

Reading Questions for November 16

These questions cover two (short) readings. One is by David Albert, and is a book review of a book by Lawrence M. Krauss; it is titled “On the Origin of Everything.” The second is a (short) chapter from the Jim Holt book we read last Wednesday; it is titled “Interlude: A Word on Many Worlds.” The answers do not have to be turned in. You will probably have to read more than once to get the answers.

*Background:*

We’re looking for an answer to the question: why is there something rather than nothing? On Wednesday we looked at whether we could answer this question by arguing that nothingness was impossible; on Friday, we looked at whether we could answer this question by appeal to religion, and today we’re looking at whether we can answer this question by appeal to science. In particular, we’re looking at two different ways one could try to explain why there is something rather than nothing, one that appeals to quantum mechanics, the other that appeals to the multiverse hypothesis.

*Questions:*

1. Does David Albert think quantum mechanics successfully explains why there is something rather than nothing? Why? Do you agree with Albert? Why?
2. Does Jim Holt think that the multiverse hypothesis successfully explains why there is something rather than nothing? Why? Do you agree with Holt? Why?