

Butterfly crush

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 03 Aug 2001

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Tony Ellis — 03 Aug 2001, 08:43

Michael Straight wrote:

Well, if you're willing to admit it's illogical, I can't argue with you,

Sorry, but I admitted no such thing. The 'logic' I said I wouldn't mind giving a miss was very deliberately placed in inverted commas.

but I think dismissing objections as "just the Crushed Butterfly theory" is ridiculous. All of human history and society would be very, very, very different if men died immediately after having intercourse.

Different, certainly. "Very, very, very different" is conjecture. Would the changes you describe necessarily all work in the same direction, and shift history onto a completely different track, or would half of them cancel out the other half, and the overall shape of history remain more or less the same?

And that's just the Time Is A River theory. How about the Many Universes theory, where every quantum event since the big bang may have created another reality, or a potential reality? In that case, all Wolfe is doing is showing us one of the more interesting, lower probability worlds.

I don't see how dismissing two of these theories in favour of a third, when in fact no one knows what happens when human history is altered, has anything to do with logic at all.

Michael Straight — 03 Aug 2001, 14:15 · follows Tony Ellis

Dan'I said most of what I wanted to say except for this:

On Fri, 3 Aug 2001, Tony Ellis wrote:

And that's just the Time Is A River theory. How about the Many Universes theory, where every quantum event since the big bang may have created another reality, or a potential reality? In that case, all Wolfe is doing is showing us one of the more interesting, lower probability worlds.

Many Universes means all possible universes exist. I can't believe this is a possible universe.

I don't see how dismissing two of these theories in favour of a third, when in fact no one knows what happens when human history is altered

This is actually a radically sceptical view of history: you're saying that we can never know anything about the causes of events. Because to say that x is the cause of an event is to say that if x were absent the event would not have happened. Every time we try to determine why something happened in history we are making statements about what would have happened if history were altered.

And, as Dan'I pointed out, there's an awful lot of history we ascribe to causes related to fatherhood and sexuality (I'll add how different the relationship between church/clergy and western civilization would have been if all men were celibate up until they mated and died).

-Rostrum