In the Beginning

Patrick Meador

Dr. Travis Dickinson    PHILO 4373-I

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In the Beginning

To so many, the logical nature of the existence of God is absurd, while to others, it is not only acceptable, but entirely and reasonably true and necessary. This dichotomy of beliefs between atheists and theists will always be a battle to be fought, but one side will prevail in the end. Until one side prevails, through the proof one’s premises, the debates will continue. One of the most common arguments is that of the cosmological argument. Craig would define the general cosmological argument as an “argument that assumes that something exists and argues from the existence of that thing to the existence of a First Cause or a Sufficient Reason of the cosmos.”¹ Yet, this type of apologetic argument takes on more specific forms. The kalām cosmological argument, developed in the eleventh century by Islamic philosophers, has now been taken in an entirely new direction under Craig’s influence.² Craig’s focus was now to add the recent discoveries within physics and all other sciences in support of the kalām argument. The objections exist far and wide, yet the apologetic defense in response is not lacking by any means. The most common objection to this argument is that of the big bang. This paper will determine the objections and direction of the kalām cosmological argument, specifically that of the big bang referring also to a genesis of the cosmos.³

¹ William Craig, Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008), 96. It is worth noting that this argument, though argument from a “cause,” is not causeological in referring to a first cause, but is cosmological in referring to the genesis of the cosmos.

² Ibid.

³ This argument was developed by Craig himself within his dissertation for his first doctoral program.
Cosmological or Causemological

Science has logically proven itself to be unreliable for the constant and continual advance in discovery. New theories are established every day as old theories are debunked every day. Theories are established as truth. Truth is debunked as mystery. The most common question that not only science asks – but all people – is that of where everything came from. People know everything to have a beginning point, so at what point did the universe begin and from what did it come?\textsuperscript{4}

Objection to Creation

This is a question that atheist philosophers are not afraid of. It seems that so many of the atheist philosophers do not refute the \textit{kalām} argument so much as they refute the direction that Christians take it. As Aquinas is known for developing “Five Proofs” of the most common arguments, he is typically the first to be refuted by these atheists. Richard Dawkins attacks his position on the cosmological argument in general. Of this Dawkins states, “Calling it God is at best unhelpful and at worst perniciously misleading.”\textsuperscript{5} It is worth remembering that Dawkins is not denying the result of the cosmological argument in the genesis of the cosmos, but the fact that Christians would deem it being the theistic, Christian God. To this, Dawkins would add that the big bang is no less reasonable in stating, “To return to the infinite regress and the futility of invoking God to terminate it, it is more parsimonious to conjure up, say, a ‘big bang singularity,’ or some other physical concept as yet unknown.”\textsuperscript{6} It is interesting that Dawkins refutation of

\textsuperscript{4} The Christian philosopher would phrase this, “from whom” did it come.


\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., 101-102.
such a compelling argument takes only two pages of this nearly 500-page work. In his mind, it is so easily refuted that it requires little to no objection.

As Craig introduced the Second Law of thermodynamics into the kalām argument, it changed the scope of the argument entirely. Bill Nye admits that he is “fascinated by the particular creationist argument.” It is important for this paper’s purpose to note that Nye nowhere denies the genesis of the cosmos, yet even states, “The universe is 13.8 billion years old.” It is while he holds that there was a definite beginning point to the universe, that he calls creationists “crazy.” What is interesting is the very sidestepping that Nye takes in avoiding the Second Law argument for which Christians truly use it. Creationists use the law to develop an argument of an origin of the universe, a point in time that time itself came into existence. On this, Nye is entirely silent. About evolution, he is overly wordy. One can take Nye’s silence on the subject as either ignorance or avoidance. Either way, Nye’s silence communicates his lack of knowledge or readiness in refuting the creationist argument.

Neither do atheists deny that a universe can, in fact, come from nothing. Lawrence Krauss even devotes an entire work to the subject, A Universe From Nothing, of which Dawkins states, “The title means exactly what it says.” It is not necessarily the possibility or probability that the universe can come from nothing, but the who or what that brings that nothing into existence. Both Dawkins and Nye were silent on, yet presupposed, the big bang as the origin of the universe. As Dawkins agrees with all that Krauss presents, it is necessary to conclude that he

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8 Ibid., 22.
9 Ibid.
would hold the big bang to be the very origin. Inferring Einstein’s General Theory of Relativity, Krauss states, “Everyone . . . now knows that the universe is not static but is expanding and that the expansion began in an incredibly hot, dense Big Bang approximately 13.72 billion years ago.” To the first point, no one objects. The universe is expanding. However, many dispute the second point, being the big bang. To reiterate a point already made, Krauss continues, “The discovery that the universe is not static, but rather expanding, has profound philosophical and religious significance, because it suggested that our universe had a beginning.” Krauss goes on to explicitly state what is presupposed in the arguments of Dawkins and Nye. It seems one difference between Krauss and that of other atheists, is that he is incidentally unopposed to the idea of religion. He goes on, “even if the Big Bang had happened . . . one could choose to interpret it in different ways depending upon one’s religious or metaphysical predilections.” Whereas Dawkins considers his purpose to refute the existence of God, Krauss considers his purpose to establish the possibility and probability of the big bang. One may be able to say that Dawkins argues as an atheist whereas Krauss argues as an agnostic.

The Problem

In all of these objections to the cosmological argument, there is one common thread: these atheists do not deny the genesis of the universe, but hold that the genesis was not in the Christian God, but in the big bang. Thus, the kalām argument holds value, but only to the degree to which the atheist believes in an indefinite universe. Upon believing in a universe limited to

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11 Ibid., 3.

12 Ibid., 4. As Krauss believes this discovery has significance not only to the philosopher, but to the religious person, he seems to infer an equal value to both sides. This is refuted only a few paragraphs later as he claims, “whether or not the Big Bang really happened is a scientific question, not a theological one.”

13 Ibid., 5-6.
time, specifically an origin of time, one needs to delve deeper beyond the *kalām* argument into arguing for intelligent design rather than a chance occurrence of the big bang.

To summarize what is now the consensus of these atheist philosophers attempting to refute creationism, specifically that rooting in the *kalām* argument, one must consult the purposes of each. For Dawkins purposes, he argues that the creationist account of God being the author is an “entirely unwarranted assumption.”\(^{14}\) Thus, his purpose is to use the origins of the universe in favor of the big bang. Nye takes things a step further in focusing upon the Second Law of thermodynamics. He recognizes that it is utilized by creationists, yet, does not necessarily refer to the *kalām* argument explicitly. For Nye’s purposes, he tries to disarm the creationist with his ability of utilizing the Second Law as a weapon against the atheist. Krauss, taking a supplementary approach, but carrying a different attitude than that of Dawkins or Nye, begins his work with the fact that “the universe is not static but is expanding.”\(^{15}\) This is something virtually all modern scientists agree on. Tyson assumes it as he states, “the temperature of our *expanding universe*…”\(^{16}\) Thus we have Dawkins establishing a basis for the big bang, Nye refuting the Second Law as in favor of the creationist, and Krauss displaying that the universe is expanding. All of these signify one major point: that the universe had a finite beginning point in time. While Dawkins and Nye are working against religion, Krauss is working alongside science, seemingly open to the interpretation of religion.


The problem is that both the creationist and the atheist come to the same consensus through the kalām argument. This shared consensus is that the universe began. There was a conception of time. The attitude shifted from that of Bertrand Russell in claiming, “The universe is just there, and that’s all,” on to a new idea. This is seen in Vilenkin’s quote, “With the proof now in place, cosmologists can no longer hide behind the possibility of a past-eternal universe. There is no escape, they have to face the problem of a cosmic beginning.” The paper now turns to the creationist perspective in the kalām argument while utilizing a teleological argument of fine-tuning in reference to distinguish between an intelligent design perspective and that of the chance big bang.

**Creationist Arguments**

Everyone carries presuppositions. The presupposition of the atheists has been examined. The presupposition of the kalām argument is specifically that of an intelligent design agent. Though a presupposition in an argument typically signifies a weakness that does not necessarily mean that the weakness cannot be overcome.

Though Craig is not the pioneer of the kalām argument, he is a modern author of it since the vast and numerous discoveries in all fields of sciences. He formulates the kalām argument as follows:

1. Whatever begins to exist has a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.

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3. Therefore, the universe has a cause.\textsuperscript{19}

Even though the first premise could be said to be intuitively true, the bulk of the problem lies in the first premise.\textsuperscript{20} The second premise is widely held through the ramifications of the Second Law and the very fact that the universe is expanding. For the purposes and limits of this paper, the writer will not delve into the implications of the first premise, rather will focus upon what the supplemental argument can be to differentiate between the \textit{beginning} that the universe truly had: that of intelligent design by an agent, or a chance big bang.

Teleological Implications of the \textit{Kalām} Cosmological Argument

The problem has been stated as the very fact that both atheists and theists mutually conclude that the universe had a beginning, more so, an inception or birth. The terms inception or birth allude to the very “where” from which the universe was birthed. Whereas an atheist could conclude the viability of the big bang, the creationist – through the intelligible nature of the argument for intelligent design – would hold to an intelligent agent as not only the designer, but also the creator.\textsuperscript{21}

In order to propose this point, one must go beyond the \textit{kalām} cosmological argument while invoking a teleological supplement. Craig would define the teleological argument as “the famous argument from design, and it infers an intelligent designer of the universe, just as we


\textsuperscript{20} Craig would use the language of “obviously true.” Ibid., 111-112.

\textsuperscript{21} Even Groothius notices this problem of the cosmological argument. Although he does not state it explicitly, he goes on to devote multiple sections of his work to differentiating between the big bang and the God as the inceptionary agent of the genesis of the universe. Groothius, \textit{Christian Apologetics}, 223-239.
infer an intelligent designer for any product in which we discern evidence of purposeful adaptation of means to some end (telos).”22 In his introduction of the design argument, Groothius comments, “All the theistic arguments work in tandem and should be assessed as such.”23

Groothius states, in commenting on what can help distinguish between the big bang and God, one can “find assistance in a successful design argument.”24 This is getting to what Dawkins’s main complaint is in the argument. Craig comments on Dawkins’s complaint, “Dawkins doesn’t deny that the argument successfully demonstrates the existence of an uncaused, beginningless, changeless, immaterial, timeless, spaceless, and unimaginably powerful, personal Creator of the universe. He merely complains that this cause hasn’t been shown to be omnipotent, omniscient, good, creative of design, listening to prayers, forgiving sins, and reading innermost thoughts.”25 Thus, Dawkins needs to see the teleological ramifications of the kalām cosmological argument, pointing him in the direction of intelligent design. This author of intelligent design is of whom Geivett would say, “is a plausible candidate for the God of Christian theism.”26

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23 Groothius, *Christian Apologetics*, 242. He comments elsewhere, “Even if big bang cosmology were to be replaced by some theory that does not entail that everything came from nothing, Christians (and other theists) could still appeal to other cosmological arguments – and arguments of other sorts – to establish the rationality of their theistic beliefs. Ibid., 230.

24 Ibid., 235.


**Intelligent Design**

The two teleological advances in recent decades have been within that of intelligent design (ID): the foundation of fine-tuning while utilizing the theory of irreducible complexity. Though these would be considered subcategories of ID, they actually gave rise to the formulation of ID theory.\(^{27}\) The focus here will be on that of fine-tuning in order to conclude the theory of ID and then be taken in relation to that of the *kalām* argument.

**Fine-Tuning**

Fine-tuning utilizes the very complexity of the universe, and everything coming together in the perfect way for all things to exist as they are. The probability is infinitesimally minute. The fine-tuning argument can be summarized as follows:

1. The existence of the fine-tuning is not improbable under theism.
2. The existence of the fine-tuning is very improbable under the atheistic single-universe hypothesis.
3. From Premises (1) and (2) and the prime principle of confirmation, it follows that the fine-tuning data provide strong evidence to favor the design hypothesis over the atheistic single-universe hypothesis.\(^{28}\)

Some questions may arise from these premises. First, an answer will be given as to what is the prime principle of confirmation. In Collins’s words, “Simply put, the principle says that whenever we are considering two competing hypotheses, an observation counts as evidence in

\(^{27}\) As Craig says, “The discovery of cosmic fine-tuning for intelligent life has led many scientists to conclude that such a delicate balance of physical constants and quantities as is requisite for life cannot be dismissed as mere coincidence but cries out for some sort of explanation.” Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 157.

favor of the hypothesis under which the observation has the highest probability."\(^{29}\) So the essence is not about the nature of proof, but rather probability.

The universe exists, that is a fact. Yet, life also exists; this is known by personal experience and deductive reasoning. For life to exist, the earth has to be such a perfect distance from the sun for temperature levels to be just right, be able to sustain life through habitat, while the ozone has to be well structured. As the argument is titled, the universe has to be finely-tuned not only for the universe to exist, but for life to continue. In Craig’s words, “‘fine-tuning’ is a natural expression that has to do with the constants and quantities’ being just right for the existence of intelligent life.”\(^{30}\) Thus, one sees the essence of fine-tuning: everything has to be just right.

Between the “design (theism)” and “chance hypothesis (atheism)”, one must which is more “plausibly false,” or even plausibly true.\(^{31}\) Another of Dawkins’ objections is an elementary point, “The temptation is a false one because the designer hypothesis immediately raises the larger problem of who designed the designer.”\(^{32}\) After getting past the elementary nature of this argument, and the fact that Dawkins lacks the ability to think outside the box, one can begin to see the weakness of his statement. This premise within his wider argument carries an atheistic presupposition, but Craig would refute his position by stating, “The point is that rejecting design arguments for God’s existence does nothing to prove that God does not exist or

\(^{29}\) Ibid., 108.


\(^{31}\) Ibid., 164, 171.

\(^{32}\) Ibid., 170.
even that belief in God is unjustified.” Dawkins is obviously referring back to the infinite regresses of causes within the cosmological argument, yet Craig responds likewise, “In order to recognize an explanation as the best, one needn’t be able to explain the explanation. In fact, so requiring would lead to an infinite regress of explanations, so that nothing could ever be explained and science would be destroyed!” Causes must stop at some point; this is what Dawkins’ objections inform the reader that he cannot necessarily comprehend. Craig’s response does not stop there, “In order to recognize that intelligent design is the best explanation of the appearance of design in the universe, one needn’t be able to explain the designer.” One need not explain the designer, but the design.

As an elementary example: just as one does not see wind, one sees the implications and effects of wind, and comes to conclusions of wind itself through that. Thus, the effects of the designer work in the same manner. One sees the effects of the designer all around (Rom 1:19–20), yet the designer is identified through His work, rather than by Himself specifically.

Cosmological Implications

One sees through the fine-tuning argument, that within it there are cosmological undertones. This works in conjunction with all theistic arguments. The weakness of the cosmological argument is solved in conjunction with the teleological argument for ID, through fine-tuning. The universe simply could not exist unless it has been finely-tuned to do just that: exist. Photosynthesis, procreation, and so many more miraculous acts of nature simply could not

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33 Ibid., 171.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.
occur without a designer, and even more so, a creator, which one can conclude through that of ID.

Conclusion

While there will always be opposition to apologetic arguments, the cosmological argument is most powerful while supplemented with teleological implications rooted in intelligent design. There are undertones of this in Craig’s conclusion of the teleological argument, “Thus, the teleological argument based on the fine-tuning of the universe fares well as a sound and persuasive argument for a Designer of the cosmos.”36 It is even more persuasive in light of the kalām cosmological argument. Atheists will always present objections to apologetic premises, yet one must always remember it is not proving a premise that the argument hinges upon, yet showing which premise is most plausible. This paper has examined specific atheists, namely Dawkins, Nye, and Krauss. Their objections have been namely to that of the cosmological argument, specifically to that of the kalām version. The solution to these arguments has been to succinctly refute their objections within the kalām argument while supplementing the kalām argument with ID theory in order to rid all objections of their power. Thus, showing that the existence of God may not be proven through these conclusions, but is the most plausible of all that has been presented.

36 Ibid., 172.
Bibliography


