

Theistic Arguments: The Craig Program, 3

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Teleological Argument

- # God makes sense of the *complex order in the universe*.
- # Many forms:
 - Fine-tuning argument
 - Intelligent design in living organisms

The Argument

- # The fine-tuning of the universe is due to either law, chance, or design.
- # It is not due to law or chance.
- # Therefore, it is due to design.
- # (A *deductive* argument.)

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Fine-Tuning of the Universe

- # Existence of intelligent life depends upon a complex and delicate balance of initial conditions given in the Big Bang itself.
- # Old belief: Whatever the initial conditions of the universe, eventually intelligent life might evolve.
- # Current belief: Our existence is balanced on a knife's edge. A *life-prohibiting* universe is much more likely than a *life-permitting* universe like ours.

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Specific Examples

- # Stephen Hawking: if the rate of the universe's expansion one second after the Big Bang had been smaller by even one part in 10^{15} , the universe would have re-collapsed.
- # P.C.W. Davies: The odds against the initial conditions being suitable for star formation is at least $10^{10^{21}}$.
- # P.C.W. Davies: A change in the strength of gravity or the weak force by one part in 10^{100} would have prevented a life-permitting universe.
- # Roger Penrose: Odds of the Big Bang's low entropy condition existing by chance are on the order of one out of 10^{1230} .
- # There are around 50 such quantities and constants present in the Big Bang that must be fine-tuned in this way if the universe is to permit life.
- # Not just must *each* quantity be fine-tuned, their *ratios* must also be fine-tuned.

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Law, Chance, or Design

- # **Law:** the fine-tuning of the universe is physically necessary. It had to be that way, and there was no (or little) chance of its not being life-permitting.
- # **Chance:** the fine-tuning of the universe is due entirely to chance.
- # **Design:** an intelligent Mind behind the cosmos.
- # Which is the most plausible?
- # Check: false dilemma?

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Law

- # Requires that a life-prohibiting universe be virtually impossible.
- # Extraordinarily implausible. Requires strong proof or evidence.
- # John Leslie: "The claim that blind necessity is involved—that universes whose laws or constants are slightly different 'aren't real physical possibilities' ... is eroded by the various physical theories, particularly theories of random symmetry breaking, which *show* how a varied ensemble of universes might be generated." If subatomic indeterminacy (or uncausedness) is real, then it must be possible for the universe to be different.
- # Even if the laws of nature were necessary, we still have to supply initial conditions. Hence, the physical universe is not necessarily unique [P.C.W. Davies].
- # If there is a single physically possible universe, this would itself be strong evidence for a designer.
- # *Strong Anthropic Principle*: often taken as indicative of God's existence [Barrow and Tipler].

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Chance

- # It could have happened by chance, but the odds against it are incomprehensibly great. We would never embrace such a hypothesis in any other area of our lives. But it's not just probability that's at stake here; see next point.
- # *Specified probability*: demonstration that the event in question is not only improbable but also conforms to an independently discovered pattern. Example: chimpanzee typing "To be or not to be; that is the question."

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Many-Worlds Hypothesis

- # Theorists who defend the chance alternative have adopted the Many-Worlds Hypothesis (that there are many parallel universes).
- # This is a sort of backhanded complement to the design hypothesis in that the fine-tuning cries out for explanation.
- # The Many-Worlds Hypothesis is no more scientific, and no less metaphysical, than the hypothesis of a Cosmic Designer [John Polkinghorne].
- # The designer hypothesis is arguably superior because it is simpler (Ockham's razor).
- # No good explanation for generating a World Ensemble. (The only consistent inflationary model is Linde's Chaotic Inflationary Theory, but it requires fine-tuning to start the inflation.) [Robert Brandenburger]
- # The Many-Worlds Hypothesis faces a challenge from biological evolutionary theory.

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Counter-Arguments: Fine-Tuning

- # *We really don't know how much certain constants and quantities could have varied from their actual values.*
- # This admitted uncertainty becomes less important when the number of variables to be fine-tuned is high.
- # Example: The chances of all 50 variables being fine-tuned, even if each has a 50% chance of being its actual value, is less than 3 out of 10^{17} .

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Counter-Arguments: Fine-Tuning

- # *The existence of any universe is equally improbable, and therefore there is nothing to be explained.*
- # In light of specified probability, can immediately see the fallacy.
- # It's not the probability of some universe or other's existence, but the specified probability of a life-permitting universe's existing.

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Counter-Arguments: Fine-Tuning

- # *We shouldn't be surprised at the finely tuned conditions of the universe, for if the universe were not fine-tuned, then we wouldn't be here to be surprised about it.*
- # True statement: "We shouldn't be surprised that we do not observe conditions of the universe incompatible with our existence."
- # It does not follow that: "We shouldn't be surprised that we do observe conditions of the universe that are compatible with our existence."
- # John Leslie's analogy.

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Counter-Arguments: Designer

- # *The Designer Himself remains unexplained; an intelligent designer also exhibits complex order, so that if the universe needs an explanation, so does its designer.*
- # Based on a misconception of "explanation." If the best explanation of a disease is a previously unknown virus, we cannot dismiss the explanation just because we can't explain the virus.
- # The complexity in a Mind is not analogous to the complexity of the universe. A mind's ideas may be complex, but a mind itself is a remarkably simple thing. In order to be a mind, it must have certain properties like intelligence, consciousness, and volition. These are not contingent properties that it might lack.

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Counter-Arguments: Designer

- # *What about alleged designs that are evil or hurtful?*
- # Irrelevant to the design hypothesis, which says nothing about the moral qualities of the Designer.
(But see next reason.)

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Craig-Flew Debate

- # In 1998, Craig debated well-known atheist philosopher Anthony Flew. See: *Does God Exist: The Craig-Flew Debate* (Ashgate Publishing, 2003).
- # It was reported that the debate had some impact on Flew. The Winter 2004 issue of the journal *Philosophia Christi* published an exclusive interview with Flew, "My Pilgrimage from Atheism to Theism," in which Flew now declares himself a theist.
- # Flew: "I think that the most impressive arguments for God existence are those that are supported by recent scientific discoveries. I've never been much impressed by the kalam cosmological argument, and I don't think it has gotten any stronger recently. However, I think the argument to Intelligent Design is enormously stronger than it was when I first met it."

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