**The Prototime Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics[[1]](#footnote-1)**

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(Forthcoming in D. Rickles, X. Arsiwalla, and H. Elshatlawy, Q*uantum Gravity and Computation: Information, Pregeometry, and Digital Physics, Routledge*, 2025.)

Abstract

*We propose the Prototime Interpretation of quantum mechanics, which claims that quantum entanglement occurs in a "prototemporal" realm which underlies spacetime. Our paper is tentative and exploratory. The argument form is inference to the best explanation. We claim that the Prototime Interpretation (PI) is worthy of further consideration as a superior explanation for perplexing quantum phenomena such as delayed choice, superposition, the wave-particle duality and nonlocality. In Section One, we introduce the Prototime Interpretation. Section Two identifies its advantages. Section Three discusses several implications of the view, such as its deterministic nature and relation to the simulation hypothesis.*

At the heart of contemporary physics is a contradiction between the study of the very big and the very small — between the supermassive structures (e.g., black holes) in Einstein’s theory of general relativity and the subatomic arena of quantum mechanics. Work in the field of quantum gravity (QG) tries to resolve this contradiction, and increasingly, it is claiming something astonishing: the fundamental ingredients of reality are not spatiotemporal. Instead, spacetime emerges from something more fundamental, something defined in terms of a mathematical structure that dispenses with any spatiotemporal metric.[[2]](#footnote-2) Just as the transparency of water is not found in a single H20 molecule, at the finest level of resolution, spacetime drops out of the picture.

In this paper we sketch a position in which spacetime emerges from a quasi-temporal reality. Modal logic reminds us that the space of logically and metaphysically possible worlds outruns those in which spacetime exists: there can be worlds where time exists, yet the laws of relativity do not obtain.[[3]](#footnote-3)  While our universe is indeed relativistic, we flesh out a view in which there is time in the sense of spacetime, as well as a different, more fundamental, “protemporal” dimension or parameter from which spacetime emerges. (Some may instead wish to think of this dimension simply as a ‘parameter,’ instead of a dimension, because they regard dimensions as spatiotemporal entities.)

Our paper is tentative and exploratory. The argument form is inference to the best explanation. We claim that the Prototime Interpretation (PI) is worthy of further consideration as a superior explanation for perplexing quantum phenomena such as delayed choice, superposition, the wave-particle duality and nonlocality.[[4]](#footnote-4),[[5]](#footnote-5) In Section One, we introduce the Prototime Interpretation. Section Two identifies its advantages. Section Three discusses several implications of the view, such as its deterministic nature.

**I. The Prototime Interpretation**

We begin with an uncontroversial fact:  

1. ***Entanglement connectivity.*** Fundamental particles can be entangled, even across vast spatial distances. When two particles, a and b, are entangled, their properties become correlated such that the state of one particle is instantaneously linked to the state of the other.

This is the “spooky action at a distance,” that Einstein referred to, and, bizarre as it is, it has been demonstrated in numerous experiments. Entanglement connectivity is a detectable phenomenon within our universe. It is neither spatiotemporally nor causally isolated from the 4D world.  It is not happening in some unrelated, inaccessible, parallel universe but from a part of our universe that we do not yet understand. Now consider a more controversial claim, which we take as an assumption for the purpose of argument:

1. ***Assumption*: Entanglement connectivity is causal.** For the purpose of argument we suppose, controversially, that entanglement connectivity is a causal phenomenon: An entangled state, a, either directly causes a change in a particle b, or, the states of a and b are jointly caused by, or mediated by, one or more other state(s) at the prototemporal level.

Empirical investigation of any phenomenon does not actually detect a cause, it merely detects a correlation because causation is not something that can be seen directly in the world, it is only inferred.[[6]](#footnote-6) But normally, a causal relation is an obvious avenue to consider given the presence of a reliable correlation. For saying that there is merely a correlation, rather than a causal relation, calls for explanation as well. And indeed, the idea that entanglement connectivity is a mere correlation is bizarre. However, while it is bizarre to merely assert a correlation, there is an important consideration in its favor, for, of course, a causal relation between entangled states at vast distances would contradict relativity theory, involving superluminal signaling. Such instantaneous correlations between entangled particles defy our current understanding of spacetime.[[7]](#footnote-7)

We resist this move, however, proposing instead that there is a causal relationship between entangled states, but it is one that does not lead to spooky action at a distance. More specifically, we propose the following:

1. **5D-ism.**  The universe has at least one added dimension (or parameter), one in which entanglement connectivity happens.  This is not an extended spatial dimension but a parameter of prototemporal connectivity.

According to 5D-ism, the classical, everyday reality we experience exists on the 4D “surface” of a larger 5D universe.  The universe has at least five dimensions: three spatial, one temporal, and at least one added parameter or degree of freedom that is nonspatiotemporal, underlying entanglement connectivity. If assumption (2) is correct, this supposed causal connection is not a phenomenon that makes sense merely on the assumption of 4D spacetime, the initial conditions, and the relativistic laws. Indeed, it is quite puzzling from a relativistic framework, as noted.   We propose that it may require at least one added parameter, or degree of freedom, that is neither spatial nor temporal — at least where ‘temporal’ is used in the “Einsteinian spacetime” sense. (Herein, for uniformity we use “temporal” and “time” in the sense of Einsteinian spacetime.)

Of course, the standard view is that quantum entanglement involves instantaneous correlations, but due to the No-Signaling Principle, it doesn't allow for faster than light transmission of information. It is not possible to use quantum entanglement to send messages superluminally.  However, this does not preclude causation in prototime, for entities in prototime are not ones in which the constraints of spacetime apply. Although the standard picture merely asserts that there is a correlation between entangled states, there is nothing to rule out the possibility that at the level of prototime, there is a causal relation between entangled particles, or the particles’ states are jointly caused by, or mediated by, other state(s) in prototime. However, macroscopic observers cannot use quantum entanglement to send messages faster than the speed of light, as per the No Signaling Principle.

How does time emerge from a more fundamental prototemporal reality? Many have suggested that time’s arrow is introduced by entropy.[[8]](#footnote-8) We agree, regarding the process of measurement (or observation) and subsequent decoherence as introducing entropy into an entangled system. Quantum Darwinism (QD) is a hypothesis that explains the emergence of classical reality from quantum possibilities. Briefly, QD is dependent on the interaction of (quantum) superpositions, ultimately converging to some stable (classical) state. Some states are more stable than others – known as “pointer states.” For example, a measurement might be a pointer state, which causes the measured particle to decohere to a stable, measured state. All quantum objects interact in the same way, becoming entangled with each other as they interact, ultimately converging to stable, classical states through decoherence.[[9]](#footnote-9) Because the number of decohered states available to any quantum object greatly exceeds the number of available “pure” unentangled quantum states, in practice classical objects don’t interact and suddenly enter a quantum state. In this way, QD ultimately gives rise to classical temporal ordering. From quantum decoherence, entropy and time’s arrow ultimately emerge from this aspatial, prototemporal arena.

It would seem that the phenomenon of quantum entanglement plays a crucial role in our understanding of the arrow of time. While classical views tied the progression of time to the dispersal of energy and increasing entropy, the modern understanding of Quantum Darwinism sees quantum entanglement as the driving force.[[10]](#footnote-10) As particles become more entangled, systems move toward equilibrium, which gives the appearance of time moving in a specific direction. This quantum perspective not only offers a more fundamental explanation for the arrow of time but also helps bridge the gap between classical and quantum thermodynamics.

Recent experiments have found evidence to support the theory of Quantum Darwinism. Two teams, one from Sapienza University of Rome and another from the University of Science and Technology of China, used photons to simulate quantum systems and their environments. They found that even a single photon can act as an environment, introducing decoherence and selection, and that the information about the quantum system saturates quickly as more of the environment is considered. Another experiment, led by Fedor Jelezko at Ulm University in Germany, used a nitrogen atom within a diamond's crystal lattice as the quantum system. This atom's unpaired electron can interact with surrounding carbon atoms. Their findings confirmed that the state of the nitrogen atom is "recorded" in its surroundings multiple times, consistent with QD's predictions. While these experiments align with QD, they don't conclusively prove it as the sole explanation for the emergence of classicality. However, these experimental tests of QD are significant steps in understanding the bridge between the quantum and classical worlds.[[11]](#footnote-11)

In sum, ours could be a universe with two time-like dimensions, one that involves time in the familiar sense of spacetime and in which time has a direction or arrow, and a different quasi-temporal dimension that lacks a direction or arrow. This fifth dimension is a non-spatial arena, yet prototime involves causation between events. Because time has a definite direction upon decoherence, positing a timeless or prototemporal arena in this context does not seem to introduce time paradoxes. This perspective is novel, and unusual, and of course, it is only one of a variety of interpretations of QG and ES, but we believe it is worthy of consideration, for it takes seriously the possibility that entanglement relations confer an added dimension to reality, one that causally determines events in the 4D world.

**II. Advantages**

Again, the purpose of the paper is exploratory. We believe the Prototime Interpretation (PI) is worthy of further consideration as a superior explanation for the following well-confirmed yet bizarre phenomena that we now outline. Further, where other theories offer explanations that are equally satisfying, this view may be more parsimonious than leading contenders, such as string-theoretic views of quantum phenomena that require commitments to entities like branes and several extra spatial dimensions.

We propose that the Prototime Interpretation offers the following advantages:

1. (***PI) provides a richer understanding of superposition.*** Quantum superposition is a puzzling phenomenon in which a particle doesn’t exist in a single state but exists as a superposed combination of all possibilities, until measurement or observation, at which point the particle has a determinate state. The prototemporal dimension introduces a fundamental timeless level of reality in which the particle is effectively “everywhere, all at once.” According to the Prototime Interpretation, the particle does not need to be in a determinate state because there is no singular moment in time, at the prototemporal level, in which it must occupy a determinate state. Time’s arrow is not in play . Instead, the particle is in a superposition of all states at once until a measurement is performed and the particle interacts with our familiar, time-bound universe. This interaction “brings the particle into time”, if you will, forcing it to adopt a definite state.
2. ***A unique perspective on the No Signaling Principle.*** The standard view is that quantum entanglement involves instantaneous correlations, but due to the No Signaling Principle, it doesn't allow for faster than light transmission of information. It is not possible to use quantum entanglement to send messages to macroscopic observers superluminally. We uphold this principle, but have a new perspective. “Speed of light” is a spatiotemporal notion, requiring both a distance and time metric, both of which are not present in entangled systems on our view. And time’s arrow arises only when systems interact with the environment. Although the standard picture must assert that there is merely a correlation between entangled states, on pain of violating the no signaling principle, there is nothing to rule out the possibility that at the level of prototime, there is a causal relationship between entangled states, (perhaps mediated by something else at that level), not just correlations. However, macroscopic observers cannot use quantum entanglement to send messages faster than the speed of light, as per the No Signaling Principle.
3. ***No “spooky action at a distance***.” Related to (2) is the well-known concern that entanglement seemingly involves instantaneous correlations across vast distances, which seems like superluminal communication or “spooky action at a distance.” (Einstein, 1935) Because (PI) proposes a nonspatiotemporal arena in which entanglement communication happens, the instantaneous correlations do not violate the luminal speed limit. Relatedly, there is no distance metric in prototime, which is aspatial, and hence, there is “distance" over which spooky action could occur.
4. ***Wave-particle duality***. Electrons and other particles are well-known for having both wave and particle-like properties, depending upon how they are measured. This phenomenon is an expected feature of the Prototime Interpretation, because the particles exist fundamentally in a cloud of potential states at the prototemporal level, and only upon interacting with the 4D world do they manifest particle-like (spatial and temporal) behavior. The duality is a manifestation of a particle’s existence in two different temporal structures.
5. ***The double-slit experiment***. This classic experiment involves particles passing through two slits and generating an interference pattern on a screen. When one attempts to measure which slit the particle went through, the pattern of interference disappears, as if the particle opted to behave in a particle-like manner, and not a wave-like manner, based on the fact that that the particle was measured. The Prototime Interpretation says that this is an expected behavior because all possible paths exist until the measurement, and decoherence “pulls” the particle into a determinate state in 4D spacetime.
6. ***Delayed choice phenomena.*** The double-slit case can be modified to be a delayed choice experiment in which the choice of whether to measure the path of the particle is made *after* the particle passes through the slits and *before* the particle hits the screen. Surprisingly, the outcome on the screen appears to depend on the choice that is made after the particle passed through the slits, seeming like the particle “decides” how to behave based on an event that has yet to occur.[[12]](#footnote-12),[[13]](#footnote-13) The Prototime Interpretation says that the ‘choice’ made upon measurement is an outcome of being in the prototemporal state until a measurement is made.

There is an important objection to our claim that PI offers an explanatory advantage with respect to the above phenomena, however. For one can object that these same advantages could be provided by the more straightforward, familiar position that takes spacetime to emerge from an entirely timeless, aspatial reality, rather than from prototime, an idea which, the objector will point out, is unclear. What is the notion of ‘quasi-time,’ after all? We shall call this more common view the “Timeless Reality” view.

Even setting aside the issue of parsimony, which arises for string theoretic versions of the view, the Timeless Reality position is flawed. (Further, explaining the flaw will help us flesh out the notion of prototime a bit more). The problem is that it is difficult to see how a fundamental timeless level can give rise to the universe we experience. All around us is change—we introspect changes in our conscious states, and both our inner experience and science details how objects and properties in the empirical world change and evolve. In contrast to this, the literature on ES appeals to highly mathematical views of reality, where spacetime falls out of the picture. This can lead to a sort of mathematical Platonism gone mad, where the entire universe is seen as a mathematical reality.[[14]](#footnote-14) Schneider has elsewhere expressed deep worries with this approach because it does not seem to explain the phenomenon of change, and how there is a concrete, empirical world (Schneider 2017 a,b). For the natural question to ask of this sort of view is what are the fundamental mathematical properties themselves—what are mathematical entities? The field of philosophy of mathematics studies this issue, and there are longstanding controversies about the nature of mathematical properties. If one is indeed a Platonist then it is not at all clear how abstract mathematical entities causally interact with the physical world — a purely aspatial and atemporal reality lacks any kind of concreteness, seemingly casting its lot with a metaphysics disconnected from the concrete, causal world. If one has in mind some form of nominalism, however, then they need to explain how they are defining their nominalism; it cannot be in terms of spacetime or macroscopic phenomena like human classificatory systems, on pain of circularity. (Spacetime, minds, classificatory systems, etc., are presumably ultimately determined by the base level, not the other way around.)

Because prototime is not time in the sense of spacetime, it is not surprising that prototime is hard for us to conceive. But there are resources in the field of contemporary analytic metaphysics and philosophy of science that can help. To begin with, notice that a metaphysical picture of base reality would need some fundamental elements that go beyond abstract entities. At the very least, there needs to be something in one’s fundamental ontology that makes sense of causation and change. Notice that the fundamental level that the Prototime Interpretation posits is not one without causal relations; again, we see experimental results indicating entanglement connectivity is real, and the connectivity cannot be explained by information transfer within spacetime itself, so if (2) is correct there is entanglement causation that exists in a different additional, dimension (or dimensions) that is not just ordinary spacetime. A purely atemporal picture would not seem robust enough to accommodate causal phenomena.

Some philosophers, such as David Lewis and Barry Loewer, claim that fundamental physical reality consists in a spatiotemporal mosaic of properties that are essentially non-dispositional, (called “categorical” or sometimes “categorical” properties). Laws of nature and causal relations are merely patterns on this more fundamental mosaic.[[15]](#footnote-15) While these views were not developed in the context of emergent spacetime, this same neo-Humean “categorialist” view of property natures remain influential today. According to a neo-Humean ontology, causation and change supervene upon an inherently acausal, non-dispositional reality. However, as influential as this line of thinking is, this sort of ontology, especially when paired with highly mathematical views of fundamental reality, would not provide the needed explanation of how events or change could even exist.[[16]](#footnote-16)

In contrast to this categorialist position, it has been observed that empirical properties seem to be dispositional—the properties in nature have some causative effect on something else. We talk about, and identify, properties in terms of what they do, by how those properties impact us, other objects, and our measurement instruments. For instance, the notion of electron charge is meaningless without some force or field acting on that charge. If the charge did not interact with anything else, its existence would be (at a minimum) permanently epistemically unavailable to us. Furthermore, we could postulate an infinite number of properties that have no causal powers – properties that don’t actually do anything. However, this would not be parsimonious. Therefore, it would seem reasonable to assume that empirical properties have at least partly causal natures. [[17]](#footnote-17),[[18]](#footnote-18)

Similar discussions have appeared in the field of philosophy of science. Ontic structural realism (OSR), an ontological claim postulated by James Ladyman and Don Ross, treats the notion of structure as primitive, where information transfer through structured interactions mediate causation. In this view, reality is fundamentally nothing but patterns all the way down.[[19]](#footnote-19) This raises a similar issue: that the laws merely articulate structures, and at the fundamental level, they are highly mathematical. But what do the laws relate? What underlying entities are we describing with our highly mathematical physical theories? A common objection to OSR is the mistaken assumption that it views the world as purely mathematical, which would be incongruent with physicalism and any distinction between the concrete and the abstract. The response is that the relational structures are, in fact, real (properties or something else). While they can be mapped to isomorphic mathematical abstracta, that doesn’t negate the existence of a physical structure to which they map. PM Ainswoth puts forth an interpretation of OSR where properties and relations are ontologically primitive, but objects are not.[[20]](#footnote-20) In the following section we raise a similar approach, one that appeals to bundle theory.

Thus far, we have laid out several explanatory advantages to PI. Because PI does not involve extra spatial dimensions, and spacetime emerges from a base reality of prototemporal dispositional properties, the view is parsimonious. Further, in contrast to the Timeless Reality view, which may explain the above phenomena and in some versions, stands to be equally parsimonious, (invoking the same number of spatial dimensions as PI) the Prototime Interpretation seems better able to explain change, claiming that reality consists in a basic stock of causally interacting prototemporal properties, dispositional properties that are defined as being capable of giving rise to spatiotemporal phenomenon. This helps flesh out the notion of prototime, illustrating why prototime is quasi-time. Having dynamic features, while not being time in the sense of spacetime, it is nevertheless a causal arena, having events that are instantiations of dispositional properties indexed to a prototemporal (and nonspatiotemporal) metric. On this view, a more fundamental layer of reality consists in a nonspatial mosaic of properties having their causal powers essentially. These properties are situated in a prototemporal dimension in which time lacks an arrow and in which causation happens. Now let us explore the metaphysical framework in more detail.

**III. Determinism, Digital Physics, and The Simulation Hypothesis**

The Prototime Interpretation is deterministic. Recall our assumption:

1. **Assumption: Entanglement connectivity is causal.** For the purpose of argument we suppose, controversially, that entanglement connectivity is a causal phenomenon: An entangled state, a, either directly causes a change in a particle b, or, the states of a and b are jointly caused by, or mediated by, one or more other state(s) at the prototemporal level.

Hidden variable theories claim that the probabilistic nature of quantum mechanics stems from a hidden variable that we have yet to uncover, and that quantum systems are actually determinististic.[[21]](#footnote-21) Consider the behavior of any two entangled states; such are commonly observed to follow a pattern that seems deterministic. For example, measuring one instantaneously impacts the other. Further, the value of one particle is non-randomly correlated with, and indeed, on our view, in some sort of causal relation with, the state of its entangled particle. These facts, when combined with the above assumption and the view that spacetime emerges from entanglement, suggest that the Prototime Interpretation is deterministic. Quantum events are the output of the deterministic function conforming to the probabilistic predictions of standard quantum mechanics.

A natural question is whether one can derive the standard probabilities of quantum mechanics from the underlying prototemporal structure—a deterministic function from states of an entangles system,S, to states in spacetime. Since we cannot access future states in the 4D manifold, it is impossible to access the complete details of the deterministic structure of the universe. To make matters worse, the universe consists in a complex web of entangled states bearing connectivity R to each other, so the “entanglement object” is one singular, enormously complex, entanglement object that underlies all of spacetime. (We shall call this “The Megaobject”.) Yet from the vantage point of a hypothetical omniscient being having upon the Megaobject, a larger pattern may be evident, upon considering that past, present and future states of entangled particles. From our vantage point, however, massive intractability looms.

Yet many body experiments have cleverly isolated more complex quantum systems, even entangling a tardigrade.[[22]](#footnote-22) But the question is: what future states are relevant? An obvious candidate is measurement. Here, delayed choice cases may be instructive, for if our theory is correct, the future choice, together with past and present states of the system, provides the hidden variable that maps to outcomes in our spacetime. The choice made in the future is in the elements of the prototemporal structure and it does match the outcome we observe. This explains why the particle seems to “know” the future measurement setting.

There are other exciting implications of determinism as well. For it is possible that spacetime and its occupants are epiphenomenal aspects of the prototemporal level; just as philosophers have entertained that consciousness is itself epiphenomenal, being determined by, and supervenient on, more basic physical properties but itself causally inert, so too, the locus of causal action may be at the prototemporal level, and the 4D world, including our own consciousness, are merely epiphenomenal features of it.This is a major departure from our current worldview, and much of physics, which takes spacetime as the primary arena for causal action.

Now let us turn to a related matter. Thus far, our discussion envisions a universe in which all of spacetime emerges from the quantum decoherence of entanglement objects at the more basic level. Given this, it is natural to ask: is reality itself effectively a quantum computer? Further, might we be in some sort of simulation? While we cannot delve into this matter in detail, we believe this matter calls attention to the need for a richer metaphysical understanding of quantum phenomena.

Digital physics, the intriguing concept suggesting that the universe is, or at least operates like, a computer program, is of interest to many in light of the simulation hypothesis, artificial life, the import of information theory, and more. The core proposition of digital physics, that all phenomena can ultimately be described by information processing or computational rules, together with Nick Bostrom’s simulation argument, raises important questions about whether the aforementioned “base level” is that of a computer simulation and whether we might even be faced with an epistemic situation in which we cannot determine, as subjects residing in spacetime, whether a certain approach to EG is right, as opposed to a simulation hypothesis — a sort of underdetermination of theory by all the available evidence.

Indeed, we might appeal to computer simulations to explore the space of theories, to try to resolve the issue, where actual experiments are unavailable. However, perhaps there is no possible function that we could derive that maps the base computation to certain emergent subroutines. Being in a simulation, we may be limited in our ability to build a computer capable of universal computation to the same fidelity as the computational universe in which it exists. It would be like trying to build a simulated computer that more powerful than the computer running the actual simulation. Interestingly, a machine cannot compute itself in more than real time, according to Stephen Wolfram's principle of Computational Irreducibility.[[23]](#footnote-23) Otherwise, infinite computational speed would be possible. Furthermore, some processes are not inherently mappable to their outcomes using deterministic functions. For instance, the emergence of markets in an economy is dependent on the local interactions of the market participants; however, this relationship can’t be compressed to a deterministic mathematical relationship – it requires stochastic simulation or direct observation to derive any insight. This is what we refer to as *algorithmic incompressibility*. It is possible that this is simply an epistemic issue, due to our ignorance of the math and physics required to fully describe this type of system; or it could be of metaphysical origin, representing a fundamental limit to our ability to deterministically compute certain phenomena. If computational irreducibility holds and algorithmic incompressibility has an epistemic limit, the computational speed limit of the 4D Universe might be one that is set by a base reality computing at a finite speed – perhaps suggestive of a simulated reality.[[24]](#footnote-24)

It is worth noting that a process ontology is compatible with a simulation hypothesis because the program can be implemented by properties having their causal powers essentially. On our view, the causal powers of the properties are determined by the role the properties play with respect to the other properties they are entangled with, where the state of one property is instantaneously connected to the state of another, regardless of the "distance" between them in the prototemporal realm. This is a mechanism for property interaction in absence of a normal time dimension. Some in contemporary metaphysics may prefer to claim that base reality ‘realizes’ macroscopic events, rather than causing them directly. However, if the 4D world is in a computer simulation generated by the base reality then it may be more appropriate to claim that the base reality causes events in the 4D world (what we might call this “upward causation”). This upward causation from the base to the spatiotemporal would be a form of genuine emergence, one without downward causation, perhaps, but one in which the base level causes, rather than realizes higher-level events.

**Conclusion**

The protototime interpretation draws from the idea that spacetime emerges from entanglement, which is causally connected through a nonspatiotemporal parameter, called “prototime.” We have claimed that time’s arrow emerges from entropy arising during quantum decoherence. We have urged that the prototime view deserves consideration as a framework that may address a range of perplexing phenomena in quantum mechanics, such as superposition, delayed choice and spooky action at a distance. It offers a deterministic perspective that suggests the probabilistic nature of quantum mechanics is due to our limited epistemic access to the prototemporal arena.

1. We are grateful to Misha Klopukh, Michael Ostroff, Edwin Turner, George Musser and Michael Huemer for feedback on this paper. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
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4. For an earlier framing of the Prototime Interpretation and implications for consciousness and the self see Schneider, “Emergent Spacetime, the Megastructure Problem, and the Metaphysics of the Self,” *Philosophy, East and West*, Vol. 74, Nu 2. She has previously stressed that the very same entities that fundamental physics investigates, these entities that spacetime emerges from, may very well be the very same ingredients that give rise to consciousness (Schneider, Susan. “Idealism, or Something Near Enough.” In Idealism: New Essays in Metaphysics, edited by Tyron Goldschmidt and Kenneth L. Pearce, Oxford University Press, 2017. pp. 234-256).  [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
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23. Stephen Wolfram, *A New Kind of Science* (Champaign (Ill.): Wolfram, 2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Herein, we have been referring to a “base” level for the purpose of discussion, but it is important to bear in mind that for all we know, there is yet a more basic level, and indeed, it is conceptually possible that it is turtles all the way down. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)