

According to General Relativity, time is just a dimension of “space-time”. A fourth dimension in addition to the three spatial ones that we all know. Every particle in the universe can be plotted on a four-dimensional graph – three of the dimensions indicate where it is, and the fourth indicates at what time it is there. All particles of the universe can be plotted like that, and you get an infinite four-dimensional landscape of dots...

In this landscape nothing moves – it’s frozen solid, unchangeable, spread out to all sides of you once and for all.

Imagine a foot-ball flying through the air. In actual fact it isn’t flying at all. It’s just standing there in mid-air. You can look at it from all sides by moving through the spatial dimensions. You can also look at where it was a moment before and where it will be a moment later by moving along the time-dimension. Like this you can get an idea of the shape of its trajectory. It’s as if you were in some kind of museum – you can look at the paintings in chronological order to get an idea of the evolution of painting-styles and techniques, but you can also look at the paintings in any other order. The point is – nothing moves and the past, the future and the present are all there at once. In fact there isn’t any past, present or future. The flow of time is just an illusion you get by looking at the pictures in chronological order and by flipping from one to the next at a steady rate.

So is this it? Is this how I’m going to spend the rest of my existence? Looking at pictures in this endless picture gallery, seeing happy faces, sad faces, knowing that they’re all frozen solid and that they’ve been there for ever and will remain there for ever in this eternally dusty museum called space-time?

Hey, you sure don’t need to think about such things when you’re not a ghost, do you? While I was thinking all this I was speeding along on the dashboard of a car. I was experiencing the flow of time because I had chosen to move forward in time at a steady rate. In the meantime my body must have fallen through the gap, died and been brought to the morgue all over again.

Well, the time had come to find out if I had any influence over anything or not. Was I able to create parallel universes (or move into them, which amounts to the same thing since they all exist anyway) or was I trapped in this particular “space-time” for ever? In other words – this car speeding along steadily on the highway, could I make it crash if I wanted to?

I “felt” myself into the mind of the driver, and then I suddenly said as loudly as I could: “Hey you!”

The eyes of the driver almost popped out of their sockets. “What? What?” he stuttered, as if he had just woken up from a bad dream. “Is... is anyone there?” He looked around himself, at all the empty seats in his car.

“Right!” I said to myself. I withdrew from the driver’s mind and didn’t talk to him anymore. There wasn’t any need to make this car crash, after all. What had just happened was proof enough that I could influence things!

So I could do things. The question now was what should I do? Just have fun? But even in fun-games there is always a goal (in football it’s even quite literal – people almost fall off their seats yelling “Goaoaoaoaallllll!!!”).

So what should be my goal in this existence of mine as a ghost? I knew I needed to have one, else I’d go insane in no time at all...

Somehow this question about the goal rang familiar to me, like an echo from my previous life as a human being made of flesh and blood. It’s kind of a religious question, isn’t it?

Maybe, now, as a ghost, I could find the answer at last. I could find God. I could fly through outer space, into alternative universes, see black holes and supernovae from close, explore the infinitely big and the infinitely small, find out if space is made of space quanta or if it's continuous, translate it all into scientific terms and inspire the next Einstein with it so that he could develop the ultimate grand unified theory of Everything...

And I would also find out what I myself, as a ghost, was made of.

There was just one thing I would never be able to find out, a nagging little detail, namely whether all this was real or just a dream I was dreaming. The question was surely meaningless, since there was no way it could ever be answered. But if it was meaningless, then why could I ask it at all? Why could I wonder about it, be bothered by it, maybe to the point of going insane?

Because if everything was just a dream of mine, which means that everything was created by me, then obviously I must be God. And if I was God, then how come I didn't have all the answers?

Or what if God was a silly little boy (or girl) from a higher-degree universe? In between throwing around his toys, he somehow creates a world or two. If you ask him why he did it like this and that, he just looks at you the way children do, and tells you something mystifying that you'll never be able to make sense of.

The goals, the question is about the goals. But what if God told you to just make your own? Somehow this answer wouldn't really satisfy you, would it?

You want to know the point of the whole thing, don't you?

But what if God just looked at you and said: "Point, what kind of point? What do you mean?"

There are all kinds of things in a world. That's what being a world really means, that there would be all kinds of things. It's not just a point. What kind of point do you want?

Yeah, really, what's the point of this question about a point?

And that's the REAL question!

There's no point in looking for God among the supernovae, black holes and parallel universes. You'll see all kinds of marvelous things, of course, but you'll still never know what the point of it all might be, simply because you can't really define what kind of a point you would want there to be... You don't really know what you're looking for!

So if you want to find that point, you must first think about what it actually is you're looking for. And since other people seem to be looking for the same, you can try to find out what THEY are looking for.

And this means staying among people.

I was suddenly afraid of flying out to outer space. What if I never found my way back to Earth, to all those little Earthlings looking for a point?

So I decided to stay here.

I could hop from the mind of one person to the mind of another, sort of zapping through mankind, but somehow this didn't seem appealing. I'd rather concentrate on a single human being for a while, but which one? It should be an interesting one...

Instead of switching between the TV-channels all evening you'd rather watch an interesting film from beginning to end, wouldn't you? It's the same thing!

Then, talking about films, I suddenly remembered that I had always loved Westerns.

Well, now was my chance to go and explore the Wild West, for REAL!