

The question of the existence of God can be viewed from a number of different angles, which include:

- The argument from morality;
- The miracle of the Qur'an;
- The cosmological argument;
- The argument from personal experience;
- The argument from consciousness.

In this leaflet we examine five of the most common statements often posed by atheists in their writings against the existence of a Creator.

Argument 1: One of the greatest challenges to the human intellect has been to explain how the complex, improbable appearance of design in the universe arises.

In reality this is only a challenge if you wish to take God out of the picture. It is indeed a challenge if you presume atheism to be true. However, for someone who is reflective and thinks deeply about things, the simplest and the best explanation - with the greatest explanatory power - is that there is a supernatural designer.

Argument 2: The natural temptation is to attribute the appearance of design to actual design itself.

This is not only a natural temptation but a rational conclusion brought to light based upon the fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the universe. This can be explained as follows. Our universe is governed by constant numbers, untune or alter any one of them and the stars, planets and humans would then not exist. The first crucial number D ($=3$) is the number of spatial dimensions: we live in a three-dimensional universe. Life couldn't exist if D were two or four. Time is a fourth dimension, but distinctively different from the others in that it has a built-in arrow: we 'move' only towards the future. The cosmic number *omega* (W) measures the amount of material in the universe - galaxies, diffuse gas, and 'dark matter'. A universe within which W was too high would have collapsed long ago; had W been too low, no galaxies would have formed. The inflationary theory of the Big Bang says $W = 1$. Another number, *epsilon* ($e=0.007$) defines how firmly atomic nuclei bind together and how all the atoms on Earth were made. The value of e controls the power from the Sun and, more sensitively, how stars transmute hydrogen into all the atoms of the periodic table. Carbon and oxygen are common, and gold and uranium are rare, because of what happens in the stars. If e were 0.006 or 0.008, we could not exist. The cosmos is so vast because there is one crucially important huge number N ($=10^{36}$). This is the ratio of the strength of the electrical force to the gravitational force.

The fabric - or texture - of our universe depends on the number Q , and represents the ratio of two fundamental energies. If Q ($=1/100,000$) were even smaller, the universe would be inert and without structure; if Q were much larger, it would be a violent place, dominated by giant black holes. The last number I ($=0.7$) controls the expansion of our universe. Fortunately for us, I is very small. Otherwise its effect would have stopped galaxies and stars from forming. Hence, the existence of a life permitting universe is due to conditions that must have been fine-tuned to a degree that is literally incalculable.

Further examples illustrate the point. Physicist P. C. W. Davies has calculated that a change in the strength of gravity or of the atomic weak force by only one part in 10^{100} would have prevented a life permitting universe.

Roger Penrose of Oxford University has calculated that the odds of the Big Bang's low entropy condition existing by chance are less than one part in 10 raised to the power 10^{123} . To put this number in context and in order to understand how special the initial stages of the universe were, if you physically tried to write out this number eg. 10000....., and you put a zero on every single particle in the observable universe, you would be way too short and run out of particles before completing the number!

Roger Penrose states "*In order to produce a universe resembling the one in which we live, the Creator would have to aim for an absurdly tiny volume of the phase space of possible universes*" According to Penrose the volume of the phase space would be $1/10$ to the power of X which is 10^{123} . This is smaller than the ratio of a Proton! This precision is much greater than the precision that would be required to hit an individual proton if the entire universe were a dartboard! There are only three possible explanations for the presence of the above fine tuning of the universe: a) Physical necessity; b) Chance; c) Design.

Why it cannot be Physical Necessity

The first alternative seems extraordinarily implausible. There is just no physical reason why these constants and quantities should have the values they do. As P. C. W. Davies states: "*Even if the laws of physics were unique, it doesn't follow that the physical universe itself is unique...the laws of physics must be augmented by cosmic initial conditions...there is nothing in present ideas about 'laws of initial conditions' remotely to suggest that their consistency with the laws of physics would imply uniqueness. Far from it...it seems, then, that the physical universe does not have to be the way it is: it could have been otherwise.*" As can be seen by the examples above, a slight change of any of the values or constants would mean the universe could not permit life.

Why it cannot be Chance

Some people who do not understand the impossibility of the universe coming into being by chance exclaim, "It could have happened by chance!" However, would they say chance explains how an elephant was sleeping in their garage overnight? Or how a 747 ended up parked in their garden? Even after their irrational perspective is highlighted, they still hold on to the theory that the universe can exist due to chance. In response to this we would argue that it is not just about chance but something the theorists call "specified probability." Specified probability is a probability that also conforms to an independent pattern.

To illustrate this, imagine you have a monkey in a room for twenty-four hours, typing away on your laptop. In the morning you enter the room and you see, "O Romeo, O Romeo, where art thou O Romeo? Deny thy father and deny thy name..." The monkey has miraculously written out a Shakespearian sonnet! What you may have expected is random words such as "house," "car," and "apple." However, in this case not only have you seen the improbability of typing intelligible English words - but they also conform to the independent pattern of English grammar! This is the same case with accepting that the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life was just by chance.

It must be Design

Since physical necessity and chance are untrue, it follows that supernatural design is the most reasonable explanation for the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.

Argument 3: The natural temptation of attributing the appearance of design to actual design itself, is false because the designer hypothesis immediately raises the larger problem of who designed the designer.

The above statement, which is a contention to the design argument is flawed for two main reasons. From a basic understanding of the philosophy of science we can conclude that in the inference to the best explanation, the best explanation does not require an explanation! The following example illustrates this point. Imagine 500 years from now, a group of archaeologists start digging in London's Hyde Park only to find parts of a car and a bus. They would be completely justified in inferring that these finds were not the result of sedimentation and metamorphosis but products of an unknown civilisation.

However, if some skeptics were to argue that we cannot make such inferences because we do not know anything about this civilisation, how they lived and who created them, would that make the archaeologists conclusions untrue? Of course not! Second, if we take this contention seriously it could undermine the very foundations of science and philosophy themselves. If we require an explanation for the basic assumptions of science, for example that the external world exists, where do you think our level of scientific progress would be?

Additionally if we were to apply this type of question to every attempt at explaining the explanation, we would end up with an infinite regression of explanations. And an infinite regression of explanations would defeat the whole purpose of science in the first place – which is to provide an explanation!

A Note on Rejecting the Supernatural

Atheists also reject a supernatural designer because they think, as an explanation, it lacks explanatory power; in other words, no advance is made. People often raise this objection because they feel that a supernatural designer is just as complex as design. However, this objection is problematic because the assumption is that a supernatural designer is as complex as the universe. In reality, a supernatural designer, in other words God, is one of the simplest concepts understood by all.

Argument 4: The most ingenious and powerful explanation is Darwinism evolution by natural selection and we don't have an equivalent explanation for physics.

This statement is irrelevant due to the following reasons:

1. Evolution does not even enter the equation;
With regards to the existence of God, evolution on Earth is about nine billion years away if we use the fine-tuning argument mentioned above. Simply put, evolution has no place.
2. Evolution is based upon incalculable probabilities.
The odds against assembling the human genome spontaneously are incalculable. The probability of assembling the genome is between $(4^{180})^{110,000}$ and $(4^{360})^{110,000}$ (*The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*, Oxford, 1986). These numbers give some feel for the unlikelihood of the species Homo sapiens. And if anyone were to accept evolution by chance, they would have to believe in a miracle as these numbers are so high! Therefore evolution itself would prove the existence of God!

3. Evolution is impossible because we have not had enough time on Earth yet according to John D. Barrow and Frank J. Tipler, the calculated odds of assembling a single gene are between 4^{180} to 4^{360} . The implications of this are that there simply has not been sufficient time since the formation of the Earth to try a number of nucleotide base combinations that can even remotely compare to these numbers!

Argument 5: We should not give up the hope of a better explanation arising in physics, something as powerful as Darwinism is for biology.

The argument here basically says that since there is a naturalistic explanation for the apparent design in species and we do not have a similar explanation for physics, we should just wait. Does this not sound like blind faith? The statement presumes scientific naturalism to be the only way of establishing facts or sound conclusions. Why else would we want to wait for a naturalistic explanation? The presumption that scientific naturalism is the only way to establish facts is not true because scientific naturalism cannot prove: 1. Logical truths such as mathematics - in actuality, logical truths are required to prove scientific naturalism. To argue the other way round would be tantamount to arguing in a circle. 2. Aesthetic truths such as beauty. 3. Moral truths such as right and wrong.

Finally, scientific naturalism is self-defeating as the statement “scientific naturalism is the only method to use to establish facts” cannot be proven using scientific naturalism! The greatest evidence of God is His creation. Nature and our study of nature, both proclaim the fact that there is One God who, in His Wisdom, has created and continues to sustain the universe. The very existence of the universe, with its superb organisation is inexplicable except as having being brought into existence by a Creator.

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Does God Exist?



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