There is Something Rather than Nothing*, explains the scientific advances that provide insight into how the universe formed. Krauss tackles the age-old assumption that something cannot arise from nothing by arguing that not only can something arise from nothing, but something will always arise from nothing. Founded in 2008, the ASU Origins Project is a university-wide transdisciplinary initiative aimed at facilitating cutting edge research and

inquiry about origins questions, enhancing public science literacy, and improving science education. Since its inception, the Origins Project has brought the world's leading scientists, including Nobel Prize winners, to Tempe to explore origins questions. The Origins Project has hosted workshops and public events that have focused on questions as fundamental as the origin of the universe, how life began, the origins of human uniqueness, and the origins of morality.