

By: ~~10/20/2006~~ Cache, Science News Editor

Anthropic Principle Again Criticized

The claims of the anthropic principle have no fundamental background

There are a number of people around us who see the universe as a place tuned in precisely to support life, and intelligent beings such as ourselves in particular. This is the basic observation behind what is called the "Anthropic Principle," which is struggling to understand why the constants of the universe are the way we see them and not differently, considering the fact the possibilities are practically infinite. One answer to this conundrum would be that if the constants of the universe were even slightly different, then there is a good chance we wouldn't be here to see them. Most physicists, including a group from the Case Western Reserve that has recently released a paper attacking this theory, believe that the connection between the laws of physics and life is nothing but a mean illusion originating from our short understanding of intelligent life. According to their analysis, intelligent life can be associated to any organism capable of observing the universe in which they live. Therefore, there are three possible types of universes. The first would not contain any intelligent life, the second would lead to organisms that view the universe completely differently from our perspective, while the third type of universe would contain organisms which rely on the same physical laws as we do. Most probably, we would live in a universe in which intelligent life would have a completely different view of the universe than we do, a fact that is not taken into consideration by the anthropic principle. There could be, in fact, several billions of billions of other intelligent beings in this universe, and in other types of universes even if galaxies, stars and planets had never formed. This would give the illusion that the laws of physics to which we own our existence are in effect, and would be a kind of test for our physics saying that where intelligent life like our own exists, the laws of the universe should be the same. Alternatively, it could prove that intelligent life and the laws of physics are not linked in any way. Simply put, the paper says that the anthropic principle is nothing but a poor joke, which has no basis in the fundamental explanation for why the universal laws appear to be the way we see them.