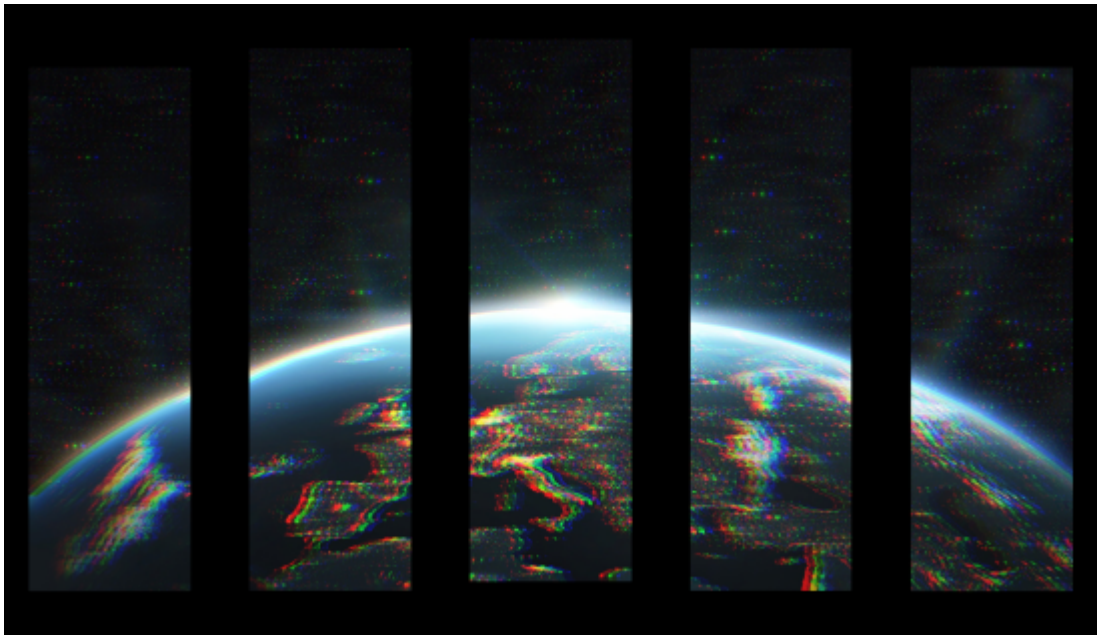
Would You Rather Believe in God or Peter Pan?



Before the discovery of fine-tuning in physics, atheists had staked out the intellectual high ground and condescendingly cast religious believers as naïve, anti-rationalists who blindly cling to myths instead of critically following the light of scientific reason. “When one person suffers from a delusion, it is called insanity,” the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins wrote in his 2007 *The God Delusion*. “When many people suffer from a delusion it is called Religion.”

But that narrative is now crumbling—challenging the views of atheists in profoundly new ways. Science, as it stands today, does not disprove God. On the contrary, its discoveries convincingly indicate that God exists.

One of the most compelling developments in modern physics is the discovery of roughly two dozen physical constants—unchanging numbers that govern the fundamental structure of our universe. Among them is the fine-structure constant (1/137.035999177), a number that determines the strength of interaction between charged particles. For decades, these numbers seemed arbitrary, prompting eminent physicist Richard Feynman to call their unexplained values “one of the greatest damn mysteries of physics.”

However, as scientific understanding deepened, it became clear that these values are anything but random—they are precisely *fine-tuned*. This means that these constants are perfectly calibrated to allow for the existence of our complex, ordered, and structured universe teeming with atoms, molecules, planets, stars, galaxies, and life. Had they been a little different, our universe would be nothing more than a chaotic sea of fundamental particles.

The deeper scientists probed, the more signs of astounding fine-tuning emerged. This culminated in the 1998 discovery of the incredibly fine-tuned cosmological constant—a number that determines the expansion rate of the universe. Scientists measured this to be around 10-122—that is, a decimal point followed by *121 zeroes* and then a one. And they discovered that if this value had been even a little bigger or smaller, then galaxies and everything else in them would not exist.

The discovery of fine-tuning forced physicists to reconsider their two previous possible explanations for the mysterious values of the constants: that they are fundamental brute facts without any deeper cause or that an unknown mathematical law blindly determines their values. Both explanations only made sense when the values were assumed to be arbitrary. But neither explanation could account for the newly discovered conceptual relationship between the fine-tuned values of the constants and the resultant complex universe. In other words, both theories must blindly treat fine-tuning as an enormous, unexplained coincidence.

The straightforward interpretation of fine tuning is that this extraordinary precision is not accidental but intentional—evidence of an intelligent actor that fine-tuned these constants for the purpose of producing our complex universe. While this is not an absolute proof—as that does not exist—it is a powerful, rational, and clear inference.

Some might criticize this argument by saying it’s just an argument from ignorance. Because we don’t know how to explain the values of the constants, we’re saying that “God did it”? That’s just the “God of the Gaps” fallacy—an error that occurs by using “God” to fill every missing detail in scientific knowledge!

This couldn’t be farther from the truth. Fine-tuning is knowledge, not ignorance. Had someone tried to posit God to explain the mysterious values of the constants *before* the discovery of fine tuning, that indeed would have been an argument from ignorance. But, inferring the existence of an intelligent cause from scientific discoveries about the fundamental constants—that they are fine-tuned to produce a complex universe—is an argument from knowledge, not ignorance.

Yet, for many atheist scientists, this conclusion is unacceptable—not because of the lack of evidence, but because it clashes with their prior philosophical commitment that God doesn't exist. Their primary alternative, the multiverse, sounds like it's straight out of a Marvel movie. Alongside the one fine-tuned universe that we actually observe, atheist scientists posit the existence of infinitely many unobservable universes, each with different laws and constants.

The multiverse explains fine-tuning without an intelligent cause. Given an infinite number of varied universes, anything physically possible will happen somewhere. In his discussion of an infinite multiverse, physicist Alan Guth said, "Anything that can happen will happen; in fact, it will happen an infinite number of times." This implies that every single possible set of values for the constants will be realized somewhere in the multiverse.

If so, at least one universe will happen to have the right conditions for life—and apparently, we are in that universe. In fact, if you think about it, we couldn't be anywhere else in the infinite multiverse. We observe fine tuned constants simply because we couldn't exist in any of the universes whose values of the constants make them inhospitable to life. Thus, if you are willing to believe in an infinite multiverse, you can reframe fine tuning from an indication of intentional design to a consequence of observer bias.

On its surface, the multiverse might seem like a reasonable scientific alternative to an intelligent fine tuner. A bit more elaboration is needed to reveal some of the multiverse's deeper flaws and to appreciate its bizarre claims. As Guth said, everything possible happens in an infinite multiverse. He's not joking. Multiverse scientists *literally* believe there are other unseen universes where Peter Pan and Captain Hook are real. In fact, according to multiverse theory, there are an *infinite* number of universes where Never Never Land is a real place.

This is because there is nothing physically or logically impossible about Never Never Land. According to modern science, quantum fluctuations (you don't have to know exactly what that means) make it possible for any group of atoms to randomly rearrange themselves into any order whatsoever. Of course, if there's only one universe, it would be highly unlikely that a fluctuation like Never Never Land will ever ever occur; but an infinite number of universes guarantees that every fairy tale—no matter how farfetched—actually occurs somewhere in the vast multiverse.

The fact that respected scientists are seriously proposing a multiverse highlights just how persuasive the fine-tuning argument has become. The fine-tuning evidence is so compelling that rational scientists find themselves considering a fantastical model of reality filled with infinitely many unobservable universes, where every conceivable possibility—including scenarios as whimsical as those from fairy tales—actually occurs.

The current relevance of the fine-tuning argument and its multiverse alternative cannot be overstated. Today, theists no longer need to defend their position against scientific discoveries. Instead, atheists are compelled to stretch the definition of science to include a belief in an infinite, purposeless, and unobservable multiverse.

Thus, fine-tuning not only revitalizes traditional philosophical arguments about design but also positions them at the very center of contemporary scientific and intellectual discussions. Far from being irrelevant, the fine-tuning argument now demands serious consideration from anyone seeking to understand the profound implications of our universe's precise configuration.

We can now appreciate how the modern fine-tuning argument has truly changed the narrative. While religious people can now embrace scientific discoveries and advocate for one fine tuned universe that was crafted by one intelligent Creator, atheistic scientists' primary alternative is to believe in a chaotic ensemble of infinitely many universes where every conceivable possibility is actually realized.

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