The Kalam Cosmological Argument
Cosmological Arguments

- A *cosmological argument* is one that argues that there must be a God to explain the existence of the universe.
- There are different forms of the argument depending on what is to be explained and why that can only be explained by God.
- The biggest divide depends on what might initially seem to be an unrelated question: What is *time*?
Philosophy of Time

- There are two fundamental theories in philosophy of time:
- The *A-Theory* or *dynamic* view of time says that time consists in moments being past, present, and future.
- By contrast, the *B-theory*, or *static* view of time says that time consists solely in moments being earlier than and later than each other.

**Domino Example**

- Notice that “earlier than” and “later than” never change, while past, present, and future do.
- Notice also that A-theory can allow for the B-properties, but not vice-versa. The A-theory adds that there is a privileged present moment.
The Contingency Argument

- If one holds a B-theory of time, there is no particular moment of time that is in need of explanation more than any other; instead, what needs to be explained is why the whole series exists?
- Thus, if one is to argue for God’s existence, it must be because the whole space-time block needs to be explained
- The most plausible way of doing this is to say that the universe is contingent and needs to be explained by a necessary being.
- (1) Every existing thing has an explanation of its existence, either in the necessity of its own nature, or in an external cause.
  (2) If the universe has an explanation of its existence, that explanation is God
  (3) The universe is an existing thing
  (4) Therefore the explanation of the existence of the universe is God.
- Why did Craig/Moreland move to (1) instead of Leibniz’s claim that every fact must have a sufficient reason for why it is the case rather than otherwise
The Kalam Argument

- On the other hand, if one holds an A-theory of time, one might think that we don’t really need an explanation of why we exist right now—it is just because we existed a few minutes ago and nothing destroyed us.
- While there are somewhat plausible reasons for denying this, it seems initially reasonable to say that each moment of time explained the existence and nature of the next moment of time (in some way).
- If this is the case, the only thing in need of explanation would be a moment for which there was no prior moment—a first moment.
- If each item in a series is explained by the previous one, then what needs to be explained is what started the series.
- Thus, the Kalam argument fits in with this view of time—it asks why the universe began to exist.
  1. Everything that begins to exist has a cause.
  2. The universe began to exist.
  3. Therefore the universe has a cause.
The Kalam Cosmological Argument:

1. Everything that begins to exist has a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause.

- The argument is valid, so to defend it one need only defend the two premises, and that the conclusion implies the existence of God

- (1) seems intuitive; one might even think that we can know it \emph{a priori} as a metaphysical principle that would have to be true

- We can add to that intuition that every time we see things come into existence (if we ever see this), they are caused

- The biggest objection comes from David Hume who argued that there was no such thing as causation, and if there was we could not know about it.

- If Hume was right, this would mean that premise (1) was either meaningless or unsupported by experience.
Hume on Causation

- Hume’s first attack on causation is that it is a meaningless notion.
- Causation involves a necessary connection between two things (e.g. if the light just happens to turn on after we flip a switch, then it is not causation. The only way we say that flipping the switch *caused* the light to turn on is if there was some necessary connection between the two events).
- However, things are only necessary if their ideas imply each other (e.g. it is necessary that bachelors are unmarried and that colored objects are visible).
- We know there is no conceptual connection between distinct events because we can clearly imagine one occurring without the other (e.g. we can imagine dropping the book and it not falling).
- Therefore, there cannot be a necessary connection.
Hume on Causation

- Hume’s second attack on causation is that we could never know any causal connections because we can never know anything by induction.
- We know something *inductively* if we infer it from a lot of cases.
- For instance, from the fact that every time I have dropped something it has fallen, I form the assumption that “if I drop this book, it will fall”.
- Notice that this is only rational if we also accept a premise of the form *The future will resemble the past*. Call this the **Uniformity Principle**.
- But surely the **Uniformity Principle** is reasonable right? Well, Hume asks, what evidence do we have for it?
- The natural response is, “well that’s the way it has always worked…”
- Notice that that will only give us evidence of the **Uniformity Principle** if we already accept the **Uniformity Principle**
- Thus, we seem to have no non-circular evidence for any sort of inductive inference (so for any causal connection). If we accept one, it seems to be not on the basis of evidence.
The Kalam Cosmological Argument:

1. Everything that begins to exist has a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause.

- For the second premise Craig/Moreland offer four arguments
- Two are scientific: the Big Bang Theory and Thermodynamics
- Two are philosophical: the impossibility of an actual infinite and the impossibility of an infinite past created by successive addition
The Kalam Cosmological Argument:

1. Everything that begins to exist has a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause.

Regarding the second philosophical argument, we know that we add one year per year (i.e. time moves at a certain fixed rate)

However, we also know that moving at a fixed rate, one will never complete infinitely many tasks

So, argue Craig and Moreland, time is not such that it could have completed infinitely many years in the past

Draper points out that this really only shows that starting from a finite past we could never reach an infinite past, but that there is no problem starting from an infinite past and adding one year at a time

If anything remains of the argument, it is merely that it is extremely difficult (perhaps impossible) to conceive of an infinite past.
The Kalam Cosmological Argument:

1. Everything that begins to exist has a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause.

The other philosophical argument offered in defense of premise 2 is that there cannot be an actual infinite in the world, merely a potential infinite.

- A potential infinite is one which can increase without limit.
- An actual infinite is a set of distinct, definite things which number greater than any natural number.
- For showing the impossibility we are shown the bizarre qualities that an infinite thing would have (Hilbert’s Hotel, Ross’s Urn).
- Note that there is no contradiction involved in these things; if there were, Craig and Moreland would be endorsing giving up math.
The Kalam Cosmological Argument:

1. Everything that begins to exist has a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause.

- Note that there is no contradiction involved in these things; if there were, Craig and Moreland would be endorsing giving up math.
- Instead, we only get a contradiction if we hold certain assumptions fixed.
- For instance, there are two ways we can understand one thing having more objects than another: one being a subset of the other, and being unable to put them in 1-1 correspondence. We only get a contradiction in Hilbert’s hotel if we assume that if something has more in one sense then it has more in the other sense—an assumption rejected by most mathematicians.
- Thus, the impossibility of an actual infinite is only as plausible as claims that concrete objects must have certain other properties.
The Kalam Cosmological Argument:

1. Everything that begins to exist has a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause.

- Many people are willing to sign on to the premises and the validity of the argument (so the conclusion), but don’t think that this conclusion implies the existence of God (as philosophers define God).

- Certainly it does not without further premises, so what are these further premises?

- They definitely want to endorse that if something causes space to begin to exist, then that thing is non-spatial, non-material.

- Furthermore, it has to be able to start a causal chain; otherwise it would not explain the things we need it to explain.

- The only things we know of that start causal chains are persons.

- Thus, we have that the universe was caused by a non-physical person.

- This is not a proof of God, but they seem to think that God is the best candidate for this role.
The Completed Kalam Cosmological Argument:

1. Everything that begins to exist has a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause.
4. If something causes the universe to begin to exist, then it is not essentially a part of the universe.
5. Therefore there is a cause of the universe that is not essentially a part of the universe.
6. If something is not essentially a part of the universe, then it is not essentially physical.
7. Therefore there is a cause of the universe that is not essentially physical.
8. The only non-essentially physical causal agents are persons.
9. Therefore the universe has a cause which is a non-essentially-physical person.