

The Meaning

by Lorenzo Maccone

A historical moment! We now have the answer to the ultimate question. "The" question, the one that has vexed mankind since prehistory: what is the meaning of everything? We now have the answer, and we don't like it.

Last month near Brownlee, Nebraska, a huge 20 mile-wide pink metal cube had suddenly appeared out of nowhere. Mount Palomar observatory spotted a similar structure on the moon, and the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter spotted one also south of Arcadia Planitia, Mars. Scientists from all over the world immediately dispatched to study the Nebraska one, but they drew a complete blank. Only the third day there was a breakthrough when little Tommy Jones, a six-year old sightseer, curiously asked to it "what are you?" The cube politely answered: "I'm your creator, your God, if you will."

We thus realized that He would answer any question addressed to Him using any form of communication: voice, modulated light beams, spread spectrum radio signals, whatever message, in any language and any encoding, including high-grade cryptography. The EFF even taped a fiber link to the cube's surface and gave Him an IP address and a nifty web interface, and the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter communicated to Him on Mars modulating its S-band radar in Morse code.

The answer to most questions was a polite "I'm sorry, for your own good I can't answer this", but enough questions were answered to give us a pretty good picture. Our universe is a Petri dish, an incubator, an experiment. Our Creator created our universe to solve a problem. Our universe is special in having a strong entropy imbalance that allows it to "evolve": it "creates" things. Our universe is basically an experiment in Darwinian evolution, of which we are a byproduct. Oh, the sublime

irony of this epilogue of the evolutionism vs creationism debate!

Why was this experiment necessary? Our Creator seemed slightly amused to be constrained to a single time dimension while visiting us, and we inferred that His universe must have multiple time dimensions, which clearly makes Darwinian-evolution, or even just plain time-evolution, rather exotic concepts for Him! On the other hand, He seemed well acquainted with the concept of religion and He did not exclude that some even higher power may exist. He certainly and undoubtedly is the creator of us and our universe, but He conclusively declared not to be "The" creator. An almost audible global collective sigh of relief rose from pious people of all world religions.

His visit here is to collect the data from His experiment. The time-honored human self-centeredness took the ultimate blow: we are of no interest to Him. He patiently explained that our minor intelligence is not even sufficient to prevent us from destroying our own habitat and He managed to mildly insult us by declaring "rather quaint" the concept of causality we have always proudly used to make sense of the world. On the flip side, people like me who work in a biology lab earned a literal godlike status overnight.

Our only meager consolation is that He did take a special interest in our Earth. It's here that He found some moderately interesting outcome to His experiment: the tardigrada phylum. Indeed these microscopic creatures are remarkably resilient: without much consequences they can be boiled, frozen to near absolute zero, exposed to hard radiation, to the vacuum of space and to the highest pressures of the deepest oceanic rifts. Their DNA sequence was apparently of some interest to Him.

Now, after one month, the momentous event of His visit has already started to drift away from people's attention and from first

page news: the adaptation of human beings to the most incredible ideas and revelations is amazing. However, as a lab technician I can't shake from my mind the thought of what we do to our Petri dishes when we have extracted all the data from our experiments. Today my fears found some purchase: the BICEP3 experiment has observed a sudden isotropic drop of the cosmic microwave background radiation, a datum confirmed by other observatories. Of course that's impossible: that radiation has been traveling to us from all directions from 13-odd billion light-years away, how can it just vanish?! It's like if some strange acausal force is sweeping up the universe, like if our laws of physics are being reset, like if somebody is sterilizing a Petri dish, lik

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