

Universal Design

The Multiverse Fails to Eliminate a Creator

— by Hugh Ross —

Virtually all scientists who've studied the features of the universe—on any scale from most immense to most minuscule—would agree with astrophysicist Paul Davies: “the impression of design is overwhelming.”¹ Disagreement arises, however, over whether this exquisite fine-tuning referred to by Davies represents a mere *impression* or, rather, a clear indication of *actual* design. Are we here because our existence was intended?

Scientists who reject the notion of a cosmic Creator often appeal to an idea called the “multiverse.” It has been defined in various ways, but the most popular view is that an infinite diversity of universes must exist, each with physical properties different from all the rest. Over time, by mere chance, at least one of these universes emerged with all the precise characteristics that allow for—and result in—our existence. According to this view, no outside intervention was required to account for us or anything else.

During my years of research and writing about cosmic attributes precisely required for life, especially human life, I began to anticipate the day when an appeal to infinity might arise. Throughout the 1970s and '80s, scientific evidence for cosmic fine-tuning increased at such a rapid rate as to fluster those who resisted belief in a transcendent, personal Creator. It occurred to me that the rising evidence for exacting and pervasive fine-tuning for humanity's existence was becoming so strong that nontheists would see no option other than to credit the multiverse. Within less than two decades, what I anticipated came to pass, but does it really offer the desired escape?



—What Is Infinity?

Infinity is not just a large number. It is a number beyond any number that anyone can conceive. Thus, infinity plus infinity equals infinity. Infinity times infinity equals infinity. Infinity to the infinity power to the infinity power equals infinity. In other words, an appeal to infinity can explain anything one would like it to explain.

Theoretical physicist Paul Steinhardt pointed out that this popular notion of the multiverse allows for all possible outcomes. From the standpoint of reason, if a hypothesis can explain everything, then it really explains nothing. No experiment or observation could verify or falsify it.

—Multiverse Explains Too Much

To illustrate the emptiness of appealing to the multiverse as a way around the necessity of a Creator, let me offer this simple scenario. In an infinite number of universes, an infinite number of planets could possess all the physical and chemical features of Earth. On this infinite number of Earth-like planets, an infinite number of birch-like tree species could exist, each one shedding thin pieces of white bark. At least one of those trees could shed thin white bark pieces exactly like rectangular sheets of paper. An infinite number of these white bark pieces could fall upon soils containing chemicals that would stain them with ink-like markings.

Over time, as an infinite number of such bark pieces falls on an infinite number of distinct soil samples, at least one set of the bark pieces could possess markings identical to all the paragraphs, equations, photos, diagrams, and tables in the 4,250,000+ research papers published by all the research scientists on Earth. Thus, this scenario could explain the existence of all the scientific research papers supposedly produced by all the world's research scientists. In other words, the multiverse produced these papers!

The same reasoning summoned to suggest that no transcendent power and no divine Mind accounts for the cosmos or for us can also be used to eliminate credit for all human design and all human discovery. However, no rational scientist would ever dare to suggest that human designs and human minds are nonexistent. So, the appeal to a multiverse to explain away divine fine-tuning in nature is philosophically inconsistent and unreasonable.

Reason calls for the use of the same standard when testing the reality of design, whatever or whomever its source. If one accepts human designs as real based on physical evidence, then one must likewise accept the reality of divine designs based on their physical evidence.

—All Size Scales

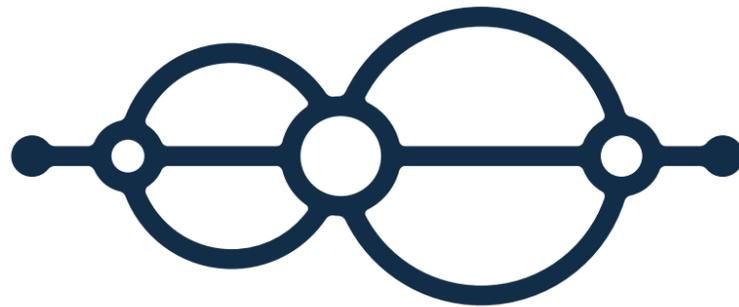
Scientists see overwhelming evidence for purposeful design that makes life, and especially human life, possible on all observable cosmic size scales. Not only does the universe as a whole reveal purposeful design, but every cosmic component does as well. Astronomers observe exquisite designs that make it possible for humans to exist and thrive in the cosmic web, in the superclusters of galaxies, and in the Laniakea supergalaxy cluster in which we humans dwell. They see it in the Virgo cluster of galaxies and in our Local Group of galaxies at the edge of the Virgo cluster. They see more than 200 design features for our existence in the Milky Way Galaxy and in the Local Arm of our galaxy. They see it in the Local Bubble.² They see it in the Local Fluff.³ They see it in our solar system. They see it in the Sun, the Moon, and Earth. They see it in the other seven planets and in the five asteroid/comet belts in the solar system. They see it in Earth's surface environment. Biologists see it in the plants, animals, and microbes. Chemists see it in molecules. Physicists see it in atoms and fundamental particles. Everywhere scientists investigate, at every size scale,

they see overwhelming and pervasive evidence for exquisite fine-tuning.

The accumulated quantity of design evidence has proven proportional to researchers' technological capabilities. As scientists' instruments continue to extend and refine our ability to make detections and accurate measurements, evidence for design continually mounts. In many cases, it grows exponentially. This progressive increase in design evidence is occurring at all observable size scales. The more cosmic details astronomers discover, the more design evidence for the benefit of human existence they uncover. Likewise, the more details astronomers discover about galaxies, stars, and planetary systems, the more design evidence they detect. This accumulation of design evidence is also occurring among geologists, paleontologists, ecologists, microbiologists, molecular biologists, and particle physicists as they expand the databases in their respective scientific endeavors.

—All Time Scales

Because light travels at a finite, measurable speed, the more distant the objects astronomers observe, the farther back in time those objects existed. That is, as astronomers look farther and farther



away, they witness the conditions of the universe at earlier and earlier times in cosmic history. They note that through time, the universe has been prepared, step by step, to make possible a place for human beings to exist and thrive. Such detailed and complex preparation for the future needs of a future species of life represents the signature of an intelligent, purposeful, powerful Planner, not the workings of random physical interactions.

In his book *The Cosmic Blueprint*, Paul Davies raised this question: "If new organizational levels just pop into existence for no reason, why do we see such an orderly progression in the universe from featureless origin to rich diversity?"⁴ In his book *Disturbing the Universe*, physicist Freeman Dyson

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wrote, "The more I examine the universe ... the more evidence I find that the universe in some sense must have known we were coming."⁵

—The Question of Testability

Most scientists and philosophers agree that the multiverse is not a testable hypothesis, due to the soundness of Einstein's theory of general relativity. According to this theory, the space-time surface of the universe in which physical observers exist cannot overlap the space-time surface of any other possibly existing universe(s). Such an impossibility implies that no matter how many universes may exist, we cannot gain any knowledge about their features. Even if a Causal Agent manufactured an infinite number of universes, humans are capable of discovering meaningful information about only the universe in which they live. On this basis, many or most scientists have begun to acknowledge that any discussion about the multiverse reaches beyond the boundaries of science. Such discussion falls within the realm of speculative metaphysics.

Despite our incapacity to detect other possibly existing universes, at least one practical test can be applied to the plausibility of the atheistic version of the multiverse. It's a gambler's test, a coin-flipping experiment. If a thousand consecutive flips of a coin come up "heads" every time, who'd be inclined to bet "tails" on the next flip? Most people would want to examine the coin, realizing that it must have been designed to come up "heads" every time. A

close examination of this coin would be warranted, even after only a dozen "heads" and zero "tails."

Betting on the multiverse would be like assuming that if an infinite number of ordinary coins were flipped infinitely many times and always came up "heads," at least one of them would eventually come up "tails." Even the boldest of gamblers would likely choose to examine,

as closely as possible, a sample coin before making a "tails" bet. Even if the coin appeared ordinary, with "heads" on one side and "tails" on the other, the gambler would do well to check the coin's weight distribution. If this detailed scrutiny revealed that the coin had been tampered with, specially designed to land only "heads" up with every toss, the betting would reasonably end there.

If ongoing research had shown steadily increasing indications that life, particularly human life, requires less fine-tuning and tolerates a wider range of variables for survival than first considered, such results would tend to favor nontheistic models of the universe or multiverse. If, on the other hand, investigators of the only observable universe can examine it in greater detail over hundreds of years and consistently see increasing, exponentially accumulating indications of its precise design for life's existence and survival, especially for humanity's needs, what would the most reasonable conclusion be?

A review of all available—and still increasing—research data emphatically favors this conclusion: A purposeful, powerful, and caring Designer initiated and crafted the universe to provide a time and a place for humanity's thriving. ☉

Notes

1. Paul Davies, *The Cosmic Blueprint: New Discoveries in Nature's Creative Ability to Order the Universe* (1988): 203.
2. The Local Bubble is a magnetized cavity of exceptionally low-density gas extending 160–640 light-years in all directions from the Sun.
3. The Local Fluff is comprised of small, diffuse interstellar clouds of warm, low-density gas and dust near the Sun. The Local Fluff resides in the much larger Local Bubble.
4. Davies, *The Cosmic Blueprint*, 141.
5. Freeman J. Dyson, *Disturbing the Universe* (1979): 250.