Teleological Argument, Version Three:
The Fine-Tuning Argument
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There are three versions of the teleological argument that we have talked/will talk about:

i. Traditional Argument from Design: from the fact that the universe or things in the universe are apparently designed (i.e., demonstrate considerable complexity in the service of a particular function), the existence of an intelligent creator is inferred. (Paley)
ii. Argument from the Regularity of Nature: even if evolutionary theory undercuts the traditional argument from design, the fact that the universe is uniform rather than chaotic, and that the complexity we see is produced by an orderly system of relatively few fundamental types of things calls out for explanation. (Swinburne)
iii. The Fine-Tuning Argument: this claims that the likelihood that the universe should be fit for life is so small, that there must be some explanation other than chance that the laws and constants are what they are (rather than some other of a bewildering variety of ways they could be that would not permit life).

Robin Collins: A Scientific Argument for the Existence of God

1. Suppose a mission to Mars revealed a domed structure in which everything was set up just right for life to exist. The temperature was around 70 degrees, the relative humidity was 50%, there was an oxygen recycling system, an energy gathering system, and a whole system for the production of food. We'd think that the best explanation was that someone set the dome up in order to support life. According to the fine-tuning argument, the universe is a lot like this dome.
2. According to Collins, the fine-tuning argument is based on the following claim: "Almost everything about the basic structure of the universe—for example, the fundamental laws and parameters of physics and the initial distribution of matter and energy—is balanced on a razor's edge for life to occur" (p. 75).
3. Examples:
   a. If the initial explosion of big bang had been different by as little as one part in 10^{60}, the universe would have either quickly collapsed or expanded too rapidly for stars to form.
   b. If the strong nuclear force had been stronger or weaker by as little as five percent, life would have been impossible.
   c. If gravity had been stronger or weaker by one part in 10^{40}, then life-sustaining stars could not exist.
   d. If the neutron were not about 1.001 times the mass of the proton, life would not be possible.
   e. If the electromagnetic force were slightly stronger or weaker, life would be impossible.

   According to Collins, all these factors (as well as others) make it highly, *highly* unlikely that these laws, constants, and other features are purely the result of chance.

4. The Fine-Tuning Argument stated:

   Premise 1: The existence of the fine-tuning is not improbable under theism.

   Premise 2: The existence of the fine-tuning is very improbable under the atheistic single-universe hypothesis.

Prime Principle of Confirmation: For any two competing hypotheses H1 and H2, and observation O, if O is more probable on H1 than it is on H2, then O is evidence for H1; and the greater the difference in the probability of O given H1 and the probability of O given H2, the stronger the evidential weight that O provides H1.

Conclusion: The fine-tuning data provide strong evidence of the design hypothesis over the atheistic single-universe hypothesis.

5. Support for Premises:

   For P1: Collins says support is easy and uncontroversial. Since God is all good and it is good for intelligent conscious beings to exist, it is not surprising or improbable that God could create a world that could support intelligent life.

   For P2: Recall the dart board or dial illustration. It looks as though there could be a whole, huge bunch of ways the laws and constants could have gone; the fact that they went one of the few ways that allows for life is surprising and in need of explanation.

6. Objections to the Core Argument:
   a. More Fundamental Laws Objection
   b. Other Forms of Life Objection
   c. Weak Anthropic Principle Objection
   d. The "Who Designed God" Objection
   e. No Probability Objection (not in the text)
   f. Many Universes Objection: appealing to multi-universe models of cosmology, this objection essentially claims that Premise 2 is too restrictive. Instead, it should read: "The existence of fine-tuning is very improbable on any atheistic cosmology. That is, fine-tuning is improbable given either the atheistic single universe hypothesis or the atheistic many-universe hypothesis. But it isn't improbable on both of these models since given enough universes, it isn't unlikely that some would be fine tuned.
7. Objections to the Many-Universes Hypothesis:
   a. Violates the 'prefer hypotheses for which we have independent evidence or are natural extrapolations from what we already know' principle (p. 81)
   b. The many universes generator would resemble a machine and hence need explanation.
   c. The universe generator would have to generate at random not only the parameters of physics but the laws of physics too. "It is difficult to see what possible physical mechanism could select or create laws" (p. 82).
   d. The basic laws of physics exhibit beauty, elegance, harmony, and ingenuity and these get no explanation in an atheistic multi-universe hypothesis.
   e. The universe begins with great order (even if it will dissolve eventually). The atheistic multi-universe model will claim that given enough universes, you'll get some that are ordered. Collins claims that even among the worlds that are ordered, most will only have some order amongst lots of disorder (think of the randomly placed scrabble pieces—most boards that contain some real words will contain relatively few among lots of sets of letters that are not words). So even among ordered worlds, it will be 'enormously improbable' for a world to have the uniform order that our world has (or had).