

## Transcript - Long

### Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

Robert, the question that has haunted me, literally my entire life, since I was a young teenager thinking about these things, is why is there anything at all? Not just an empty universe and how stars came about, but why is there anything, any laws, anything, any God, anything? Because it just seems intrinsically that nothing, absolutely nothing, is more simple than anything else.

### Robert Spitzer:

Well, I think that you have discovered the presupposition that makes the question of why is there anything at all, so vexing, because nothing does seem simpler than anything else. Except for, perhaps, absolute simplicity. And--

### Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

But that's nothing.

### Robert Spitzer:

Well, no, I would maintain absolute simplicity is power without intrinsic or extrinsic restriction.

### Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

Wow, that sounded very, a lot of somethings.

### Robert Spitzer:

Well, actually, it's not a lot.

### Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

[crosstalk] a lot of somethings.

### Robert Spitzer:

I would just say simply this: I would say why assume that nothing is the condition that demarcates as it were, the eternal existence of everything, alright? Let's suppose for just a moment, that there was something like absolute simplicity. What gives us the problem is really finite realities, because finite realities then imply something beyond that finitude, or finite realities may have a beginning, and the beginning seems to indicate that there has to be something else beyond it, and so forth and so on, and so my thought is, you know, if you really have an unrestricted reality, which is not a lot of somethings, it's not a lot of finite realities, it's a perfect simplicity, it's a perfect unity. Then perhaps perfect, unitive reality, something which exists through itself, is the primordial, and as it were, eternal now existent, and that nothing, nothing is only the result of our reflecting on what's outside of the boundaries of finite reality. In other words, we've come up with zero, you know, as it were, in response to conceiving of the problem of finitude. But if you start with, well wait a minute, why wouldn't an unrestricted power be, you know, reality itself? Why wouldn't that be the natural condition of all else that is? Well, okay, go ahead.

### Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

If I am in this universe, right now, it may make more sense to have a something behind this universe, because I know that exists. But if I were looking at it purely a priori, if I didn't know this universe exists, I wasn't in it, this is ridiculous, wheels within itself [ph], but stepping outside, it would seem to me if I were given a choice in this kind of absurd situation, between nothing being the most simple, and an unrestricted, unbounded, simplistic reality being the primordial existent, I would pick nothing.

### Robert Spitzer:

Yeah, I mean I can see why you'd do it; because of course, you'd think well there's no presuppositions in nothing. But what I would want to suggest is there are no presuppositions in perfect simplicity, a perfect unitive, unrestrictive power either. There's absolutely no presupposition. And I think the thing that's just driving you, is when you get to that thing of choosing between nothing and something, nothing always seems to have far less presuppositions than perfect, simplistic, unitive reality or power. And the thought I'm just going to bring home to you is, if you really did have something that was truly absolutely simple, had no intrinsic or extrinsic boundaries whatsoever, which was a completely unconditioned reality, there wouldn't be a single presupposition that attached itself to that reality, and that reality could clean out exist in a presupposition-less environment; tantamount to the nothing.

### Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

If I have that thing that you've just described, I don't whether to call it a thing, but your, the thing you described, wouldn't I ask, why does that exist?

### Robert Spitzer:

Actually, you wouldn't have to because it would exist through itself.

### Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

No, I mean, that's an answer to the question. But I still have to ask the question.

### Robert Spitzer:

Yeah, you, you--

**Robert Lawrence Kuhn:**

If it's nothing, I don't have to ask a question.

**Robert Spitzer:**

Yeah, but actually, to be honest with you, if you understood it in itself, you would understand that it was presupposition-less, and therefore, you wouldn't have to ask the question, because--

**Robert Lawrence Kuhn:**

But I can't understand it in itself, but I can't understand— [crosstalk]

**Robert Spitzer:**

You can, and that's why you have to think of--

**Robert Lawrence Kuhn:**

You can't either.

**Robert Spitzer:**

No, I know I can't, but at least I can conceive of what a presupposition-less reality would be, you know, by, you know, as it were working backwards, so, you know, through the via negativa. I can tell you what it's not, and so--

**Robert Lawrence Kuhn:**

But you're still winding up with something.

**Robert Spitzer:**

You're still winding up with something

**Robert Lawrence Kuhn:**

You agree you have a something.

**Robert Spitzer:**

I agree I have a something.

**Robert Lawrence Kuhn:**

And your something, you think, is more [crosstalk]

**Robert Spitzer:**

Is just as presupposition-less as nothing.

**Robert Lawrence Kuhn:**

Just as.

**Robert Spitzer:**

Yes. And therefore, you know, I have to assume that the presupposition-less something has to be, as it were, the ground of reality, because as you already suggested, we have something.

**Robert Lawrence Kuhn:**

Yeah, now that I know. And I concede we have something, and once I concede that, I would, I would move, if these two things are close, if nothing is close to your something in terms of, of, of being devoid of presuppositions, if that were the case, then I would concede. Because we have something, then yes, that's more likely. But if we didn't have something, if I didn't know we had something and I was somehow outside this whole system, which is impossible, but nonetheless, I'd still pick nothing.

**Robert Spitzer:**

The problem is a limitation to our understanding. Really, I think you're exceedingly close to God. I think you're coming--

**Robert Lawrence Kuhn:**

Nobody has ever accused me of that.

**Robert Spitzer:**

No, I know, but I think you are. I think you are busy trying to get to what's presupposition-less. And I guess I just, here's a three-step process for future reflection: Step number one.

**Robert Lawrence Kuhn:**

I'm counting.

**Robert Spitzer:**

Okay. Number one is, think of a reality that you can work backwards to, so just say unrestricted and no intrinsic, extrinsic restrictions to the power. Then

secondly, conceive of that as being unconditioned, that it could exist through itself you know, in a pure unity and a pure simplicity. Then, you know, the ancients would have called this a kind of hyperactive wave [ph]. Then the third thing is, just try, even though you have to approach it from the vantage point of a via negativa, I have to take away every image, I've got to take away the spatial manifold, I've got to take away the temporal manifold, but just think for a second; every time I'm taking away one of these things that is restricting it, I'm also taking away a presupposition. Now take them all away, third step. I'll take everything away, every single thing that can cause a restriction, that is everything then that can cause a presupposition. And at that point, reflectively, even though you've had to approach it via the via negativa, you still can get to that point where you almost can sort of see for a glimmer of a second, something presupposition-less as presupposition-less as nothing. And if that's the case, all of a sudden, the quandary, great quandary that it is, begins to dissipate and that's why there's room for reality and not just nothing.