

GOD: THE NECESSARY INGREDIENT IN THE EDIFICE OF LIFE

By Eric F. LaRock

INTRODUCTION

Naturalistic evolution is predicated upon the assumption that organic matter arose from inorganic matter spontaneously. Accordingly, chance, matter, time, and natural processes are all that is needed for life in its present state. There is no room for God in the edifice of life; God has been deemed unnecessary. In the words of prominent atheist scientist, Richard Dawkins:

Natural Selection, the blind, unconscious automatic processes which Darwin discovered, and which we now know is the explanation for the existence and apparently purposeful form of all life, has no purpose in mind. It has no mind and no mind's eye. It does not plan for the future. It has no vision, no foresight, no sight at all.¹

What Dawkins considers to be a known explanation is highly disputed, even in his own backyard. Scientists are not in agreement regarding the naturalist's thesis, and the assumptions therein. Scientifically and philosophically, it can be argued that naturalism is simply false. The present writer will endeavor to show the falsity of naturalism. Thus, the first part of this paper will examine the credibility of naturalistic evolutionary claims. Examining the claim that life arose through purely physical processes at (1) the prebiotic level, (2) the molecular level, and (3) the fossil level will attest to the credibility or incredibility of naturalistic evolutionary theory.

Delving into some of the critical problems of naturalism at the philosophical level will also place this issue in a much more circumspect light. In the second part of the paper these problems will be brought to light by answering the following questions: What is the nature of (1) science, (2) knowledge, (3) natural selection, and (4) chance in relation to scientific naturalism?

The third part of this paper will focus on countering the claim that God is unnecessary in the edifice of life. Both philosophically and scientifically it can be demonstrated that the cosmos cannot have an infinite past. It will be argued that the Kalam cosmological argument and Big Bang cosmology offer weighty evidence in favor of a beginning to the cosmos and, hence, the necessity of a Supernatural Being (i.e., God). Each part will be dealt with in turn. So, with that in mind, let us delve into the first part, the claims of naturalistic evolution.

PART 1: THE CLAIMS OF NATURALISTIC EVOLUTION

A very crucial assumption of naturalistic evolutionary theory is that life spontaneously arose from inorganic matter. This is the prebiotic claim. It was not until the experimentation of Stanley Miller in the early 1950's that this hypothesis gained serious credibility within the scientific community. Miller, while a graduate student at the University of Chicago, was

¹ Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (New York: Norton, 1996), 5.

determined to prove that life could arise spontaneously from nonliving matter. It cannot be overemphasized that Miller set out to demonstrate the plausibility of life arising by the physical processes of chance selection, a blind, unguided, non-intelligent process.² Miller's experiment entailed simulating what he believed to be the early earth's terrestrial and atmospheric conditions. Since the terrestrial condition of the early earth was primarily water, he used a pool of water. However, simulating the early earth's atmosphere was a bit more tricky. The early atmosphere was comprised of simple gases (e.g., methane, water vapor, hydrogen, and ammonia). Miller knew that combining gases alone would not bring about favorable results, because they are generally unreactive on their own. So he added electrical charges to his prebiotic soup; these electrical charges simulated lightning. After a week of boiling the pool of water and mingling the gases with electrical charges, his experiment produced amino acids, the building blocks of life. Miller's experiment was embraced by naturalists. In their minds, his experiment showed that organic matter evolved from a prebiotic soup, a scenario that allegedly corresponded to the primordial conditions of planet earth.³ Before we cash our chips at the evolutionary bank, it is important to determine just *what* Miller's experiment actually proved.

At best, Miller's experiment proves intelligent design, not a mindless, purely physical process of chance selection. His experiment was rigged from the very start. Miller, an intelligent agent, set up the whole prebiotic scenario. As an intelligent agent, he selected the proper chemicals. He also set up all the conditions needed to obtain a favorable outcome. This is exactly the opposite of what evolutionists claim took place, i.e., there was no intelligent being guiding and intervening in the processes of life, according to naturalists. Miller was a "creator" per se, the very thing naturalists disdain. Hence, the very thing Miller set out to disprove, he indirectly proved. Michael Behe, a molecular biologist at Lehigh University, has the following to say on this topic:

There were no chemists four billion years ago. Neither were there any chemical supply houses, distillation flasks, nor any of the many other devices that the modern chemist uses daily in his or her laboratory, and which are necessary to get good results. A convincing origin-of-life scenario requires that intelligent direction of the chemical reactions be minimized as far as possible. Nonetheless, the involvement of some intelligence is unavoidable.⁴

To complicate matters further, it is still incumbent on evolutionary scientists to prove how amino acids formed proteins on earth's rather aqueous surface. Protein formation involves a combination of several specific amino acids. A successful combination of amino acids entails the removal of a water molecule per amino acid. However--and here is the main problem--*the removal*

² A.E. Wilder-Smith, *The Natural Sciences Know Nothing of Evolution* (Costa Mesa: T.W.F.T. Publishers, 1981), 11.

³ Michael Behe, *Darwin's Black Box* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 166-168.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 168-169. Behe also points out that Miller's successful experiment was preceded by several failures. On numerous occasions Miller's experiments did not produce amino acids. Given that fact, it is not unreasonable to conclude that his failed experiments better represent the naturalist's prebiotic soup.

of a water molecule from an amino acid is strongly inhibited by the presence of water.⁵ And yet naturalists would have us believe that life spontaneously evolved from the primeval ocean.⁶

Thus, not only does the experimental data show the necessity of an intelligent agent to guide various physical processes for amino acid production, but it is also the case that the primeval ocean is the worst possible place for amino acid combination and, hence, protein formation. Both of these factors provide evidence contrary to the naturalist's hypothesis.

Moreover, atmospheric physicists discovered that earth's atmosphere has been an "oxidizing" atmosphere, rather than a "reducing" atmosphere for the last four billion years.⁷ This presents serious problems to Miller's experiment; for it was discovered in the experimental work that oxygen, regardless of its amount, could not be present for amino acid production.⁸ According to astrophysicist Hugh Ross, "Under oxidizing conditions, processes producing amino acids (protein building blocks) and nucleotides (DNA and RNA building blocks) operate 30 million times less efficiently than they would under reducing conditions."⁹

Thus far we have examined the naturalist's prebiotic claim and have found it to be without any evidentiary weight. In fact, the evidence reveals a rather dismal picture for naturalistic evolutionists. But proponents of naturalistic evolution also claim that evolution accounts for life at the molecular level. Is their case plausible? It is evident that unless evolution takes place at the prebiotic level, then evolution at the rather complex molecular level will not occur. (Given the preceding evidence, the naturalist had better pray for a miracle!) Perhaps the best way to test whether evolution occurred at the molecular level is against the backdrop of one of their primary claims, *viz.*, that evolution takes place very gradually. That is to say, if evolution is true, then life at the molecular level should admit a gradual transformation.

This is consistent with both Darwin and neo-Darwinian evolutionists. Charles Darwin, in his *Origin of Species*, said: "If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down."¹⁰ Richard Dawkins, one of the more fervent defenders of Darwinism today, said the following in support of Darwinism:

One hundred and twenty five years on, we know a lot more about animals and plants than Darwin did, and still not a single case is known to me of a complex organ that could not have

⁵ Ibid, 169.

⁶ A.E. Wilder-Smith, *The Natural Sciences Know Nothing of Evolution* (Costa Mesa: T.W.F.T. Publishers, 1981), 16.

⁷ Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1992), 139. Ross defines an oxidizing atmosphere as "one in which atoms and molecules bond with oxygen atoms." A reducing atmosphere is one in which atoms and molecules bond with hydrogen atoms (Ibid).

⁸ Norman Geisler, *When Skeptics Ask* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1990), 223.

⁹ Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1992), 139.

¹⁰ Quoted in Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (New York: Norton, 1996), 91.

been formed by numerous successive slight modifications. I do not believe that such a case will ever be found. If it is . . . I shall cease to believe in Darwinism.¹¹

Hopefully Dawkins' temerity is tempered with sincerity. Given the progress of molecular biology today, it is quite plausible that Dawkins' should give up his faith in Darwin. Michael Behe, in his recent book *Darwin's Black Box*, demonstrates countervailing evidence to the Darwinian-Dawkins contention that complex organs can be accounted for by "numerous successive slight modifications." Behe demonstrates that the cell is an irreducibly complex "machine." That is to say, the cell is comprised of several parts that work interdependently. The cell can only function if all the parts are working simultaneously; if one part is missing, the cell would cease to function. Hence, due to the cell's irreducible complexity (i.e., its interdependent composition), the cell cannot be the product of a slow evolutionary process.¹² And since complex organs rely upon irreducibly complex cellular make-up, it follows that Dawkins' challenge has been met.

Behe also contends that examples of "irreducible complexity abound, including aspects of DNA reduplication, electron transport, telomere synthesis, photosynthesis, transcription regulation, and more."¹³ Behe's challenge should not go unnoticed by the Darwinist today. He makes a very salient point regarding the progress of molecular biology and the challenges it brings to Darwinian evolutionary proponents:

No one at Harvard University, no one at the National Institutes of Health, no member of the National Academy of Sciences, no Nobel prize winner--no one at all can give a detailed account of how the cilium, or vision, or blood clotting, or any complex biochemical process might have developed in a Darwinian fashion. But we are here. All these parts got here somehow; if not in a Darwinian fashion, then how?"¹⁴

Behe answers the foregoing question in the concluding pages of his book when he says, "The result of these cumulative efforts to investigate the cell--to investigate life at the molecular level--is a loud, clear, piercing cry of "design!" The result is so unambiguous and so significant that it must be ranked as one of the greatest achievements in the history of science."¹⁵ His answer is without question an assent to the necessity for an intelligent designer, i.e., God. (Will Dawkins and other neo-Darwinians give up faith in Darwinism in light of this evidence?)

To further show the implausibility of molecular evolution occurring gradually over a few billion years, evidence of fully formed cells has been found in some ancient rocks in Greenland. They are about 3.8 billion years old. Behe's claim regarding the irreducible complex nature of cells

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Michael Behe, *Darwin's Black Box* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 39-45.

¹³ Ibid, 160.

¹⁴ Ibid, 187.

¹⁵ Ibid, 232-233.

is further substantiated in that *there is no evidence of pre-cellular formation in the geologic record*. Moreover, given the fact that the earth is approximately 4.6 billion years old, and fully formed cells have been dated at 3.8 billion years old, it follows that if Darwinism is true, then the formation of cellular life would have to take place over a period less than two hundred million years.¹⁶

For those hopeful evolutionists, Astrophysicist Hugh Ross has pointed out that the early earth's surface was bombarded with massive meteorite raids. These meteorite raids took place approximately every 10 million years and lasted from 4.25 until 3.8 billion years ago. Hence, according to the evolutionary scenario, life would have to arise in geological instants of 10 million years or less (between the meteorite impacts). Even if life could arise during these instants, it would still have to survive subsequent meteorite bombardments during this period.¹⁷ This would, of course, compromise the plausibility of an utterly physical (i.e., Darwinian) interpretation of early life formation on earth. Ross concludes that "From the perspective of our life span, a ten-million-year window may seem long, but it is impossibly short to those seeking to explain life's origins without divine input."¹⁸

All of the above arguments present compelling evidence against naturalistic evolutionary theory. But there is one more claim that we need to examine, that is, the claim that evolutionary theory is attested at the fossil level. The bones have always been a problem for naturalists. Even Darwin recognized this when he said, "Why then is not every geological formation and every stratum full of such intermediate links? Geology assuredly does not reveal any such finely graduated organic chain, and this, perhaps, is the most obvious and gravest objection which can be urged against my theory."¹⁹ Indeed! Where were the numerous transitional forms during Darwin's era? And where are they today? Darwin thought that the difficulty in finding them was due to the primitive nature of paleontology as a science. Thus, he hoped that over the course of time paleontology would eventually prove his theory true. Unfortunately for Darwin, it has not. In fact, the case seems to be getting worse. There are now prominent evolutionists who disagree with Darwin on this point. Stephen Jay Gould, Professor of Paleontology at Harvard University, argues that species evolve in a punctuated manner, rather than the gradual manner that Darwin proposed.²⁰ Gould has the following to say regarding Darwinism and the fossil record:

The extreme rarity of transitional forms in the fossil record persists as the trade secret of paleontology. The evolutionary trees that adorn our textbooks have data only at the tips and

¹⁶ Norman Geisler, *When Skeptics Ask* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1990), 224.

¹⁷ Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos* (Colorado: NavPress, 1992), 138.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Quoted in Norman Geisler, *When Skeptics Ask* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1990), 228.

²⁰ Michael Behe, *Darwin's Black Box* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 27.

nodes of their branches; the rest is inference, however reasonable, not the evidence of fossils.²¹

Although Gould is an evolutionary scientist, his assertion is in agreement with the creationists' understanding of the fossil record, which is a fossil record revealing *stasis* and *sudden appearance*. That is to say, all living species exist as separate kinds, a thesis contrary to evolutionary thought. The notion that all animals are transitionally linked and differ in degree only is evidently false.²² Because the fossil record admits stasis and sudden appearance, Gould has posited a new theory. He has termed it 'punctuated equilibrium,' which says that species evolve in 'peripheral isolates' and by an episodic or punctuated process rather than the gradual process Darwin proposed.²³ Accordingly, the verifiability of evolution by way of transitional links is eliminated, since presumably change takes place abruptly and not gradually. But just how does punctuated equilibrium differ from an imaginary theory or no theory of evolution whatsoever? That is, what could possibly falsify a scientific theory that is altered each time an error surfaces? If evolutionary scientists continue to qualify their theory each time a contradiction arises will their theory not die the death of a thousand qualifications? Moreover, Gould's thesis sounds a bit like a 'materialism of the gaps' (*materia ex machina*). Punctuated equilibrium, which rests on a materialist supposition, is used to fill in the gap where evidence that evolutionists expect to find is clearly missing. However, such an appeal to materialism begs the question, since that is what Gould and other materialists must first prove. More could be said regarding the fossil problem, but space does not permit.²⁴ Turning now to the critical problems should solidify the case against naturalistic evolutionary theory.

PART 2: THE CRITICAL PROBLEMS OF SCIENTIFIC NATURALISM

The first critical problem of Scientific Naturalism involves addressing the question, "What is the nature of science in relation to scientific naturalism?" This question may seem like an odd one, especially as it reverberates in the mind of a scientist. Their relation is found in the scientist's presuppositions. Before any scientist can even begin the investigative task, they must first assume certain ideas that cannot be verified empirically. Accordingly, naturalists do not prove the existence of truth before they prove their scientific theory. Truth is presupposed. Neither do they set out to prove that numbers exist, nor that their cognitive apparatus is a reliable truth gatherer. Numbers and reliable minds are presupposed. It is also assumed, and must be if science is to be possible, that the world actually exists (i.e., exists objectively); empirical observation assumes objectivity. However, none of the above presuppositions are provable

²¹ Quoted in Norman Geisler, *When Skeptics Ask* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1990), 228.

²² Norman Geisler, *When Skeptics Ask* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1990), 229. That is not to say that species do not change within their own kind. Micro-evolution is empirically evident. It is the charge of macro-evolution that is under scrutiny.

²³ Stephen J. Gould, *The Panda's Thumb* (New York: Norton, 1980), 184.

²⁴ For further studies on the fossil problem see Michael Denton's *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, and *The Creation Hypothesis*, edited by J.P. Moreland.

through the methods of science. In other words, the building of science is constructed on a foundation that is not its own. It is merely renting space.

Also, naturalists do assume that existence is by its very nature physical. Dawkins claims, for example, that “nature is the blind forces of physics.”²⁵ This is a universal claim about reality. It leads to the fallacious assumptions that (1) the world has always existed, and that (2) science alone can adjudicate that which is true, since nature is wholly reduced to the physical. This, of course, begs the whole question. To the contrary, scientists as scientists do not, and cannot, make universal claims (i.e., prescriptive claims) about the world. Instead, they are stuck in the realm of description. They do not *prescribe* the way the world functions; they merely *describe* the way it functions. Those scientists who make prescriptive claims are no longer doing science, but philosophy. If a scientist, for example, makes the claim that only science and its methodologies can adequately ascertain truth, then she is no longer making a claim *of* science (i.e., a descriptive claim), but a philosophical statement *about* science.²⁶ Herein lies the problem of such a claim. Since the claim itself eliminates philosophy (and all other non-scientific fields) from the process of ascertaining truth, science becomes an impossible practice. For it rests upon the truth of a philosophical statement which it denies. That is, it is self-referentially incoherent.²⁷

The second critical problem involves addressing the question, “What is the nature of knowledge in relation to scientific naturalism?” In other words, how does the naturalist know that naturalism is true, given his basic world-view assumptions? Naturalists describe the world as a blind, unconscious, mindless, purposeless process, to borrow a few descriptive terms from Dawkins.²⁸ Dawkins, a naturalist, assumes that the conclusion he has drawn is true. But how reliable could his mind possibly be in the quest to ascertain truth, if his mind is the result of a blind, unconscious, mindless, purposeless process? Moreover, how does he (or any scientific materialist) account for consciousness if it is excluded in the evolutionary description of how things got here?²⁹

²⁵ Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (New York: Norton, 1996), 5.

²⁶ J.P. Moreland, *The Creation Hypothesis* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994), 14-18.

²⁷ It is tantamount to the “principle of verification,” an idea that gained prominence in the early part of the twentieth century among logical positivist philosophers. The principle of verification says that something is meaningful if, and only if, it is true by definition or empirically verifiable. A statement is true by definition if the predicate is contained in the subject, e.g., all bachelors are unmarried men. Of course, it was later discovered that the verificationists principle was neither true by definition nor empirically verifiable. Hence, it was abandoned as a criterion for testing truth. It seems that contemporary naturalism intimates the same position, but only in a much more “sophisticated scientific” guise.

²⁸ Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (New York: Norton, 1996) 5.

²⁹ Some materialists have attempted to deal with this problem by asserting that consciousness is caused by the brain; it supervenes on causally determined brain states. This is known as epiphenomenalism. The problem with this particular description of consciousness is that it leads to determinism. If consciousness is causally determined by physical states of the brain, then consciousness is merely an effect--an impotent by-product--and never a cause in-itself. Epiphenomenalism leads one to the untenable conclusion that thoughts and beliefs are held to be true because the brain determines consciousness to have such thoughts and beliefs, and not because consciousness apprehends such thoughts and beliefs to be true.

Furthermore, it is difficult to see how a scientific materialist can account for immutable knowledge, given his description of human cognition. Immutable knowledge does not change over time. If something is immutable, it will never change. However, if the brain is the product of an evolutionary process, then mutability becomes an unavoidable factor for human cognition. Thus, how can a mutable brain have immutable knowledge? Since we do have immutable knowledge (e.g., $2+2=4$, genocide is always wrong, rape is wrong, murder is wrong, love your neighbor as yourself, etc.), it follows that immutable knowledge cannot be the product of a mutable brain. Immutable knowledge must instead transcend the physical; immutable knowledge is therefore spiritual in nature and, hence, is known by minds, not physical brains. Philosopher Gordon H. Clark makes a similar point in the following paragraph:

If a truth, a proposition, or a thought were some physical motion in the brain, no two persons could have the same thought. A physical motion is a fleeting event numerically distinct from every other. Two persons cannot have the same motion, nor can one person have it twice. If this is what thought were, memory and communication would be impossible....It is a peculiarity of mind and not of body that the past can be made present. Accordingly, if one may think the same thought twice, truth must be mental or spiritual.³⁰

If the naturalist tries to avoid the above conclusion by making the claim that truth is relative, then he can no longer prove his own naturalistic world view as objectively true. For in that case it is merely a *subjective* truth to him and not an *objective* fact for everyone. But since relativism is self-defeating, it follows that the naturalist must maintain a set of beliefs consistent with theism. Of course, in so doing he affirms the opposite of what he is trying to deny!

The third critical problem will entail addressing the question, “What is the nature of natural selection in relation to scientific naturalism?” What is this mysterious notion that evolutionists refer to? It is not even evident that “natural selection” is scientific. Is it something natural or physical? It seems to pop up to explain everything, and yet nothing at all. That is, “natural selection” is a tautology. Philosopher Karl Popper made this point and was subsequently harangued by indignant naturalists. He toyed with the foundation of their theory by saying the following: “some of the greatest contemporary Darwinists themselves formulate the theory in such a way that it amounts to the tautology that *those organisms that leave the most offspring leave the most offspring.*”³¹ Circularity is a serious charge. It seems, however, that the evolutionist would prefer to embrace the vacuity of “natural selection,” instead of chucking it on a trash heap which reads “failed scientific theory.”

The job of the evolutionist is to prove “species transition,” which is the notion that species are morphologically linked. Species transition is not proven by simply pointing out that those animals which produce the most offspring insure greater survival of their species. Phillip

³⁰ Gordon H. Clark, *A Christian View of Men and Things* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 319-320.

³¹ Quoted in Phillip E. Johnson, *Darwin on Trial* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 21. Emphasis added. Popper’s comment was directed to some of the more prominent proponents of evolutionary theory, e.g., Fisher, Haldane, and Simpson.

Johnson, Professor of Law at the University of California at Berkeley, says the following witty remark in this regard: “When I want to know how a fish can become a man, I am not enlightened by being told that the organisms that leave the most offspring are the ones that leave the most offspring.”³²

The fourth and final critical problem addressed concerns the following question, “What is the nature of chance in relation to scientific naturalism?” Chance is also a term that is uncritically bandied about by naturalists. However, chance is not scientific. Science bases its formulation of scientific law on repeatable events. A chance event is by its very nature rare and is usually not repeatable or easily observed. Since scientific truth is based on observable evidence, and thus scientific law on repeatable occurrence, it seems to follow that chance is rather unscientific. Furthermore, chance has no ontological potency. It does not cause anything, because it does not exist in-itself. Yet it is constantly appealed to by naturalists as a source of explaining how things got here.

Given the complexity of life on earth, what is the likelihood that it arose naturally? According to Harold Morowitz, a molecular biophysicist, the odds of spontaneous biogenesis is about one chance in $10 \times 100,000,000,000$.³³ In acknowledging the implausibility of terrestrial evolution, some evolutionists have proposed theories involving aliens. H.C. Crick, a highly respected scientist and Nobel laureate, argues that an ancient alien vessel transporting bacteria to earth’s surface is a more likely story than the terrestrial evolutionary scenario proposed by Darwinians. However, Crick’s “solution” merely pushes the question back one step: where did the alien come from?³⁴ Moreover, his “solution” is mere conjecture as it relates to the implausibility of evolution occurring on this planet.

Let us now take up the task of discovering whether the universe requires a beginning, or is simply a brute fact extending into the infinite past. Is the cosmos eternal? In the words of Carl Sagan, “The cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be.”³⁵ However, an actual infinite past to the universe is philosophically incoherent and scientifically untenable, as will now be shown in the third part of this paper.

PART 3: THE SUPERNATURAL EXISTS

The overall logic of the Kalam cosmological argument and Big Bang cosmology can be put in the following syllogism. (1) Everything that begins was caused; (2) the universe began; (3) therefore, the universe was caused. Since all effects require a cause, it will be argued that the universe, being a giant effect, requires a Supernatural Cause. The first premise is part of our common experience. For example, if a cue ball crashes into another billiard ball, then the result is

³² Phillip E. Johnson, *Darwin on Trial* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 22.

³³ Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1992), 139.

³⁴ Michael Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 248-249.

³⁵ Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* (New York: Random House, 1980), 4.

motion in the billiard ball that was formerly at rest. The cue ball is said to be the efficient cause of the other billiard ball being put in motion. Premise one also affirms the principle that *nothing cannot cause something*. There is absolutely no predication or quiddity to nothing. There is nothing in nothing. It is complete absence. John Locke perhaps said it best: “This being of all absurdities the greatest, to imagine that pure nothing, the perfect negation and absence of all beings, should ever produce any real existence.”³⁶ Thus, only that which has something (or is something) can cause something. As obvious as this principle may seem to most people, there has been some disagreement among a few eccentric philosophical types. Atheist Philosopher Bertrand Russell once asserted, “there is no reason why the world could not have come into being without a cause.”³⁷ Does Russell honestly believe that, say, a giraffe can suddenly pop into existence uncaused, out of nothing? As absurd as that may be, Russell is left with justifying his claim that the entire universe suddenly popped into existence uncaused, out of nothing! Even David Hume, one of the greatest skeptics, once said: “I never asserted so absurd a proposition as that any thing might arise without a cause.”³⁸ Hence, simply because we are not privy to all causes (in an explicit empirical sense), it does not follow that they do not occur in reality.

Turning now to the Kalam argument will expose the problem for those who think the universe is an uncaused brute fact, which extends into the infinite past. Historically, the Kalam argument developed in the Medieval theological and philosophical tradition, principally among Arabic and Jewish scholars. The Kalam cosmological argument establishes that the universe necessarily had a beginning in the finite past. It accomplishes this by exposing the absurdities that would result if the universe had an infinite past. That is to say, if the universe did not have a beginning in the finite past, then it would be impossible to pass through an infinite series of moments to arrive at today. The argument can be put in the following way: *If the universe has an infinite past, then arriving at today would entail traversing an actual infinite series of moments; but traversing an actual infinite series of moments is impossible, for there is no beginning to such a series; therefore, since arriving at today is actual, the past cannot be infinite.*

This argument points out that since we have arrived at today, it necessarily follows that the universe cannot have an infinite past. For the series of moments comes to an end in the present day (i.e., today). Yet an infinite series of moments should have no end. Thus, the past is not infinite; the universe requires a beginning.³⁹ Accordingly, if the past was infinite, then accounting for my existence presently would prove impossible. As Medieval Philosopher Saadia argues: “Yet if the process of generation did not reach us we would not be generated, from which it necessarily follows that we, the multitude of beings, would not be generated and the beings now existent would not be existent.”⁴⁰

³⁶ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1991), 333.

³⁷ Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not A Christian* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), 7.

³⁸ David Hume, *Letters*, ed. by J.Y.T. Greig (Oxford: Clarendon, 1932), vol. 1, 187.

³⁹ Norman Geisler, *When Skeptics Ask* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1990), 17.

⁴⁰ Arthur Hyman and James J. Walsh, *Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1973), 347.

It is evident that the cause of the universe cannot be another finite cause, for that being would require another finite cause, *ad infinitum*, which is logically impossible. That is to say, eventually, one of those finite causes would have to both cause its own being and cause the being of another. But a self-caused being is impossible.⁴¹ For effects no more precede causes than death precedes life. Furthermore, “an infinite number of finite causes” is no more possible than a round square, an omniscient unwise God, or a Christian atheist. All entail contradictory terms. Thus, adding finite causes to previously extant finite causes will not bring about an infinity of causes, regardless of how many are added. Similarly, attempting to count from zero to positive infinity can at least begin. However, counting from negative infinity (i.e., an infinite past) to zero (i.e., the present) is impossible. In fact, such a task cannot even begin. It would be tantamount to a man who attempts to jump out of a bottomless pit.⁴²

There is an objection, based on mathematics, that should be considered regarding the Kalam argument. Utilizing mathematics, one can argue that an infinite number of dimensionless points on a line demonstrates an infinite. Does it? Actually, it only demonstrates a possible (or abstract) infinite. But time is not dimensionless; and space is not purely abstract.⁴³ The universe is filled with actual objects that take up actual space, not abstract entities between point A and point Z.⁴⁴

Furthermore, the absurdity of an actual infinite number of things existing was brought to light by the famous German mathematician, David Hilbert.⁴⁵ According to Philosopher William Craig, Hilbert exposed the absurdities entailed in an actual infinite via his famous hotel illustration, better known as “Hilbert’s Hotel.” In his illustration Hilbert compares a finite hotel with an infinite hotel. Imagine a hotel with a finite number of rooms, all of which are occupied. Thus, when a new guest arrives, he is informed that there are no vacancies. (That seems

⁴¹ Jean Paul Sartre was correct regarding the contradictory nature of an *Ens Causa Sui*, i.e, a self-caused being. Unfortunately, he did not consider the possibility of an uncaused Being. Because he opined that the God of religions was an *Ens Causa Sui*, he concluded that “Man is a useless passion.” Had Sartre considered an uncaused Being as the ground of all existence, he may have avoided such a dismal, atheistic conclusion.

⁴² J.P. Moreland, *The Creation Hypothesis* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994), 18-19.

⁴³ Time is a dimension in the sense that it is a quality of matter, exposing matter’s transient, becoming nature. Time is understood both mechanically and existentially. Mechanical (or clock) time is measured by objects in motion. Planetary and solar motions imbue the mind with a sense of time. It is not surprising that calendars, based on lunar motion, reflect this understanding of time. There is also an existential sense of time. There is a sense in which human beings grasp time in light of their own mortality. That is, the mind, reflecting on the terminus of the body, shudders at such transience; the daunting fact of bodily mortality reflects within subjectivity a movement which will eventually cease, viz., that of the body. Hence, a more robust sense of time entails both mechanical and existential concepts. Admittedly, however, a full understanding of time is not all that simple. As Augustine put it, “What then is time? I know what it is if not one asks me what it is; but if I want to explain it to someone who has asked me, I find that I do not know” (*The Confessions*, XI, 14). According to Augustine, the soul understands time in the present by way of remembering the past and expecting the future. For the past is no longer and the future is not yet.

⁴⁴ Norman Geisler, *When Skeptics Ask* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1990), 17-18.

⁴⁵ William Lane Craig, *Apologetics: An Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 76. The following is the present writer’s adaptation of Craig’s understanding of “Hilbert’s Hotel.”

reasonable enough.) Now, imagine Hilbert's Hotel, a hotel with an infinite number of rooms, but all of which are occupied. However, when a new guest arrives at Hilbert's Hotel, he is told that there is an available room. The hotel manager simply shifts the guest in room # 1 into room # 2, the guest in room # 2 is shifted to room # 3, He does this out to infinity. The new guest graciously praises the hotel manager for his business sense and occupies room # 1. But consider the absurdities resulting from this transaction. As was pointed out earlier, there were no vacancies at Hilbert's Hotel when the new guest arrived. Yet, the new guest still obtained a vacant room. Secondly, mathematicians will argue that the number of guests in the hotel did not increase numerically, i.e., the number of guests in Hilbert's Hotel remained infinite. This is odd. The hotel manager added another name to the register when the new guest arrived and occupied room # 1, did he not?

What if an infinite number of guests arrived at Hilbert's Hotel? The hotel manager would employ his wit once again to accommodate his new guests. He simply shifts every person into a room that is double their original number. Of course, he does this out to infinity (i.e., he shifts # 1 to # 2, # 2 to # 4, # 4 to # 8, . . .). Now suppose that the new guests in rooms # 1, # 3, # 5, . . . check out. "In this case an infinite number of people have left the hotel, but according to the mathematicians there are no less people in the hotel--but don't talk to that laundry women!"⁴⁶ The absurdities that obtain in an actual infinite number of things or events is evident.

Given the impossibility of an infinite past and actual infinite number of things, it is evident that the universe had a beginning and, hence, was caused by an infinite Being, who is necessary, immutable, uncaused, eternal, and omnipotent. This Being must be necessary, because only finite beings have the potential to not be. For anything that begins was not. The universe began. Therefore, the universe was not (before creation). Also, the universe cannot be a part of the infinite Being's being. God did not create *ex Deo*. A necessary and immutable Being cannot *come to be*; *coming to be* involves a change, viz., from one state to another. Moreover, change signifies finitude and, hence, temporality. As stated above, such a being would not exist eternally. That eliminates creation *ex materia*. *Creatio ex nihilo*, however, attests to this Supernatural Being's omnipotence and independence. Interestingly, it is the God of the Bible who is described as having created the universe *ex nihilo*.⁴⁷ Yahweh did not depend on anything to create the cosmic order; the universe presently depends on Him.⁴⁸

Thus far we have examined a philosophical argument which establishes that (1) the past cannot be infinite (i.e., the cosmos had a beginning), and (2) the cause of the universe is an Infinite

⁴⁶ Ibid, 77.

⁴⁷ Gen. 1:1

⁴⁸ "And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together" (Col. 1:17 NASB).

Being, who is necessary, immutable, uncaused, eternal, and omnipotent.⁴⁹ Examining Big Bang cosmology will further strengthen the case that the universe began.

A few lines of evidence in Big Bang cosmology include (1) the expansion of the galaxies, (2) the second law of thermodynamics, and (3) the radiation echo. Astronomers have established that the universe is expanding and decelerating from a central origin.⁵⁰ If traced backward to its origin, it seems that arriving at a point of infinite density is entirely plausible. This infinitely dense point, better known as a singularity, actually represents the space-time continuum crunched to nothingness. Evidently the universe came into existence out of nothing. Interestingly enough, this line of evidence perfectly corresponds with Genesis 1:1, or creation *ex nihilo*.

Some atheists find it difficult to believe that something can be caused to exist from nothing. They generally cry “*ex nihilo nihil fit*. . . .” But their song “nothing comes from nothing” should be applied to their own position in light of the evidence. In fact, it was Bertrand Russell who believed that the universe could pop into existence uncaused, out of nothing. For some time atheists have accused theists of embracing an illogical understanding of the universe’s origin, i.e., *creatio ex nihilo*. Today, however, the atheist who embraces Big Bang cosmology must affirm that “nothing can cause something.” Now, such a position clearly contradicts our empirical experience. But the belief that an infinite, omnipotent, omniscient Being can cause the universe to come into being *ex nihilo* is not at odds with logic or our empirical experience. For God, the “Ultimate Something,” caused the universe to exist (via the Big Bang). Logically, something can cause other things; and empirically, some things do cause other things.⁵¹

Another line of evidence that supports a beginning to the universe is the second law of thermodynamics. The second law of thermodynamics says that the “amount of usable energy in any closed system (which the whole universe is) is decreasing.”⁵² It points out that the physical universe is suffering from the “disease” of entropy, which will only increase with time.⁵³ Given this empirical fact, the universe will eventually stop functioning. If the universe was infinite, however, then it would have already stopped functioning; it would have “reached” a state of equilibrium in the “infinite past.” The fact that the universe has not reached a state of equilibrium in the present, proves that it cannot have an infinite past. A variation of the above argument can be put in the following manner: (1) If the universe is infinite, then the amount of work energy is

⁴⁹ All of the predicates of the above described infinite Being perfectly correspond to the Biblical God. See Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:2 for God’s eternal nature, Mal.3:6; Heb.6:18 for God’s necessary nature, 1Kings 8:27; Isa.66:1 for God’s infinite nature, and Heb. 1:3; Matt. 19:26 for God’s omnipotent nature.

⁵⁰ Hugh Ross, *The Fingerprint of God* (Orange: Promise, 1991), 53-59.

⁵¹ Moreover, theists are not claiming that God created the world out of some thing called “nothing,” as if nothing could ever be a thing. Rather, theists argue that God did *not* create the cosmic order out of something (*Ex materia*). That is what *creatio ex nihilo* means. God spoke the cosmos into being and He “upholds all things by the word of His power” (Heb. 1:3).

⁵² Norman Geisler, *When Skeptics Ask* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1990), 220.

⁵³ Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos*, (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1993), 59.

infinite; (2) the amount of work energy is not infinite (due to entropy); (3) therefore, the universe is not infinite.⁵⁴

Another line of evidence supporting the Big Bang (i.e., the beginning) is the radiation echo that permeates the cosmos. The radiation is equivalent to a giant explosion. In 1992, COBE satellite confirmed the Big Bang hypothesis to an even greater degree. Several scientists compared its findings to a religious experience. George Smoot, a professor of astronomy at Berkeley, said: “What we have found is evidence for the birth of the universe.” He adds, “It’s like looking at the face of God.”⁵⁵

Some scientists have attempted to avoid the above conclusion by positing an oscillating universe. According to John Gribbon, an oscillating universe is one “in which the universe expands from a singularity, collapses back again, and repeats the cycle indefinitely.”⁵⁶ This particular hypothesis, however, rests on a few doubtful assumptions. First, it assumes that the universe contains enough mass, which translates to gravity, to halt the expansion of the galaxies. Once gravity stops the process of expansion, it is alleged that the universe will collapse and rebound. However, the amount of matter needed to make the theory plausible cannot be found in our universe. According to Hugh Ross, “Even with the new consideration of exotic matter, the total mass appears to fall just short of what would be needed to make oscillation work.”⁵⁷ The second assumption is that the universe will bounce back once it collapses. But this assumption seems counter to the known laws of physics.⁵⁸ Besides, even if the universe could collapse and rebound, the attempts to avoid the consequences of entropy are misguided and futile. Entropy is a fact of the physical universe. Since entropy increases with time, so will the diameter of each oscillation (due to the amount of work energy that decreases with time). This necessarily intimates a finite universe, not the reverse.

Other attempts have been made to avoid the conclusion that the universe began. Some scientists have postulated an oscillating model that takes place during the quantum gravity era. This, too, suffers the same affliction of entropy. Hugh Ross has the following to say:

The universe, before the hypothetical bounce, begins with a huge amount of space curvature and little or no matter. But, as the universe expands, space is stretched, reducing the curvature. This loss of curvature is transformed into matter, and in the process, a huge amount of entropy is generated. Because of the enormous entropy produced, the process is not reversible. Matter cannot be converted back into the needed space curvature. Thus the

⁵⁴ Premise (2) is supported in that an infinite should have an endless supply. It has no end or beginning. Yet the amount of usable energy in the cosmos is decreasing. In other words, the universe presents itself as winding down. If it is winding down, then it must have been wound up at one time. (All winding implies a winder. The universe is winding (down). Therefore, the universe implies a Winder, i.e., God.)

⁵⁵ Quoted in Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1993), 19.

⁵⁶ John Gribbon, “Oscillating Universe Bounces Back,” *Nature* 259 (1976): 15-16.

⁵⁷ Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1993), 58.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 57-63.

universe we live in cannot be the product of oscillation even if the bounces are hypothesized to occur in the quantum gravity era.⁵⁹

The oscillating universe model fails to disarm the fatal effects of entropy and, hence, we can plausibly conclude that the universe had a beginning.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the evidence at the pre-biotic, molecular, and fossil level shows a glaring contradiction to naturalistic evolutionary theory. The pre-biotic experiments by Miller merely demonstrated the need for intelligent intervention, a thesis of which naturalists are unwilling to assent. Molecular biology shows that the cell is irreducibly complex. Cells function insofar as their parts work simultaneously. The cell's irreducibly complex nature (i.e., its interdependent composition) militates against naturalistic evolutionary theory. For the cell could not have gradually evolved from a non-cellular form, since the cell functions if, and only if, all of its parts are working simultaneously. There are several critical problems to evolutionary naturalism. It rests on a set of presuppositions that are not provable through the methods of science. The naturalist is epistemically challenged. Natural selection seems tautological. And appealing to chance regarding origins is unscientific. Moreover, since the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859, the fossil record is in no better condition; it is still missing the transitional forms that Darwin hoped scientists would eventually discover. Also, both the Kalam argument and evidence of a Big Bang corroborates the same point: the space-time universe cannot have an infinite past; the universe began, and only once. This evidence, on its own, shows the dubious nature of naturalistic evolutionary theory. Since the universe began via a Supernatural Cause, all is not reducible to the natural. Hence, God is the necessary ingredient in the edifice of life. In closing, Robert Jastrow, founder of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, has aptly summarized the plight of scientific naturalism:

For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1993), 61-62.

⁶⁰ Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers* (New York: Warner Books, 1978), 105-106.