

Jacobus Erasmus. *The Kalām Cosmological Argument: A Reassessment*. Cham: Springer, 2018. xiii+186 pages. ISBN: 9783319734378.

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Beliefs and ideas regarding the concept of God have been an integral part of societies throughout history. Although people usually believe in a transcendent God who created the universe and sustains it, as in the monotheistic religions, they have developed different arguments on how to attain knowledge of God's existence. One of the argument types used commonly to that effect is the cosmological argument based on phenomena such as the order, temporality, contingency, change, and complexity in the universe.

The cosmological argument is considered an *a posteriori* argument to demonstrate the existence of God. Unlike *a priori* arguments, which are based only on thought and contemplation, at least one of the premises of *a posteriori* arguments is based on sense and observation. This makes *a posteriori* arguments more open to renewal and updating than *a priori* arguments,<sup>1</sup> because the increase in people's knowledge about the universe through scientific discoveries and theories may result in a new cosmological argument or a reassessment of previous arguments.

South African philosopher, theologian and computer scientist Jacobus Erasmus's work as reviewed in this study is titled *The Kalām Cosmological*

1 Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 131–32.

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*Argument: A Reassessment* and aims in the light of recent philosophical debates and scientific developments to reevaluate the *kalām* cosmological argument (KCA), which was last updated by William Lane Craig nearly 40 years ago.<sup>2</sup> This work of Erasmus is a comprehensive revision of his doctoral dissertation titled “Towards a More Persuasive *Kalām* Cosmological Argument: Permitting the Actual Infinite,” which he completed in the Department of Philosophy at North-West University in South Africa in 2016. Erasmus states that half of the sources he uses in the book are new compared to the ones in his doctoral thesis and are based largely on the work he did during his post-doctoral research (vii). The book has a total of 186 pages and consists of an introduction and nine chapters. The five chapters after the introduction are devoted to presenting the history of KCA from a new perspective, while the last four chapters focus on defending it in a new and unique way.

In the introduction of his book, Erasmus first introduces KCA and explains how it differs from other cosmological arguments. According to him, the most distinctive feature of KCA is that it rejects an infinite temporal past and generally uses the following logical sequence: (i) Everything that begins to exist has a cause for its existence, (ii) the universe began to exist, and (iii) therefore, the existence of the universe has a cause (2).

According to Erasmus, by reaching the aforementioned conclusion of the KCA, the proponents of the argument try to show that the cause of the universe, which came into existence out of nothing (*ex nihilo*), is God, who is transcendent, unique, personal, beginningless, beyond space, immaterial, immutable, omniscient, and omnipotent. According to Erasmus, this approach makes the KCA not only an argument for natural theology but also compatible with theistic religions.

In the Introduction, Erasmus also discusses why this argument is referred to as *kalām*. According to him, although the idea that the universe has a beginning was defended by John Philoponus (Yaḥyā al-Naḥwī) (d. 570) prior to the Muslim theologians (*mutakallimūn*), it was the *mutakallimūn* who transformed this idea into the real evidence of God’s existence. The *mutakallimūn* who tried to rationally explain and defend the fundamental doctrines of Islam put this at the center of their thought systems and fervently defended and developed it over a long historical process. That is why this argument deserves to be called the “*Kalām* Cosmological Argument,” as stated by William Lane Craig (2).

2 William Lane Craig, *The Kalām Cosmological Argument* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1979).

Erasmus begins to cover the historical background of KCA in Chapter 2, “The Doctrine of *Creatio ex Nihilo*.” He associates the reason for this choice to result from KCA being a philosophical argument in support of *creatio ex nihilo*, an important theistic doctrine. Accordingly, he discusses whether the sacred texts of religions such as Judaism and Christianity include the belief of *creatio ex nihilo*. Contrary to researchers such as Willem B. Drees, Alister E. McGrath, and Harry A. Wolfson (d. 1974) who claimed *ex nihilo* to not be explicitly stated in the Bible and the scriptures to be interpretable in terms of the eternity of the universe, Erasmus highlights Eric Osborn’s view that *ex nihilo* is included as a concept despite not being stated in so many words (17). He also gives examples of how Jewish and Christian theologians such as Isaac Israeli (d. 344/955), Moses Maimonides (d. 601/1204), and Clement of Rome (d. 99) had defended *ex nihilo*. The aim of Erasmus’ attempt to reveal how widespread and entrenched the *ex nihilo* idea has been in both theistic religious traditions can be said to show that KCA’s emphasis on the idea of *ex nihilo* is supported by theistic religions.

In the third chapter of his book, Erasmus gives a detailed explanation of the Alexandrian philosopher John Philoponus’ (d. ca. 570) argument against eternity of the universe. The importance of Philoponus comes from the fact that some researchers consider him to be the original founder of the KCA prior to the *mutakallimūn*. Before dealing with Philoponus’ criticisms against the idea of the universe being eternal, Erasmus examines the views of Aristotle (d. 322 BC), whose views on infinity had affected medieval thought. The striking point in Aristotle’s approach, who accepted potential infinity but rejected actual infinity, was that he believed that potential infinity allowed him to confirm that the universe is eternal and has no beginning. According to him, as time goes by, new events emerge and previous ones disappear. Thus, an infinite number of events do not simultaneously exist as an actual infinity (42).

Philoponus’ main objection to Aristotle on this point was that an infinite series of past days would require an actual infinity, because if the universe had been eternal in terms of past days, actual infinities would exist that had been traversed on different scales. However, this is impossible, because actual infinity does not exist, nor can it be traversed or increased. Therefore, the universe must have a beginning (49).

In this part of his book, Erasmus also discusses whether Philoponus had an impact on the *mutakallimūn*. According to Erasmus, the impact of the arguments Philoponus had brought against Proclus (d. 485) and Aristotle, who claimed the universe is

eternal, on thinkers such as Kindi (d. 256/870), Fārābī (d. 339/950), Avicenna (d. 428/1037), Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198), and al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), should not be underestimated. According to Erasmus, however, the difference between the *mutakallimūn* and Philoponus was that the *mutakallimūn* had transformed the beginning of the universe into evidence for the existence of God (51).

In the fourth chapter of the book, Erasmus deals with how the *mutakallimūn* had transformed the KCA into an argument for the existence of God in the context of al-Ghazālī. According to Erasmus, al-Ghazālī's cosmological argument consists of two premises: (i) A cause exists for the universe that has a beginning (*ḥādith*), and (ii) that cause is God. Al-Ghazālī explains that, based on the principle that bodies and substances occupying space cannot be deprived of temporal (*ḥādith*)/accidents (*a' rāq*) such as motion and rest, the universe has a beginning and that the universe, by having a beginning, also has a sufficient cause, based on intuition. Based on this argument, Erasmus also examines how al-Ghazālī had explained the cause of the universe to be a God with features such as eternalness, immateriality, uniqueness, power, knowledge, and will (57). However, according to Erasmus, although al-Ghazālī and the *mutakallimūn* had developed a complete cosmological argument in line with the theistic conception of God, this argument contains some problems from the perspective of the modern period. First of all, al-Ghazālī claimed that the principle that everything that begins to exist has an effective cause for its existence is intuitive. However, some philosophical and scientific objections have been brought against this principle in the modern period. The other problem is that al-Ghazālī's argument, being based on the fact that actual infinity leads to absurd results, did not take into account set theory, which has brought new insights regarding infinities in the modern period. Therefore, according to Erasmus, someone who wants to defend al-Ghazālī's cosmological argument today has to take into account set theory as well as the current philosophical and scientific debates about the beginning of the universe (63).

The fifth chapter of the book is called "The Rise of Set Theory and Modern Cosmology." While set theory brought consistent new insights regarding actual infinity, modern cosmology has also enabled some theories and models to develop regarding the beginning of the universe. Therefore, the contemporary proponents of KCA cannot avoid interacting with both set theory and cosmology (77).

The sixth chapter of the book examines how William Lane Craig updated the KCA. First of all, Craig took modern set theory into account while arguing for the impossibility of actual infinity, thereby ensuring that KCA was compatible with

contemporary mathematics. Also, unlike his predecessors, he presented scientific as well as philosophical arguments to support the beginning of the universe. As a result, Craig helped to enhance the interaction between theologians, philosophers, and physicists regarding the origin of the universe. According to Erasmus, the arguments put forward by Craig, as can be understood from his comprehension of KCA as a cumulative case, on the other hand can be said to not permit the possibility of actual infinity in the traditional sense (88).

In the next chapters of the book, Erasmus aims to show that KCA can be defended in a way that has never been done before, namely without rejecting actual infinities. In this direction, he discusses in the seventh chapter whether Philoponus' argument against eternity, which is based on rejecting actual infinity, is a good argument for supporting theism. According to Erasmus, the Infinity Argument is not a good argument for supporting theism for three reasons. The first reason is that the Infinity Argument is incompatible with the Platonist view of the existence of an actual infinite number of abstract objects. Therefore, the argument does not satisfy the Platonists who want to defend their own ideas and attracts unnecessary criticism against them. Second, the Infinity Argument is inconsistent with theistic beliefs such as the infinite knowledge (omniscience) of God, because the intention of the theists' argument regarding God's knowledge being infinite means that God's knowledge includes actual infinities. Third and last, the argument seems to be based on a metaphysical intuition of the impossibility of actual infinity, and this intuition is both ambiguous and controversial. Therefore, according to Erasmus, proving that the universe had a beginning without rejecting the idea of actual infinity will ensure that KCA is freed from the many criticisms that have been directed at it (107).

The eighth chapter of the book focuses on presenting a version of the KCA that is not based on the Infinity Argument. In this direction, while supporting the idea that the universe has a temporal beginning, Erasmus proposes three philosophical arguments that do not reject the existence of actual infinity: i) Traversing past infinite time is impossible, (ii) a causal chain such as time must have a first (i.e., external) cause, and (iii) time that has no beginning (i.e., an eternal universe) will result in certain impossibilities. According to Erasmus, these three arguments are not based on controversial metaphysical intuitions about actual infinity and also are compatible with Platonism, which states an actual infinite number of abstract objects to exist, with the standard definition of God having infinite knowledge, and with set theory (126).

Erasmus deals with the topic of Chapter 9's title "Can Cosmology Confirm the Belief in an Eternal Universe?", in which the author discusses whether scientific cosmology may justify one's belief in an eternal universe. According to Erasmus, cosmology cannot provide a successful model in this regard, and the hypothesis that the universe has a beginning is currently the best explanation for the discoveries made in the context of scientific cosmology (154).

In the tenth and final chapter of the book, Erasmus deals with the subject of the chapter's title "God as the Explanation of the Universe." In this section, he first deals with the principle of sufficient reason, which states that everything that begins to exist intuitively must have a cause. According to Erasmus, this principle cannot be rejected using quantum mechanics, because atoms (e.g., uranium, thorium, lead) decay consistently, not randomly. For example, things such as butterflies and puppies never emerge from the decay of uranium atoms. This shows that quantum events occur within the framework of a consistent causal structure (168). So, according to Erasmus, if the universe began to exist and a sufficient explanation exists for the universe, the questions arise: What is the sufficient explanation for the universe (or the existence of the universe), and why did the universe begin to exist? The most reasonable answer to these questions is that God is the explanation of the universe, as al-Ghazālī and William Lane Craig had done in the past, and that God brought the universe into being. Erasmus later concludes that the cause of the existence of such a universe must be a supernatural, transcendent being (i.e., God) who is one, conscious, intelligent, personal, timeless, causeless, incredibly powerful and knowledgeable, and creative (177).

After presenting a general framework of the book chapters I have reviewed, it would now be appropriate to make some assessments about the book. Erasmus seems to have had two main purposes in his book. The first is to holistically present the historical background of KCA by taking into account the latest developments. The second is to show that KCA, which is based on the idea that the universe has a beginning, can be defended without rejecting the idea of actual infinity.

Considering these purposes, Erasmus appears quite appropriately to have started the historical background of KCA by addressing the position of the *ex nihilo* doctrine in monotheistic religions, as this approach makes KCA not only an argument of natural theology, but also one related to monotheistic religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Thus, the claim is reinforced that KCA is an argument that brings religion, science, and philosophy together. In my opinion, the only deficiency of this section is that it deals with the idea of *ex nihilo* only in terms of Judaism and Christianity without including Islam. However, because the

question of whether *ex nihilo* exists in the Qur'an would require another specialty, Erasmus' decision is understandable.

Erasmus quite remarkably talked about the influence of Philoponus, who'd rejected the view of the universe being eternal, with regard to Islamic thought on one hand, and on the other, he emphasized how the *mutakallimūn* had made original contributions to transforming this argument into an argument for the existence of God. I hope this reasonable connection Erasmus established between the *mutakallimūn* and Philoponus will lead researchers to investigate and compare the arguments the parties had developed in more detail.

On the other hand, Erasmus' focus on *al-Iqtisād fī al-i'tiqād* in addition to *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* while explaining al-Ghazālī's views on KCA allows one to see more clearly how the idea that the universe has a beginning turned into a cosmological argument compatible with the theistic concept of God. However, the reader would be better off keeping in mind that Erasmus' explanation of KCA along the axis of al-Ghazālī reflects only the tip of the iceberg. The *ḥudūth* evidence of classical *kalām*, based on premises such as the universe consists of substances and accidents, accidents are temporal (*ḥādith*), and the substances that cannot be deprived of accidents must also be *ḥādith* in *kalām*, should be noted to have a history dating back to Abū al-Huzayl al-'Allāf (d. 235/849-50) and to have been widely defended by the Ash'ari, Māturīdī, and Mu'tazilite theologians.<sup>3</sup> In order to justify this argument in addition to the philosophical discussions about epistemology and ontology, the *mutakallimūn* have intensely engaged with the concepts and theories of physics and cosmology, such as the structure and properties of bodies, substance (atom), accident, void, motion, and causality.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, one should not forget that KCA, beyond being an argument for the existence of God, was also nourished by the *mutakallimūn*'s intense interest in philosophical and scientific issues and ideas on the conception of the universe they had developed based on atomism.<sup>5</sup>

3 Al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025) stated Abū al-Huzayl al-'Allāf to have been the first Muslim theologian (*mutakallim*) to have attempted to prove the existence of Allah on the basis of the principle that bodies cannot be deprived of temporal (*ḥādith*) accidents (*a'rāḍ*). Al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Şerhu'l-Uṣūl'l-hamse: Mu'tezile'nin Beş İlkesi*, translated by İlyas Çelebi (Istanbul: Yazma Eserler Kurumu, 2013), 106, 156.

4 According to the *mutakallimūn*, issues based on reason, including subjects related to physics and cosmology, are handled around topics such as *laṭīf* (subtle) and *daḡīq* (difficult to understand and complex). See Alnoor Dhanani, *The Physical Theory of Kalām: Atoms, Space, and Void in Basrian Mu'tazilī Cosmology* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 3.

5 Mehmet Bulgen, "Science and Philosophy in The Classical Period of *Kalām*: An Analysis Centered upon the *Daḡīq* and *Laṭīf* Matters of *Kalām*," *Kader* 19/3 (December 2021): 964.

Another point to be noted about KCA is that the traditional *ḥudūth* argument of *kalām* states that creation in the universe have not merely been limited once in the beginning, but God's creation activity continues right now. Accordingly, accidents such as motion and rest that correspond to the secondary or non-essential qualities of the bodies do not have continuity (*baqā'*) in themselves and their similarities need to be regenerated (*tajaddud al-amthāl*) by God.<sup>6</sup> The fact that bodies cannot be deprived of the constantly regenerated accidents in this way leads to the conclusion that the bodies or substances that carry these accidents are also *ḥādith*. Similarly, *kalām*'s idea of the beginning of the universe has been acquired through the principle that regeneration process that occurs in the certain accidents cannot go back in perpetuity.<sup>7</sup> According to this, bodies cannot be deprived of or prioritize spatial accidents (*akwān*) such as motion and rest or combination and separation, which are observed to occur in the moment. If bodies being deprived of or prioritizing such *ḥādith* accidents is impossible, so would their being deprived of all moments and spaces also be impossible, because time and space have no effect on matters that are contingent, necessary, and impossible for the body. In this version of the argument, no matter how far the bodies in the universe go toward the past or the future, they cannot escape from being *ḥādiths* in all times and places, as they cannot deprive themselves of being *ḥādith*. From this follows that the universe was *ḥādith* in the past, is now *ḥādith* and will be so in the future, as Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār pointed out.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the *mutakallimūn* do not need a first

- 6 Nūraddīn al-Ṣabūnī, *al-Bidāya min al-Kifāya fī al-hidāya fī uṣūl al-dīn*, translated by Bekir Topaloğlu (İstanbul: IFAV, 2014), 62–63; see also D. B. Macdonald, "Continuous Creation and Atomic Time in Muslim Scholastic Theology," *Isis* 9/2 (1927): 326–44.
- 7 For example, Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) stated that the argument where the universe with a beginning cannot be established with the *ḥudūth* evidence in the case when accidents are continuous means it is not renewed/recreated in each moment, because according to him, bodies being created (*ḥādith*) is a state acquired by the principle that they cannot be deprived of *ḥādith* accidents. The argument where the accidents are created is acquired by the principle that the body cannot carry opposite accidents such as motion and rest at the same time (i.e., when one of these exists in the body, the other will disappear). The accident of motion disappearing in the body and rest taking its place indicates that the motion and rest have been created (i.e., they are *ḥādith*). Therefore, someone who does not accept the accidents as being *ḥādith* (i.e., being created) cannot claim that the bodies are also *ḥādith*. Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, eds. Bekir Topaloğlu and Muhammed Aruçi (Ankara: TDV Publications 2017), 93. In addition, according to al-Māturīdī, the accidents such as motion or combination as perceived by the senses are the most recent of those past. If accidents were to continue forever into the past, a beginningless past would have to not end in a moment. al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, 97.
- 8 Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār explains the *ḥudūth* evidence as follows: "1. There are qualities/accidents (*ma'ānī*) in bodies such as *ijtimā'* (combination) and *iftirāq* (separation) and motion and rest. 2. These accidents are *ḥādith*. 3. The body is not separate from or prior to them. 4. Because it is not separate from or prior



moment of creation to say that the universe is *ḥādīth*, since it is sufficient to prove that the universe is now *ḥādīth*. The absurdities caused by the universe having no beginning is a separate argument for the *mutakallimūn*. It does not fully represent the *ḥudūth* argument of classical *kalām* that is based on the principle that bodies cannot be deprived of or prioritize spatial accidents such as motion and rest or combination and separation, all of which are temporal (*ḥādīth*). However, as Craig had put forth and Erasmus updated, KCA focuses on the idea that the universe has a beginning without focusing on the premises that constitute the essence of the *ḥudūth* evidence of classical *kalām* in which the similarities of the accidents carried by the bodies are the subject of constant recreation or where bodies must be *ḥādīth* because they cannot be deprived of spatial occurrences or accidents such as motion and rest or combination and separation. Therefore, a study claiming to completely update the *ḥudūth* evidence of classical *kalām* must address what the theory of continuous recreation as acknowledged by the majority of the *mutakallimūn* means for contemporary cosmology. Although some studies are found in this field to have attempted to update the theory of continuous recreation of *kalām*, especially through some theories such as the unified theories in modern cosmology that state space-time should have an atomic structure (quantum gravity), these cannot yet be said to have aroused sufficient interest.<sup>9</sup>

Erasmus' assumption that KCA can be defended without denying actual infinities, which is his second aim here, also seems quite remarkable. However, this interpretation of Erasmus should also be noted to be related to facts such as God having infinite knowledge rather than to the physical universe existing in actuality. This is because the *mutakallimūn* are sensitive about not being associated with an actual infinity in the present universe, which they define as everything other than Allah (*mā siwā Allāh*). When one looks at the texts of the *mutakallimūn*

to them, the bodies must also be *ḥādīth* (created) like the accidents they carry." (156) 'Abd al-Jabbār explained that this argument covers not only the initial creation, but also all times and places as follows: "Time and space have no effect on matters that are possible, necessary, or impossible for the body. As a matter of fact, because the body can be combined or separated in a moment, quite obviously it can always be combined or separated at any time. If it is impossible for the body to be combined and separated even for a moment, these possibilities are always impossible for it." Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Şerhu'l-Usūli'l-hamse*, 182.

9 I have partially studied this subject in my doctoral thesis titled "The Evaluation of *Kalām* Atomism in the Viewpoint of Contemporary Cosmology." My thesis was later published as a book. Mehmet Bulgen, *Kelam Atomculuğu ve Modern Kozmoloji (Kalām Atomism and Modern Cosmology)* (Ankara: TDV, 2015). See also, Mehmet Bulgen, "Modern Bilim Açısından Atomcu Zaman ve Sürekli Yeniden Yaratma," *Din Bilim Açısından Yaratılış*, eds. Mehmet Bulgen and Enis Doko (Istanbul: IFAV, 2022), 407–40.

such as Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī (d. 324/935-36), Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085) and Ibn Mattawayh (d. 5<sup>th</sup>/mid-11<sup>th</sup> century) that have survived to the present day, they claim that attributing infinity to the universe consisting of bodies, substances, and accidents in any way would invalidate the *ḥudūth* argument that states the universe had come into existence.<sup>10</sup> According to them, creating or completing the creation of an infinite, endless (*lā mutanāhi*) number of things is impossible. On the other hand, the power of Allah Almighty does not concern the impossible (*muhāl*). From this follows that, if the universe is infinite, it would not have been created by God, as creating the infinite is impossible. As a matter of fact, according to this objection, this attitude the *mutakallimūn* have to avoid associating the existents (*mawjūdāt*) with infinity was expressed by al-Ghazālī as a view that, “if the universe is accepted as eternal, the heavenly bodies will have infinite cycles in different amounts, which is absurd because one of two infinities cannot be more or less than the other.” In this context, al-Ghazālī had brought an objection along the lines of “according to you, what Allah knows (*ma‘lūmāt*) is just as infinite as what He is capable of (*maqḍūrāt*). And what He knows is much more than what He is capable of,” and answered it by stating, “things are what are existent (*mawjūd*), and these are limited (*mutanāhi*).”<sup>11</sup> The Māturīdī theologian Abū al-Mu‘īn al-Nasafī (d. 508/1115) also brought the objection, “although both His objects of knowledge (*ma‘lūmāt*) and objects of power (*maqḍūr*) are unlimited, Allah’s objects of knowledge exceed his objects of power. In this way it is permissible for an unlimited thing to be more than another unlimited thing like itself,” and answered by saying, “Allah’s knowledge and objects of power regarding what [actually] exists

10 Ibn Fūrak (d. 406/1015) quoted Ash‘arī, saying, “Ash‘arī said that whatever indicates the bodies are originated (*ḥadath al-ajsām*) also indicates their finitude (*tanāhi*), and a limit exists in bodies regarding combination (*ijtimā‘*) and addition (*inḍimām*), which are the causes of division (*tajazzi*) and separation (*iftirāq*).” Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad Maqālāt al-Shaykh Abī al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī*, ed. Daniel Gimaret (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1987), 202; al-Juwaynī also says, “We say to him (al-Nazzām): One of the greatest pillars of religion is to accept that the things that have come into existence (*muhḍathāt*) are finite. Without proving this, the evidence that says the universe came into existence (*ḥudūth*) cannot be sustained.” Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī, *al-Shāmil fī uṣūl al-dīn*, eds. ‘Alī Sāmī al-Nashshār, Suhayr Muḥammad Mukhtār and Fayṣal Badr ‘Awn (Alexandria: Munsha‘āt al-Ma‘ārif, 1969), 147–48. Again, one of the Mu‘tazilī theologians, Ibn Mattawayh, claimed that, if the unlimited divisibility of bodies is accepted, the eternity of the body will have to be accepted. Here, Ibn Mattawayh asked: “While the infinite is not possible, how can it be believed that the infinite one came into existence after which it became infinite?” Ibn Mattawayh, *al-Tadhkira fī aḥkām al-jawāhir wa-l-a‘rāḍ*, ed. Daniel Gimaret (Beirut: al-Ma‘had al-‘ilmi al-Fransī lil-āthār al-sharqīyya bi-l-Qāhira, 2009), I: 80.

11 Al-Ghazālī, *el-İktisād fī’l-tikād: İtikadda Orta Yol*, translated by Osman Demir (Istanbul: Klasik, 2012), 44–45.

(*mā wujida*) can both be limited as well as more than the other. However, as for those who do not exist from His knowledge and objects of power, they are infinite, one of them cannot be said to be more than the other.” According to al-Nasafī, the constant things that have excess and multiplicity are finite and limited, while infinite things have no determined multiplicity. For this reason, according to al-Nasafī, objections to the possibility of actual infinities in different amounts based on the comparison of what Allah knows and what He is capable of doing are invalid.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, I would like to point out that any situation in which KCA is defended in a way where the universe is associated with infinity, upon considering the red lines of the *mutakallimūn* regarding the finite/limited things that exist (*mawjūd*) and things that are created (*ḥādith*), these may cause such a disagreement that the name of *kalām* should be removed from KCA.

In conclusion, Jacobus Erasmus’s book introduces KCA very understandably, both historically and conceptually. Moreover, its claim that the idea of the universe having a beginning is defensible without rejecting actual infinities is also notable. The work involves very sophisticated concepts and theories, from the idea of *ex nihilo* to the principle of sufficient reason, from set theory to modern physics, astronomy, and cosmology. It explains why the *mutakallimūn* should not only be content with revelation but also intensely engage in philosophical and scientific issues about the creation of the universe. I hope that this study, which provides vivid and comprehensive connections among different fields regarding the KCA, will attract the attention of theologians, philosophers, and scientists, as well as anyone interested in existential questions about the beginning of the universe.

12 Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adilla fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Hüseyin Atay (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 2012), 1: 70.