



# AN UPSETTING SOLUTION TO THE FERMI PARADOX

(AND THE ULTIMATE ANSWER TO LIFE, THE UNIVERSE AND EVERYTHING)

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**(I already posted the present essay as an answer to the Quora question: [The Fermi Paradox establishes the contradiction between the probabilities of the existence of extraterrestrial civilizations and our lack of proofs for that. Do you have any new explanations?](#))**

Many questions recently appeared on Quora in various languages focussing on the possibility that we live in a simulation and are, so to speak, sentient Sims. Although mainstream science is beginning to take seriously such a hypothesis, curiously, I have not seen (and if I missed it, I apologize) any answer to the Fermi paradox question that refers to the "Simulation possibility." Yet, the latter allows for alternative, possibly new, explanations.

Here I will apply it without setting any limits. If we are the object of a simulation, the super-simulator is something immense and almost omnipotent, which we can only understand by analogy. So it would be ridiculous to impose our modest and, in the super-simulator's view, undoubtedly absurd limits (size, amount of energy etc.)

The following, in my opinion, is the most obvious explanation.

Let us start with our Earth. On Earth, there are thousands of cities with various shops, in particular toy shops. Nowadays, one of the most popular toys is the Playstation (PS). Each PS is essentially a computer, which today is just a toy, but would have been almost unimaginable only thirty years ago. There are hundreds of millions of PS in action on Earth right now, each simulating a football match (or any other video game). The games are displayed on flat screens (2D); the football players are Sims, who, as far as we know, have no will or feelings of their own. Two types of factors determine the setting of each football match: 1) the free action of one or more external players; 2) the definition of specific parameters at the beginning of the game. The PS may offer default parameters, but players can change them. For example, we can identify the players, their skills, their state of form, the stadium in which the game takes place, the weather conditions, etc. We can interrupt the game, go to dinner, and start again from where we had saved the game, with all possible variations, including going back in time (of the game), which is different from the time of our watches.

The game, of course, is just a game, and almost all players have other, more important activities to do.

At this point, the stage is ready for our analogy. (From now on, I use an asterisk prefixed to words that indicate an approximate equivalent of the terms used. One can think of the word preceded by an asterisk as the "projection" into our world of a much more complex entity in its \*world, which is practically unknown to us).

Suppose there is a place we call \*Earth, N-dimensional, where at this moment there are billions of \*PS turned on, each with one or more \*players. The \*players, instead of a football

match or other video game, are simulating in their \* PS one of many possible universes. The \*Sims that populate the universes are 1, 2, 3, 4 ... n-dimensional beings. They can be non-sentient, like the players of our football matches (I mean those of the PS) and the pieces of a chess game, or sentient like us, or "super-sentient," with other talents besides ours.

The parameters that the \* PS offers can be first of all the physical parameters, such as the speed of light ( $c$ ), the Planck constant ( $h$ ), the number of forces in action, their interaction constants, the fine structure constant ( $\alpha$ ), the Hubble constant – all constant or variable over time. For example, the \*players can experiment with a Universe where  $c = 20 * \text{km} / \text{s}$ ,  $h = 0.1 * \text{erg s}$ , 5D etc. Many of such universes, if chosen at random, may be impossible or very short-lived. (Possibly the \*PS can be didactic support to a beginners course in \*Physics, of the \*schools on \*Earth.)

**An important parameter is how many inhabitable planets the \*players wish to play with, and on how many of them there may be one or more forms of life, intelligent, sentient, and endowed with free will. (Such parameter can be a constant or a variable over time too.)**

The \*PS's offer different levels of play, and like on our Earth, the most popular are the lower levels. For example, many \*novice players (the majority) are satisfied with a universe with appropriate parameters, but with only one planet in which \*thinking and free will \*Sims can exist, while all other planets admit life, but not intelligence, until it is imported, if possible, from the only planet which possesses it. **Such would be the explanation of the Fermi paradox: among the universes that the PS can simulate, the simplest, and therefore most probable, is one with only one planet populated by intelligent beings.** As is the case on Earth in almost all games, which nearly all young people experience, but only a few lead to the highest levels, few \*players go beyond the simplest \*levels. Indeed, one can assume that \*PS is just one of the most popular and easiest games in vogue on \*Earth, and \*players have other more important tasks to be done or other \*more intriguing games to experiment. Besides, one should note that in a simulated universe on \*Earth, in principle, every elementary particle, every cell, every thought of every thinking being can be followed by the \*players.

Following the analogy, one can conclude that we live in a universe that is the playing field of two \*beginner kids, **who have chosen the physical parameters of our universe** (probably the default parameters of the \* PS) **and only one planet with intelligent life** (reasonably, following many such planets in parallel would be a \*game of \*higher level). Furthermore, the \*players have no feelings towards the Sims, as the war simulation players on Earth sink battleships, bomb cities, destroy civilizations etc., as possible moves of the game, without feeling any remorse.

Judging from the historical evolution of our Earth, our universe, albeit at its lowest level, is in the \*hands of two \*inexperienced players, white and black, good and evil. The first one protects the planet and its inhabitants ... until the \*end of the game, the other wants to destroy them before the same. It may not be the only kind of game possible, but it is what we see on Earth. Alternatively, the PS may distribute point on a scale and according to rules unknown to us. On the other hand, \*players may make mistakes or try to cheat.

Of course, such an explanation gives non-standard answers to many philosophical questions, which is not necessary to list here. However, a meta-question is the following: "If we discover, through some experiment (and I believe there are already some in progress,) that we are sentient sims of a simulation that is nothing more than a game, would we be willing to play along? Would we accept that we are meaningless and aimless toys in the hands of \*players who don't care about us? So, what would we do?"

Those who know a little about the Zoroastrian religion can find a short story on my website (APPOINTMENT IN CADESIA - Third Edition ([daino equinoziale](#))), in which I briefly develop the simulation concept.

As an extra bonus, I offer an interpretation of the number **42**, which is the answer to the ultimate question on Life, the Universe and Everything, according to the book *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, by Douglas Adams (1981). My interpretation is that 42 is the number which identifies the (simulated) Universe we live in. It's a small number (especially if compared with others appearing in the figure), a simple model....with only one planet inhabited by intelligent beings.