

# The Cosmological Argument

## The Kalam Version

### The Fallacy of Equivocation

When an argument uses the same word more than once – but with a significantly different meaning.

### Craig's Kalam argument, and the Fallacy of Equivocation

Peter S. Williams suggests that William Lane Craig's formulation may commit the fallacy of equivocation in its definition of 'begin to exist'.

He proposes that there are two possible definitions of 'begin to exist'.

1. Something comes into existence within a reality that already exists.
2. Something comes into existence where previously there was nothing at all.

Does Craig's form of the Kalam argument use 'begin to exist' in these different ways?

Williams then suggests a modification to the Kalam argument that he believes will resolve the issue. He puts it like this...

1. Every physical event must have a cause
2. There was a first physical event of the universe
3. Therefore that first physical event of the universe must have had a cause (and that cause must have been non-physical – it cannot have been physical because it cannot have come before the first physical event!)

Does this new version avoid the fallacy of equivocation?

What do you think?

### Further Reading

**'God? A debate between a Christian and an Atheist'**, by William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong. (Oxford University Press 2004) [Contains some good material on the Kalam Cosmological argument, and information on various current controversies.]