

## October 2022 Entry – Happy Halloween from Earth!

Boo!

It's that time of the year again – the time of choreographed dancing zombies (of [Michael Jackson](#) “[Thriller](#)” (1983) fame). I guess that means that the zombies are happy, though I cannot imagine why; I cannot imagine that [Lazarus of Bethany](#), who was presumably in heaven, was happy to be called forth from his crypt by Jesus (*Probate Attorney to Jesus*: “Do you have any idea the tax mess you just created!?”).

“‘Qualia’ is an unfamiliar term for something that could not be more familiar to each of us: the ways things seem to us. As is so often the case with philosophical jargon, it is easier to give examples than to give a definition of the term. Look at a glass of milk at sunset; the way it looks to you – the particular, personal, subjective visual quality of the glass of milk is the quale of your visual experience at the moment. The way the milk tastes to you then is another, gustatory quale, and how it sounds to you as you swallow is an auditory quale; these various ‘properties of conscious experience’ are prime examples of qualia. Nothing, it seems, could you know more intimately than your own qualia; let the entire universe be some vast illusion, some mere figment of Descartes’ evil demon, and yet what the figment is made of (for you) will be the qualia of your hallucinatory experiences. Descartes claimed to doubt everything that could be doubted, but he never doubted that his conscious experiences had qualia, the properties by which he knew or apprehended them.” – [Daniel Dennett](#), abstract to “[Quining Qualia](#)” (1988).

1. I did not consent to be born, to our knowledge, no one has ever consented to be born.

a. To consent to being born implies either knowledge that we do not have, or it requires the creation of absurdities and implies in either case, a fraud by omission (in that a potential being, fully informed of the harm of life on Earth might well choose not to be born).

b. No religion I have ever encountered claims that anyone consented to be born, the absurdity of it is even too much for religion. Rather, any religion that has a creation story implies exactly the opposite; Adam and Eve certainly didn't consent to being made (e.g., “Did I request thee, Maker, from my Clay, To mould me Man, did I sollicite thee, From darkness to promote me, or here place?” – [John Milton](#), [Paradise Lost](#) (1667), Book 10, 743-745) and probably even [Jesus](#) and [The Buddha](#) didn't consent to being born. In fact, every religion I

can think of, including those originating in the Indian subcontinent and featuring ‘reincarnation’ or ‘cycling’, have as their goal, an escape from life on Earth ([Samsāra](#)); Christianity as I have pointed out features a cheapened one-shot version that skips reincarnation (go figure that?). The Levant was the cross-roads where Hellenism met Buddhism via the Silk Road.

c. Christianity doesn’t even try to argue that Jesus consented to be born (though it might be teased out of some of their beliefs), even though they argue a heavenly host of other assertions they can’t prove – rather, being often characterized as a bizarre ‘death cult’ underpinning Western civilization (ask yourself, has Christ ever been blamed for the suicide of a Christian?) – Christianity focuses almost entirely on the other end of the process, claiming that Jesus died for us and by us and secured the afterlife of the believers. That is, the death of Jesus, in the minds of Christianity, closed the Abrahamic circle, where Abraham was stopped by an angel from sacrificing his infant son to prove his faith and love of the parental God, God apparently sacrificed his adult son to prove his parental faith in and love of man! And we talked ourselves into believing it because it’s a good story.

2. I do not consent to be here, I do not consent to my continued existence.

a. You may consider that a subjective position – which is just a way that empiricist pat us nicely on the head and say, “Ok whatever,” – but it is a fact known to me every day of my life.

b. Happiness can (and should be) defined as the extent to which each of us consent to our current existence at any given moment; happiness is always subjective (compare to the similar concept of utility in economics), I have never seen anyone argue for objective happiness.

3. I am not allowed to decide to have never existed because the universe has this idiotic mechanism called ‘[causality](#)’ that makes it a paradox: To choose to have never existed implies existence. And that paradox is our life in prison.

a. Non-existence should not be confused with death, no, it is like a [nothingness](#) which is nothingness and like nothing else (e.g., “Nothing is not quantum anything. It is nothing. Nonbeing. This, not empty space, is what ‘nothing’ signifies for Plato and Aquinas and Heidegger....” – Michael Robbins, “Atheists Used to Take the Idea of God Seriously. That’s Why They Mattered.” Slate Magazine, July 8, 2014); it is a winking out or unraveling of our personal “timeline” to nothingness.

At least 1 and 3 above are axiomatic, undeniable facts in the most objective universal sense; to deny them creates absurdities and cognitive dissonance. The fact that undeniable, axiomatic facts lead to paradoxes is exactly a description of the problem of existence.

“That is the entire story to me, which is that if you don’t believe that your kids are going to be better off than you, then what’s the whole point of this whole thing?

What’s the whole point of life? That’s literally the primary drive of human evolution is to stay alive and procreate, and then in order to keep your kids alive and better off so they can do the same thing. If you don’t think that, that leads to some deep nihilism and that is what I think you see within our politics.” – [Saager Enjeti](#), [Rising with Krystal & Saager](#), The Hill YouTube Channel, November 3, 2020.

The problem of human existence requires three additional enhancing factors:

1. Merely for existing, we are subjected to endless nonsense, absurdities, entropy, and plain bullsh\*t every day.
  - a. Put another way, I am offended to be here. I am offended every minute of every day of my existence. If I was not here, I would not be offended.
  - b. The basic human relationship with the universe is one of righteous indignation.
2. Our intelligence allows us to see that we are unjustly imprisoned (I use “imprisoned” because I am bereft of any better term) and subjected, it causes us to experience the enhanced absurdity of the universe, to see that things don’t need to be as they are and that the ‘design’ of the universe is flawed and we are the victims.
  - a. We are victims because we could not have done anything about our conception; that is the ultimate selfish act of tyranny of our parents.
  - b. So we make up stories and absurdities, such as God’s plan or the ‘love of God,’ and talk ourselves into believing it so that we can go on suffering in delusion. We curse and blame some imaginary supreme being and invoke the name in our arguments to add emotional force because logic isn’t convincing enough.
3. By virtue of our reproductive consciousness, we know that each of us is potentially the cause of the next generation’s unconsented existence.

a. No one has experienced non-existence and no one remembers their death, if it were not for reproductive consciousness and human communication, each of us might be justified in believing we had always existed. Animals then may, if they thought of it, assume they have always existed; science-fiction philosophers such as [Isaac Asimov](#), have written short stories on the very proposition of a god or the problem of a god which seeks an end because it has always existed or has no memory of coming into existence (on that latter issue, none of us do – however see the opening scene of the film [Lady Hawke](#) (1985) with [Matthew Broderick](#) escaping from a supposedly inescapable prison).

b. “The passion between the sexes has appeared in every age to be so nearly the same that it may always be considered, in algebraic language, as a given quantity.” – [Thomas Malthus](#), [An Essay on the Principle of Population](#) (1798).

So the purpose of our religion and much of our culture is to promote happiness – not in an ‘[engineering consent](#)’ manner, but rather, as an opioid salve and a pair of blinkers (or to wear a cone like your vet puts on your pet after surgery) so that we do not see the Existential Void. I always suspect that people who appear overtly happy lack understanding, are shallow minds living in the moment devoid of critical thought; it is probably no coincidence that fiction and non-fiction stories often begin with such people who suffer horrible events and losses for no apparent reason and then come to some sort of tragic understanding at the end. In short, if you are happy, you do not yet understand, and apparently it is my purpose to make the world unhappier than it already is by spreading enlightenment and through grim nihilism, reminding sociology of basic humanity.

“I am truly left alone But somehow, just somehow  
It feels like my loneliness is a victory  
Over the self-delusion of joy and happiness.”  
- [Draconian](#), “The Cry of Silence” (2003)

And besides religion, we have our pets, the millennial-long [chattel](#) companions of the human mind. Roger Caras has concluded that the relationship between humans and their pets is always infantile. No one thinks that animals experience the universe in the same way that we do – that is the ‘blessing’ called sapience, personhood, e.g. “They [dogs and cats] seem closed off from their own mortality and the peril of it all. That level of comprehension would appear to be ours alone.” – [Roger Caras](#), [A Cat is Watching](#) (1989), p. 208. And since it is so easy to make a pet expressively happy, we do so without thought so that they be happy for us, so we can experience in some sense, their simple happiness (absent our understanding), vicariously.

“This world, for aught he knows, is very faulty and imperfect, compared to a superior standard; and was only the first rude essay of some infant deity, who afterwards abandoned it, ashamed of his lame performance: it is the work only of some dependent, inferior deity; and is the object of derision to his superiors: it is the production of old age and dotage in some superannuated deity; and ever since his death, has run on at adventures, from the first impulse and active force which it received from him.” – David Hume, “Critique of the Design Argument.”

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By Charles W. Phillips