

The Argument from Design

Cosmologists tell us that *our universe is “fine-tuned for life”* – for life to even have a shot of evolving certain extremely stringent conditions have to be met. Had the values of the physical constants been even *slightly* different our universe would not have life in it.

The Fine Tuning Argument (as explicated by Roger White)

1. If a fact E that we observe stands in need of explanation, hypothesis H provides a satisfactory explanation of E and one that is better than any alternative explanation available, then E provides significant evidential support for H.
2. That our universe is hospitable to life stands in need of explanation.
3. That God adjusted the constants in order to allow for life to develop provides a satisfactory explanation for why our universe is life-permitting.
4. There is no comparably satisfying explanation of this fact available.
5. Therefore that our universe is life-permitting provides significant evidential support for theism. (from (1)-(4))

Premise (1): Inference to the Best Explanation is a general principle defended by epistemologists and philosophers of science. Both in day to day life, and in science, it seems like we come to believe things because they provide the best explanation of the evidence

Premise (2): Not every improbable event stands in need of explanation. Contrast: a string of scrabble letters that spell gibberish versus a string of scrabble letters that spell a line from *Hamlet*.

- As a matter of fact cosmic fine tuning strikes many scientists and philosophers as calling out for explanation.
- Perhaps it's the fact that life seems valuable, or interesting that makes a universe hospitable for life call out for explanation.

Objection to Premise (2): It's not surprising that the universe is fine-tuned for life because if it weren't, we wouldn't observe that it weren't.

White's Response: "It was not inevitable that we would observe the constants to be fine-tuned. What was inevitable was just that if *we were to observe the constants at all*, we would find them to be fine-tuned for life."

Premise (3): We frequently appeal to the actions of rational agents in explanation. Objections?

Premise (4): White considers the following objection

Objection to Premise (4): The multiverse provides a comparably satisfying explanation of fine-tuning.

White's Response: The multiverse theory explains why *some* universe is fine-tuned for life, but not why ours is. It would be odd, therefore, to conclude that the multiverse exists on the basis of fine tuning evidence.

However, if there is independent evidence for the existence of the multiverse, then White thinks this could undermine Premise (2). Asking why *our* universe is fine-tuned for life might be asking why *Smith* won the lottery.

Conclusion: The conclusion follows from (1)-(4).

Premise (2) says that the fact E (our universe is fine-tuned for life) stands in need of explanation.

Premise (3) says hypothesis H (God adjusted the constants to allow for the development of life) provides a satisfactory explanation of E .

Premise (4) says that there is no better explanation available.

Premise (1) says that when a fact E stands in need of explanation, hypothesis H explains E , and there is no better explanation available, then E provides significant evidential support for H .

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