

WHATEVER IS INSIDE IS OUTSIDE:

DO NOSTALGIC MEMORIES EXIST IN PARALLEL UNIVERSES?

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of time in the universe we inhabit follows linearity, and hence it may be represented by a rightward pointing arrow, indicating that the future is towards the right and that the past is towards the left. Thus, it follows that the arrow of time, as we know it, in the universe that we inhabit, is obviously linear. Events occur sequentially or chronologically and can therefore be assigned loci in the arrow of time with increase in the chronological order as one progresses from the left to the right. It must be noted that this is not essentially something that is universally accepted as the norm across all cultures across the world. All said, quantum physicists tend to claim that time is not necessarily linear in parallel universes, and that there can be an infinite number of parallel universes. There must be an infinite number of parallel universes to vouch for all the possibilities. By the same token, there can be infinite number of nostalgic memories. Taking into consideration the context of this theoretical paper, nostalgia could be associated with both the past (the sentimental longing for one's past) and the future (considering the non-linearity of the arrow of time).

The belief in the existence of parallel universes introduces a paradoxical manner of thinking. Cause may or may not precede its effect: the causal event may be preceded by the event or occurrence. Abiding by this logic, a glass of wine that breaks may already have been broken (in a parallel universe) before the wine taster's hand slipped due to whatever reason. In the universe in which we inhabit, there arises an epistemological problem if one makes use of causality as the arrow of time. As David Hume maintained, the causal relation per se cannot be perceived; one only perceives the sequence of events in which they occur. It is believed

that each time a decision is made, a new parallel universe gets created. Nostalgic memories probably exist in different planes of existence, that is, in parallel universes. Communication with the past and the future may thus be rendered possible; however, homo sapiens have not figured this out yet in a way that can be empirically proved to mainstream scientists (which of course excludes parapsychologists and other such allied professionals). The exception is the phenomenon of quantum teleportation and the like, which has been demonstrated by exceptional individuals like shamans, saints, wiccans, and so on. Such gifted individuals have shown the capability of non-conformity to the asymmetry of time. That being said, one knows that mainstream science still does not know how to accomplish this feat.

THE MAN BEHIND THE CONCEPT OF PARALLEL UNIVERSES OR MULTIVERSE

Hugh Everett was a noteworthy mathematician and an iconoclastic quantum theorist. In later years, he switched to become a defense contractor and had access to very sensitive, secretive military records. Science-fiction aficionados consider him as a folk hero: as the man who postulated a quantum theory of multiple universes. Here, I would like to add a pertinent comment. Today's science-fiction may well turn out to be tomorrow's reality like how yesterday's science-fiction has turned out to be today's reality. One must therefore not underestimate the power of revolutionary thinkers like Everett.

Hugh Everett was the brain behind the development of the idea of multiverse. He came up with it as part of his doctoral thesis, according to which we live in a multiverse of countless universes full of doppelgangers of each and every one of us. Everett's many-worlds interpretation of quantum physics was a revolutionary idea at that time (1954). He said that quantum effects result in the constant splitting of the universe. Although he is highly respected today for his groundbreaking views on reality and quantum mechanics, Everett did not get the reverence that he rightly deserved when he was alive.

NOSTALGIA AND NOSTALGIC MEMORIES IN CONTEXT

“Nostalgia for the future” can emerge from memories and memorialisations.¹ When one discusses nostalgia from the conventional perspective, it usually refers to a sentimental yearning of the past, which may have arisen out of mere reaction to a stimulus or stimuli. On the other hand, nostalgia in the context of this paper can refer to the past and the future or both, as mentioned earlier. Information or truths about the past and future may be well accessible to an individual in special circumstances. For instance, the perceiver who lucid dreams may get precognitive messages about the future—of the next day or the next week. These messages may be transmitted to the individual through images, impressions, thoughts, feelings, physiological sensations, etc. The access to the past or future becomes possible through the use of the sixth sense or psi. Some significantly controversial claims have been made on the interpretation of psi or extrasensory perception as in the views expressed below:

The essence of ESP is that false internal stimulations are mistaken as external objective stimulations which enter through sensory organs, while real external

¹ L. Smith, G. Campbell, “‘Nostalgia for the future’: Memory, Nostalgia and the Politics of Class,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 23 (7) (2017).

objective stimulations are mistaken as perceptions which do not result from sensory organs when one is in deep hallucinations.²

I condemn this point of view strongly as it almost entirely disrupts the quintessence of not only this paper but, more than that, it is also counter-intuitive to Indian philosophy, to many ancient teachings, and also to contemporary books of wisdom like books written by Rhonda Byrne.

Nostalgic memories that could be retrieved by an individual may relate to explicitly or consciously forgotten memories, implicitly recorded memories, or even memories of other individuals and beings. As is evident, the possibilities are endless and infinite. The brain's capacity for storage of memory is thus presumed to be limitless.

An extremely important point to be made is as follows. Given the inflation theory of quantum physics, the universe is continually expanding, ever since the Big Bang—"the so-called beginning of everything."³ If one abides by the ancient Indian notion that whatever is inside is outside, then the entire universe is within. This may seem problematic at first glance. People of different worldviews may view this contention very differently. Some may be staunch believers, others skeptics, and the remainder of the people may opine that this argument is pointless.

QUALIA AS EVIDENCE OF OBJECTIVE REALITY

When rationality cannot adequately account for a phenomenon, trans-rationality becomes essential. A transrational experience is not pathological; it is just one step beyond rationality. Subjective experiences or qualia constitute the source of theory, and one does not need evidence per se. What is real for one person may not be in the reachable limits to be experienced by another person. Experiential reality is reality. However, this does not mean that one can discount the experience of the first experienter. Memories and the way the individual attaches meaning to them is unique for that individual. A string of memories may occur in the mind of one individual, which could be linked with the past or future, corresponding to many different parallel universes. It seems reasonable to reiterate that infinite possibilities must be accounted for. I argue that it is not mere speculation that nostalgic memories could be present in parallel universes. What is real for an individual is absolutely real in the real sense of the term. Inter-experience⁴ appears to catch hold of a truer experience of reality. The limitations that come with quale is that although one can see another individual experiencing something, he/she cannot get into the shoes of other person. In this sense, there is always a psychological distance between two experiencers, even of the same experience. This is because each individual's perspective and perception about life, existence, and the universe are uniquely original. For that matter, even identical twins do not share the same qualia. The theory of cognitivism finds salience in this regard. An individual's idiosyncratic experience (quale) is by itself sufficient and evident rather than one having to provide evidence to validate an experience.⁵

² W. Huang "Altered States of Consciousness: A Story about Perception," https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3435728 [access: 1.05.2022], p. 1.

³ F.A. Wolf, *Parallel Universes* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988).

⁴ R.D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience and the Bird of Paradise* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1990).

⁵ Ibidem.

WHATEVER IS INSIDE IS OUTSIDE: EAST MEETS WEST

Albert Einstein held the opinion that the speed of light is not surpassed by any other form of communication. Yet, he was able to think different thoughts to formulate his Theory of Relativity, which obviously surpassed the speed of light! Einstein's tenet that no communication is faster than the speed of light does not hold true anymore, as discovered by Alain Aspect in his groundbreaking experiment on subatomic particles in 1982. This discovery established that thought is indeed faster than light. Aspect and his team of researchers discovered that no matter how much distance separates subatomic particles like electrons (be it 10 feet apart or 10 billion miles apart), the particles were somehow mysteriously able to communicate with one another. In an attempt to explain these results, David Bohm believes in a radical explanation: that these findings of Aspect point to the fact that there is no objective reality. The universe is actually a phantasm, a hologram, which makes it difficult to believe that separateness is an illusion. Thus, nostalgic memories in several parallel universes are in fact a part of a unitary entity. Apparently, stimuli that trigger nostalgic memories exist in a seamless web in the universe. What is inside the human mind has potential to be outside, somewhere, as demonstrated, amongst others, by the 'manifestation' anecdote of author Esther Hicks (Blue Glass, Butterflies, and Feathers). I would like to illustrate this powerful anecdote by emphasizing that one must never underestimate one's cognitive faculties. One day, a woman who was on a telephonic call with Esther Hicks was adamant to believe in the power of manifestation, despite having been given numerous explanations. Esther got a wild idea and began talking about things like different shades of blue glass, butterflies of different kinds, and all kinds of feathers. The disbelieving woman disconnected the call due to her frustration. Later on, when Esther was out for dinner with her husband Jerry Hicks, she was pulled into a store by some transpersonal force, a force other than herself and at the back of that store, she came across a beautiful mosaic of blue glass. After dinner, a walk through the park near the restaurant led Esther to an overwhelming number of butterflies. After the tryst with the butterflies, a little boy, whom Esther did not know, approached her and gave her a beautiful feather he had found. He was extremely excited to give the feather to Esther. At this point, Esther finally put all the pieces together. This is one anecdote that portrays the power of manifestation, and the ability of an individual to access elements that are out there, somewhere, in the external world. This reinstates that anything in one's inner mindscape must be somewhere in the external world; it could be the immediate universe or parallel universes.

The universe is ultimately holographic and indivisible, which is akin to the Eastern (Indian) philosophy of *Advaita* (non-dualism) propounded by Sri Shankaracharya and also to the notion of *Maya* or illusion. The word *Maya* procures its etymological origin from Sanskrit which means 'magic' or 'illusion.' It is agreed upon by erudite scholars and laypeople in India that we are presently living in an age of *Maya* or illusion, which is one of the reasons why we are grappling with unravelling the true nature of reality. According to Vedanta, one's true nature is enveloped in divinity; it is pure and perfect. One does not have to realize *Brahman*, because of the simple fact that individuals themselves are *Brahman*. One's true Self, which is the *Atman*, is one with *Brahman*. Ironically, although one's real nature is divine, the awareness of this truth is appallingly lacking. Why is this so? It is because individuals are enshrouded in the veil of *Maya*. This veil of *Maya* makes one's perception of reality deceptive. It is claimed that *Maya* will cease to exist with the dawn of realization of the knowledge of the Truth. What constitutes the real truth of existence? It is *Brahman*—the substratum of existence, which is the ultimate Truth. Unfortunately, though, conditioning influences and shapes most of one's

reality, “from the *tabula rasa* state to the tomb.” One does not identify with the unchanging divine Self, but with the body, mind, ego, desires, and so on. The *Atman* remains unchanged and unaffected by the material world.

CONCLUSIONS

“Once we have granted that any physical theory is essentially only a model for the world of experience,” Everett wrote in the conclusion portion of the unedited version of his dissertation, “we must renounce all hope of finding anything like ‘the correct theory’ ... simply because the totality of experience is never accessible to us.”⁶

R.D. Laing quipped that we are all surrounded by the false consciousness of pseudo-events and that we are all far away from authentic possibilities that could have been experienced.⁷

The question that hangs in midair is: do nostalgic memories exist in parallel universes? Until the material universe is *Maya* or illusion and until we are able to perceive the infinitely connected universe in unity, yes, nostalgic memories do continue to exist in parallel universes. And finally, when we *are* able to perceive the infinitely connected universe in all its unity, it would be safe to surmise that “all the parallels have met.”

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⁶ H. Everett, III, *The Many-Worlds Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics*, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/manyworlds/pdf/dissertation.pdf> [access: 1.05.2022], p. 134.

⁷ Laing, op. cit.

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SUMMARY

This paper explores nostalgic memories from an unconventional perspective and their complex relationship with parallel universes. The arrow of time is not necessarily linear, and nostalgic memories pertaining to the past or the future, be it in this world or in parallel universes, could be accessed in various states of consciousness. Whatever is inside (in the internal environment of an individual) is outside (in the external environment), which is in line with esoteric teachings and individualistic experiences. The Indian concept of *Maya* (illusion) that applies to the material world, acts as a hindrance to experiencing *Brahman* or the ultimate Truth. Until one is able to perceive the infinitely connected universe in all its gigantic underlying unity, it may be posited that nostalgic memories exist in parallel universes.

KEYWORDS

nostalgia, memories, parallel universes, multiverse, arrow of time