

Fort Bend Christian Academy – Honors Apologetics

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Introduction

For over two millennia, humans have formulated possible proofs for the existence of one or more deities. Some of these have been purely derivations from logic and reason, however humans seem to have an innate tendency to ask the question of what caused the physical world to be as it is. In answer to this question humans have formulated cosmological arguments to show that a God or deity must be the source of the universe's existence. Ranging from explanations based on principles of temporality and matter to sources for motion and cause of existence, the scope of what cosmological arguments have come to encompass over the past three thousand years is very broad. Plato, Aristotle, and Leibniz all addressed or formulated arguments from cosmology at some point during their lives, and the contributions of thinkers such as them have established a sizable philosophical and logical foundation for the many arguments of cosmology.

Despite a strong past, cosmological arguments have begun to come under attack in the modern age. The discoveries of science have indeed improved the quality of life for all humanity, and humans have gained extraordinary amounts of knowledge through the work of science. With regard to arguments from causation, temporality, and motion practitioners of modern science have, however, turned on the offensive in order to attempt and invalidate arguments for existence of deities based on their findings.

Addressing the principles found in philosophical treatises is outside the realm of what scientists should be capable of, but it has nonetheless occurred. In order to stifle this offensive effort to a small degree new interpretations and presentations of ideas found in the writings of men such as Thomas Aquinas are required. One such idea is that of causal power: the ability to

cause events to occur. Implicitly found in the writings of Aquinas, further expansion of this principle of causal power with the differentiations of causal bestowers, sustainers, and recipients allows for formulation of an adequate proof for God that does not contradict scientific theories due to the necessity of a bestower or regenerator which will be demonstrated later.

Historical Review

Plato

In its most basic form the cosmological argument first appeared in the writings of Plato, specifically in the tenth book of his *Laws*. Though more closely related to the “unmoved mover” (or first way found in Aquinas’ writing) cosmological argument the one presented in the *Laws* is more an establishment of the existence of deities from general motion, rather than causation.

Plato - Deities from motion

In the tenth book, a dialogue is presented where the elder Cleinias and a young Athenian stranger reason that the Grecian gods exist based on motion and that the soul exists and moves before all things. To begin the proof of how the soul is before all matter the Athenian stated that all entities are either at rest or in motion, not all at rest or all in motion as some thought in ancient Greece. Ten types of motion were then outlined by the Athenian: (1) motion which can change itself and others, (2) motion which moves others and is changed by others, (3) motion able to move others but not itself, (4) motion which can move itself and others, (5) composition, (6) decomposition, (7) increase, (8) diminution, (9) generation, and (10) destruction. Of these types of motion the motion that can change itself and others is the highest form of motion because when the self-moved changes, then a resulting series of bodies (which could consist of

thousands) is set into motion because of the change of the self-moved's motion, thus making the self motion the beginning of all motion¹. The soul is then defined as the essence of self motion, and from this the statement is made that the soul is the "first origin and moving power of all that is" ². Since the soul is the essence of self motion it is before the body, and the body is meant to obey the soul by nature. The soul is what gives order to the universe because movement of ideas in the mind is nonetheless a movement that was first enacted by the soul. After this the Athenian stranger makes the following statement:

If, my friend, we say that the whole path and movement of heaven, and of all that is therein, is by nature akin to the movement and revolution and calculation of mind, and proceeds by kindred laws, then, as is plain, we must say that the best soul takes care of the world and guides it along the good path.³

And therein he affirms that there must be a great soul in control of the earth, which can in turn be termed a god. The same is later said for all celestial bodies so that some great soul either inhabits them or guides them by some extraordinary power.

Plato - Summary

The argument for the existence of the gods found in the *Laws* can be summarized as follows: (1) All things are either at rest or in motion. (2) Self motion is the greatest form of motion. (3) The soul is the essence of self-motion. (4) The soul is what gives order to the universe, and the cosmos behaves in a way resembling that of the motion of the mind. (5) There must be great souls or best souls that give motion to heavenly bodies. (6) The great souls can be

¹ Plato, *The Laws* (360 B.C.E.) translated by Benjamin Jowett <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/laws.10.x.html>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

termed ‘gods’. Although very loosely related to the modern interpretation of the cosmological argument it was nonetheless a precursor to Aristotle’s works, which are far more important to the metaphysics of causation that forms the base of the cosmological argument.

Apart from the *Laws* in a seemingly tangential relation is it found the first conception of something related to the causality of existence. In his treatise *Timaeus*, during a dialogue between Socrates and the titular Timaeus, Timaeus makes the statement that everything that comes into existence or is created must have a cause firstly for it to exist⁴. The opposite noted by Timaeus is that without some cause nothing created would ever exist. Though only a slight mention of causality and not nearly as full and encompassing as what later philosophers have wrote, Plato can be accredited with the first mention of the principle of cause of existence that seems to relate closely to Aquinas’ second way.

Aristotle

After Plato’s light excursion into proving the existence of deities came his famed student Aristotle who provided what can be considered the first whole cosmological arguments for the existence of deities in two of his writings: *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. *Physics* in particular dealt with the nature of motion in a similar way to how Plato came to the conclusion that there must be gods. *Metaphysics* pertains to the principles of causation of substance and how they

Aristotle - *Physics* & God from Motion

In *Physics* Aristotle sought the origins of motion. He began in Chapter 4 of Book 8 by saying that of things that are either move or cause motion, they either cause motion or are moved in two ways: intrinsically and incidentally⁵. Little is said regarding incidental motion because

⁴ Plato, *Timaeus* (360 B.C.E.) translated by Benjamin Jowett <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/timaeus.html>

⁵ Aristotle, *Physics*, translated by Daniel W. Graham (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 253^a - 260^a.

the primary focus of Aristotle is intrinsic motion. The definition given to intrinsic motion is motion caused by either an entity within itself or by some outside cause. Intrinsic motion can happen “by nature” which means that the entity is self moved, or contrary to nature where the entity is acted on by some outside force ⁶. The problem encountered with motion by nature is that only animate bodies can cause motion in themselves and move contrary to nature willingly, however the elements that the Greeks believed compose everything – fire, earth, air, and water – do not have the force or consciousness within themselves to explain how they can move contrary to nature when they do move contrary to nature. The conclusion Aristotle came to is as follows:

If, then, all things that are in motion are moved either by nature or contrary to nature and by force; and if things moved by force and contrary to nature are all moved by something other than themselves; and if things moved by nature, in turn, are moved by something, both those moved by themselves and those not moved by themselves... all things that are in motion will be moved by something ⁷.

After establishing that all things require something to move them Aristotle begins to expound on the concept of an unmoved first mover. The only way the first mover could be moved would be by moving itself, else either an infinite series of movers existed or an infinite series of intermediaries exists ⁸. The original mover does not move itself as a whole, but rather has a part that is moved and a part that is unmoved. In this he establishes that the mover of all motion remains unmoved.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Aristotle, *Physics*, translated by Daniel W. Graham (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 183-187.

Afterwards Aristotle proves that the described first, unmoved mover must be everlasting for motion to exist. Aristotle sought to prove that the mover must be eternal because motion is a continual and everlasting process, thus a perishable or ending entity could provide no explanation for cosmic motion ⁹. Aristotle then came to the conclusion that there is at least one eternal, unmoved mover that provides motion for the entire universe.

Aristotle - *Metaphysics*

Metaphysics contains a similar argument from motion, but arriving at it from a wholly separate course of thought¹⁰. Beginning in Book XII (also called Lambda) Aristotle explains at length the causes of matter, nature, and substance, as well as how actuality is first prior to potency¹¹. From his laborious musings Aristotle arrives at the following conclusion:

There is, then, something which is always moved with an unceasing motion, which is motion in a circle; and this is plain not in theory only but in fact. Therefore the first heaven must be eternal. There is therefore also something which moves it. And since that which moves and is moved is intermediate, there is something which moves without being moved, being eternal, substance, and actuality.¹²

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Since the argument Aristotle made was with regards to motion more than causality it has not been included in its entirety since this paper is meant to deal with causality. Motion has been included earlier in order to recount the earliest cases of cosmological arguments from motion, which preceded arguments from causality.

¹¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (350 B.C.E.) translated by W. D. Ross <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/metaphysics.12.xii.html>.

¹² Ibid.

The same unmoved mover is found in both the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics*, but the ways in which Aristotle arrived at the necessity of these unmoved movers is completely different in both accounts¹³.

Arab Philosophers

A gap exists in the history between Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas where Europe was enveloped in the Dark Ages, and very few contributions were made to any field of study by Europeans. During this time the world of Islam preserved the writings of the Greeks and experienced something akin to an Islamic renaissance where learning flourished. Arab philosophers such as Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina were able to further expand upon the principles set forth by Aristotle during this time, and thereby develop portions of what the cosmological argument has come to be.

Al-Farabi

Known as “the first outstanding logician and metaphysician of Islam” and regarded as “the founder of Arab Neoplatonism”¹⁴, Al-Farabi made some of the most substantial contributions to arguments of causation. He was the first to introduce the principles of possibility with regard to essence and existence, and can be credited as being the first person to make a cosmological argument from contingency¹⁵. In his *Gems of Wisdom* Farabi first distinguishes what he means by existence and essence, which is the an integral part of his apologetics. Farabi

¹³ It is important to note the difference between the arguments of Plato and Aristotle. The mover found in Plato’s argument by necessity was moved first by itself, but the mover found in Aristotle’s argument is an unmoved first mover. The same argument often applied to a self-caused causer (where the causer must be itself and greater than itself at the same time) can also be applied to a self-moved mover, which is why the unmoved first mover is logically superior to a self-moved mover.

¹⁴ William Lane Craig, *The Cosmological Argument from Plato to Leibniz*: (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2001), 76-104.

¹⁵ Ibid.

describes essence as that whereby a thing is what it is (the nature of a thing), while existence is that whereby the essence is actuality in being for a thing¹⁶.

The argument from contingency of Al-Farabi runs as follows:

1. Contingent beings begin to exist.
2. Anything that begins to exist has a cause of its existence.
3. This cause is contingent or not.
4. A series of contingent beings each caused by another can not be infinite or circular.
5. Therefore, the series of contingent beings must end in a cause that is self-existent and first.

Four classifications are made by Al-Farabi before this proof is given: necessary being, possible being, possible being *per se*¹⁷, and possible being *per se*¹⁸. The classification of necessary being can be subdivided into two groups: necessary *per se* (the only of which is God), and necessary *ab alio*¹⁹ (this includes immaterial and eternal beings other than God). Possible beings includes all sublunary temporal beings. What is possible *per se* is subdivided into the necessary *ab alio* due to the possibility being an intrinsic part of a necessary *ab alio* entity, and what is possible in every respect (sublunary temporal beings). In his first point what Al-Farabi refers to as contingent beings most nearly means beings in the possible classification group (sublunary temporal beings). The second point does not mean a temporally prior cause (an infinite regression of which could exist, and things temporally prior is the realm of cosmological motion

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ *Per se* seems to be used in such a way that it is interchangeable with the word intrinsically.

¹⁸ Emil L. Fackenheim, "The Possibility of the Universe in Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and Maimonides", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 16 (1946-1947): 39-70, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3622267>.

¹⁹ *Ab alio* is meant denote something midway between necessary and possible. In the example of other immaterial and eternal beings it is meant that it is possible that such things exist, and they are similar to the necessary *per se* so they are in between possible and necessary.

arguments), but rather what he does in this point is bring in his distinctions of essence and existence. If something comes into existence, then its existence is not a part of its essence because in that case it would have always existed. Something that comes into existence requires some existential cause to continually conjoin existence and essence in order to sustain the being that came into existence²⁰. There can not be an infinite or circular series a regress of these beings that conjoin existence and essence in that way because the series would have no causal efficacy and would be unable to produce an effect. In this way Al-Farabi introduced causation into the cosmological argument to prove the existence of God.

Ibn Sina

The figurative successor to Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina again engaged Neoplatonism and expanded principles regarding necessity and essence in the cosmological argument of Al-Farabi. Coming after Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina accepted the original doctrines of necessity/possible and existence/essence set forth by Farabi, but his expansion on them comes in the form of two distinctions. The first distinction is with regards to the essence and existence of a certain object or entity. The essence of something, as Ibn Sina held, was predominantly an answer to the question of ‘what is it?’, which would be responded to with characteristics necessary to come to a complete description of that entity or object²¹. This is separate than what Farabi said in that essence is no longer the nature of an entity, but is now defined as what the entity is. Existence is an answer to the questions of ‘is it?’ or ‘does it exist?’. The second distinction made by Ibn Sina is based on logical necessity compared to strict necessity as Farabi had it. Beginning with the

²⁰ William Lane Craig, *The Cosmological Argument from Plato to Leibniz*: (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2001), 76-104.

²¹ Ibid.

premise that the Necessary Being, or God, is the only entity where essence and existence are inseparably united and for everything else it is an accident added to their essence, Ibn Sina wrote that the necessary being is that which involves a contradiction if assumed to be non-existent²². Though both of these distinctions seem to be ontological in nature they clarified the first proof of Al-Farabi, and allowed Ibn Sina to compose the following proof²³:

1. Definitions:

- a.** Contingent being: a being composed of essence and existence, which therefore requires an existential cause.
- b.** Necessary being: a being not composed of essence and existence, which therefore does not require an existential cause²⁴.

2. Every being is either contingent or necessary.

3. If it is necessary, then a necessary being exists.

4. If it is contingent, then a necessary being exists.

- a.** A contingent being requires an existential cause.
- b.** If this cause is also a contingent being, then an existential causal series is formed.
- c.** An existential causal series can not be infinite.
 - i.** An infinite series has no first cause.
 - ii.** Therefore, there would be no cause of existence.
 - iii.** Therefore, contingent being could not exist.

²² William Lane Craig, *The Cosmological Argument from Plato to Leibniz*: (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2001), 76-104.

²³ Outline/Syllogism style proof found in William Lane Craig, *The Cosmological Argument from Plato to Leibniz*: (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2001), 76-104.

²⁴ The necessary being is not composed of essence and existence in that existence and essence are the same and are inseparably united in a necessary being. A contingent being is composed of the two individually.

iv. This is absurd.

d. Therefore, the existential causal series must terminate in a necessary being.

5. Therefore, a necessary being exists.

Obviously closely related to the argument originally made by Farabi, but slightly different because of the distinctions that he introduced.

Al-Ghazali

Acclaimed to be the ‘Proof of Islam’, the ‘Ornament of Faith’, and the ‘Renewer of Religion’, Al-Ghazali contributed greatly to cosmological arguments with his multiple proofs for God’s existence. Though Al-Ghazali did compose a particular proof with regards to infinity that is commonly associated with the *Kalam* school, Al-Ghazali created another proof with regards to causation that was marked by significant differing characteristics between his proof and those of his predecessors. The prime difference between the proof of Al-Ghazali and other philosophers is that his proof does not rely on a basis in the finitude of time, but rather argues from temporal phenomena, and not from time as a whole²⁵. His proof also does not argue from cause of existence as those of Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, but rather inquires as to the cause of the temporal phenomena that occur within the world. His proof goes as follows²⁶:

1. Everything that begins to exist requires a cause for its origin.

2. The world began to exist.

a. There are temporal phenomena in the world.

b. These are preceded by other temporal phenomena.

²⁵ William Lane Craig, *The Cosmological Argument from Plato to Leibniz*: (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2001), 76-104.

²⁶ Ibid.

c. The series of temporal phenomena can not regress infinitely.

i. An actually existing infinite series involves various absurdities.

d. Therefore, the series of temporal phenomena must have had a beginning.

3. Therefore, the world has a cause for its origin: its Creator.

While it may be said that this proof from temporal phenomena is a precursor to the later work of Thomas Aquinas, it still appears to be the first of its kind regarding series of temporal phenomena instead of an argument from the finitude of time that is common among Arabic philosophical writing.

St. Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas is perhaps the person most commonly associated with cosmological arguments due to his presentation of his five ways in the *Summa Theologica*. Aside from being one of the greatest thinkers that ever lived Thomas Aquinas was different in his apologetics than many of his day. Though it was common to rely on the writing of church fathers in one's apologetics, what differentiated Aquinas from the rest of the scholars at the time is that he embraced the philosophy of Aristotle while nearly all of the church relied on Platonic, Neo-Platonic, or Augustinian traditions²⁷. In all of his theology Aquinas replaced the teachings of Plato with those of Aristotle. Indeed in the first chapter of book VII of Aquinas' extensive commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* is found an explanation of Aquinas' interpretation of the unmoved mover argument of Aristotle from the basic tenets that whatever is moved is moved by

²⁷ Norman L. Geisler, Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics. (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 1999), 89-95.

another, and no process to infinity in movers can occur so one must arrive at an unmoved first mover²⁸.

Though Aquinas held that knowledge of God was self-evident in itself, he nonetheless composed his five ways to provide proof for those who sought further proof that God exists²⁹. The first way could be seen as a restatement of principles from Aristotle because it is based on change and motion (change and motion are closely related principles in the philosophy of the Greeks and thusly Aquinas), and ends in the same unmoved mover by saying “Hence one is bound to arrive at some first cause of change not itself being changed by anything, and this is what everybody understands by God,”³⁰. The second way is the way from causation which will be explored later, but the third way is what is commonly referred to as the “necessary being” argument since it is based on what Aquinas says need be and need not be. The third way can be summarized to the point that there must be something which must be and must have existed before the physical universe in order to bring it into existence³¹. The fourth way is with regards to gradation of characteristics such as “more good” or “more true”, and argues that there must be a superlative by which everything else is caused to have that characteristic. This superlative of being, goodness, etc. (“and whatever other perfection they have”) that causes in other things their characteristics is what is termed to be God. The fifth way deals with the guidelines of nature, and states that an orderedness of actions that tends toward some end is observed in anything that

²⁸ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics*, trans. Pierre H. Conway (Columbus, OH: College of St. Mary of the Springs, 1958), Book VII.

²⁹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Holy Teaching*, trans. Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt (Grand Rapids, MI.: Brazos, 2005), 45-56.

³⁰ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Complete English ed. (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981), 5:13-17.

³¹ *Ibid.*

obeys natural laws. Since an awareness is required for something to tend towards a goal or end, then there must be some awareness that directs nature to its ends, which may be called God.

Causation is the particular topic of this essay so a more detailed examination of the second way is required before proceeding. The second way can be outlined as follows:

- 1.** In the world causes are found to be ordered in series.
- 2.** Nowhere is it observable that something causes itself because something would then have to precede itself, which is a contradiction.
- 3.** The series of causes must come to some end.
 - a.** Earlier members in the series cause intermediates and intermediates cause further “last” things in the series.
 - b.** If you eliminate a cause you eliminate its effects, so there can be no intermediate or last effects without a first cause.
 - c.** With no stop in the series there is never a first cause, and thus no intermediate or last effects.
- 4.** There must then be some first cause which can be given the name ‘God’.

Thomas Aquinas is the person most often associated with cosmological arguments, and though most of what he wrote was reinterpretation of what he read from Aristotle, Aquinas’ argument from causation stands as probably the first argument based on direct cause and effect relations to emerge. Though not explicitly stated in his argument, it must first be assumed that entities have an ability to cause events to occur for causes and effects to be related in a series. This implicit principle of ability to cause events to occur gave rise to the idea of “causal power” which will be examined later.

Historical Objections to the Argument

The most significant objections to the cosmological argument came in the writings of David Hume and Immanuel Kant. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant sought to indirectly discredit the cosmological argument by proving that it invoked the ontological argument, which he also held as insufficient proof for the existence of any God. Hume attacked the argument in his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* where he came at the argument from a philosophical standpoint, and sought to discredit it by showing that it was an inadequate did not wholly establish that God must exist.

Hume

Hume had several problems with arguments from causation, one specific critique found in part IX of his *Dialogues* and another found in part 1 of section IV in his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. The version of the cosmological argument used by Demea is predominantly concerned with the Principle of Sufficient Reason³² (often abbreviated PSR) that came from Leibniz³³. Beginning with the PSR Demea states that in tracing the reasons or causes of things in existence they (the characters in the Dialogue) must either trace an infinite succession, or an ultimate cause that must necessarily exist. After this Demea discounts the possibility of an infinite chain, and states that even if the particular reasons for all the contingent entities in succession are explained there must be a reason for the whole succession as a set³⁴. In

³² The principle of sufficient reason from Leibniz states that everything has a sufficient reason or cause for its happening. He then argues that the universe exists and must have a sufficient reason for its existence, and the reason for the universe's existence must be found outside itself.

³³ Joseph K. Campbell, "Hume's Refutation of the Cosmological Argument", *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 40, no. 3 (December, 1996): 159-73, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40026984>.

³⁴ As opposed to some other possible set of contingent entities.

the end he concludes that there must be some entity that has a cause in itself to serve as the reason or cause for the succession's existence³⁵.

Hume's critiques throughout the whole of part IX regarding the cosmological argument that he outlined through Demea can be distilled into a single "attack"³⁶:

1. Either all necessary truths are analytic or some are not.
2. If all necessary truths are analytic, then the cosmological argument does not establish that God exists.
3. If some necessary truths are not analytic, then the universe is either a contingent or necessary entity.
4. If the universe is a contingent entity, then the cosmological argument does not establish that God exists.
5. If the universe is a necessary entity, then the cosmological argument does not establish that God exists.
6. Therefore, the cosmological argument (at least the version displayed by Demea) does not establish that God exists.

This seems to be an attack on the definition of God as a necessary being that first came from Al-Farabi, and the subsequent truths to arrive at the necessary being. It seems predictable that Hume would doubt the necessity of a necessary being since he wrote in his *Enquiry* "Whatever is may not be," and if applied a necessary being is no longer necessary in Hume's view³⁷.

³⁵ David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1854), under "Part IX," <http://www.anselm.edu/homepage/dbanach/dnr.htm#A14>.

³⁶ Joseph K. Campbell, "Hume's Refutation of the Cosmological Argument", *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 40, no. 3 (December, 1996): 159-73, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40026984>.

³⁷ David Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1910), under "Section IV," <http://18th.eserver.org/hume-enquiry.html#4.2>.

The problem that Hume had with causality is that he claimed it was based on custom in his *Enquiry*. As stated by Hume, “all reasoning concerning matters of fact seem to be founded on the relationship of cause and effect. By means of that relation alone can we go beyond the evidence of our memory and senses,”³⁸. Cause and effect relations are not something known a priori, but are rather only known a posteriori. Only after one has observed certain things constantly in association does the conception of a particular causal relationship appear in their minds³⁹. From this Hume believes that though customary conjunction may lead one to believe in a causal relationship one can never know if the connection is real; the connection can only be believed to exist. This agnostic denial of any ability to know causal connections presented in Hume’s writing can be applied to say that no ultimate cause for the physical world can be known without knowledge of the God or cause.

Kant

Kant’s objection to the cosmological argument was unlike Hume’s in that it sought to indirectly discount the argument by showing that it invoked the ontological argument. In Kant’s conception the cosmological argument has two phases: the first where it proves that God exists, the second where it tries to define what properties this Necessary Being must have⁴⁰. From this Kant stated “It follows that the conception of the ens realissimum is the only conception by and in which we can cogitate a necessary being. Consequently, a Supreme Being necessarily exists,” in which he begins his explanation regarding how the cosmological argument invokes the

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1988), 14.

⁴⁰ John D. Caputo, “Kant’s Refutation of the Cosmological Argument”, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 42, no. 4 (Dec., 1974): 686-91, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1461135>.

ontological argument⁴¹. Kant believed that the whole of the cosmological argument is based on the presupposition that the Necessary Being is itself necessary, which would appear to be a problem with the classifications of necessary and possible by Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. Kant argued that if he could conceive of a scenario where the necessary being did not exist, then the being was not itself necessary. Since he conceived of a universe without such a being being, Kant proposed that the being was not necessary and in using the concept of necessary existence the ontological argument was being used. While Ibn Sina seems to have been able to predict such a refutation by making the Necessary Being logically necessary, Kant nevertheless reasoned that the cosmological argument did not establish a truly necessary being and used a principle that was ontological in nature to try and argue for God's existence.

⁴¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by J. M. D. Meiklejohn (Hazleton, PA: Electronic Classics, n.d.), 350-55, <http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/kant/critique-pure-reason6x9.pdf>.

Thesis Proof

Though the argument from causation has existed for over a millennium and has been debated at length in philosophical circles it is often disregarded by modern scientists. The scientific community at large tries to negate the possibility of God's existence based on the principles of size or age of the universe, however a slightly altered interpretation of the argument from causation presented in Aquinas' second way can be used to show that regardless of the universe's properties there must be a God for anything to exist or occur within the universe.

Definitions:

Causal Power: the ability to cause events to occur

Causal Bestower: any entity that "bestows" or gives causal power to another entity from itself (example: human throwing an object; the human bestowed causal power on the object by throwing it, and the book can then cause some event on impact or otherwise)

Causal Sustainer: any entity that does not bestow causal power, but rather sustains the existence of some other entity, and without the sustainer in the system of causation the entities dependent on it would not exist and would have no causal power (example: humans on earth; earth does not give causal power to humans, but without the earth humanity as a whole would not exist. If the earth did not exist, then humanity would also consequently not exist and would have no causal power if the earth were not there. Thus earth sustains the causal power of humanity, but does not bestow it.).

Causal Recipient: any entity that receives causal power through bestowing by the action of a bestower (example: object in the earlier human throwing object example; the object is the recipient of causal power from the human bestower).

System of Causation: a relationship that exists between the listed classes of bestowers, sustainers, and recipients.

Basic Syllogism of Proof

1. In reality there exist systems of causation consisting of causal recipients, bestowers, and sustainers.
2. Theories have been postulated to explain how the universe is the ultimate causal bestower based on qualities of the universe such as age.
 - a. This is problematic because the universe causes no events to occur within itself⁴².
 - i. Causal power is the ability to cause events to occur.
 - ii. The universe causes some events such as the expansion of itself through gravity (since gravity is said to be a property of the universe), etc., however events that only occur within the bounds of the universe are never caused by the universe itself.
 - iii. Since the universe has no ability to cause events in relation to the entities inside it it has no causal power in the system of causation consisting of itself and everything inside it.
 - iv. The universe rather serves as a causal sustainer for what exists inside it, and bestows no causal power on them.
3. Events occur within the universe.
 - a. Since events occur they must have some cause.
 - i. Events do not spontaneously occur. An explanation for an event is always needed.

⁴² Response regarding general events will come later.

ii. Something then must have causal power great enough to cause that events, or bestow it on the thing that caused a particular event.

4. Since the universe can not serve as the ultimate source, yet an ultimate source is required there must be something to act as bestower for the causal power within the universe.

The first point of this argument has already been demonstrated in the definitions. Systems of causation consisting of sustainers, bestowers, and recipients can be found everywhere in the universe.

The second point must be the topic of further discussion. Now that the denominations within systems of causation and the limitations of causal power have been outlined the argument can be presented more fully. In the past the cosmological argument was used to lead up to the universe as a source of causal power lacking in consciousness, which necessitated God because there must have been a being with a will and consciousness to bestow and generate causal power for the universe. The problem herein lies with the universe being presented as a bestower of causal power. Rather, the universe serves as a sustainer for causal power for everything within its bounds only and not a bestower of causal power on them. This is seen in how galaxies and celestial entities are within the universe and survive because of it, and without the universe galaxies and other celestial bodies could not exist and would have no causal power. In this way the universe is a causal sustainer for the causal power within the universe, however the universe has no causal power of its own to cause events within itself and can not be the entity to bestow causal power on the entities within its boundaries. If the universe is merely something that encompasses all the cosmos and entities therein, then it is questionable how the universe can possibly bestow causal power or serve as a source of causal power for anything. It has been said

that an example of an event the universe causes is its expansion because of gravity, and gravity is referred to as a property of the universe. While this may be true the gravitation of two masses within the boundaries of the universe is not something caused by the universe, but is something rather explained by the way the two masses relate. Since the gravitation of bodies is not a manifestation of the universe causing something, then it is questionable whether the universe can cause events within itself. Based on the definition of causal power presented earlier it can be concluded that the universe does not have causal power in relation to what exists inside it. Events indubitably occur within the universe, but the universe is never the cause of any event. For instance, if some cosmological event occurs the statement is not made that “the universe made it happen”. It is rather said that “this occurred because xyz” where xyz is some occurrence that took place within the universe because of entities within the universe, and not because the universe somehow caused it. Everything that humans observe are occurrences that take place because of entities within the universe interacting, and not because the universe gave cause to the event.

The third point is obvious: events occur within the universe and are always caused by something. Events never spontaneously occur, and always have some cause that made them happen.

The fourth point again requires explanation. An ultimate source of causal power is required because the series of linked systems of causations will lead to greater and greater bestowers and recipients until one has to question what gives causal power to entities such as stars, planets, and other massive celestial entities if the universe can not. The necessity for an ultimate source is the same as those contributed by the philosophers throughout history.

Rebuttals:

Response to predicted criticism that the given proof does not prove that there must be a creator, God, before all things, but rather just something to do the action of bestowing.

It may be claimed that in the previous pages it has only been necessitated that there be a bestower and regenerator of causal power outside of the universe, rather than a beginner or creator of the universe. If this bestower did not create the universe, then it would mean that it has the possibility of not being omnipotent, and thereby could not be called God. No matter what this necessary bestower of causal power that exists outside of the universe may be, statements and judgements regarding the nature and essence of it made by humans are irrelevant. This bestower is beyond the universe and beyond the physical realm which humans can adequately study and know anything about through the standard practices of science. Relating to this bestower the only thing that humans can know is that it must exist. All interpretations of its nature and essence would have to presuppose its existence in order to even speak of it in a meaningful way. For this very reason to engage questions as to the nature of the bestower is to engage questions of theology (the realm of metaphysical philosophy and substance of the universe) and philosophy, which scientists are not qualified to engage.

Response to: “The universe has no causal power is contrary to all that has been said in the past. How are you sure that the universe has no causal power, or could the case be that the causal power of the universe is zero and it causes no events because it does not have the physical capacity to.”

To make the statement that the universe has no causal power is a highly lofty statement, but it is one that is defensible. All things that occur within the bounds of the universe occur

because of interactions between entities within the universe's bounds, and not because of the universe. The universe consists of all cosmological systems and entities, but it in no way actively or otherwise causes things to occur within its bounds. All events within the universe occur because entities within the universe interact, and not because the universe willed some event to happen or caused some event to happen.

One example of the previous understanding of causal power can run as follows: the causal power of humans comes from the food they eat, and the food can be traced back to the plants that grow and became food, but the sun before that energized the plants for them to grow, and the sun in turn is powered by the universe. If this were an example to show how humans receive energy and what the ultimate source of that energy was then this would be adequate (with the exception that the universe does not give energy to the sun), however this example is problematic when the relationships of causal power are considered. Firstly, the food that humans eat does not bestow causal power on them. It may be true that if one does not eat they become weak, thus limited in physical capacity, and thus with a lesser amount of causal power. However, humans as conscious entities can regenerate their lost causal power by in this instance taking action to sustain their life by eating. Food is more closely related to a sustainer than anything. The other significant problem with this example is that it is thought that the universe gives power to the sun. How does the universe power the sun? Did the sun choose to power the sun and not power a planet such as earth? The universe did not form the sun or cause it to come into existence because the formation of stars is a process that occurs within the universe and is not caused by it. Here we encounter what was above outlined: the universe is a sustainer more than anything else (if it even is a bestower at all).

The universe is never named as the cause for any series of events, and this is due to the fact that the universe can not cause events to occur within itself.

In the case that the universe has a causal power of zero due to physical limitation again problems arise. If the causal power of the universe is zero, then the universe must be limited. Aside from the already stated question as to what the universe causes, in order for the universe to cause anything other than what it already causes it would require a regenerator of causal power. Since the universe is not a conscious entity it could not serve as regenerator for itself, and would require something great enjoy to regenerate causal power for it.

Response to: “If Big Bang cosmology is true, then first the universe exploded outward, and all matter was spread throughout the universe. Over the passage of time gravity caused particles of matter to attract each other and form larger and larger clusters of matter that eventually formed stars, planets, etc. In effect gravity began the existence of the different celestial entities, and their motion is caused by the attraction of the different stars and planets to each other. If gravity caused the different bodies to form and gave them motion, then would gravity then be the bestower of causal power upon these things?”

It would appear as if gravity were the bestower of causal power in this situation if one is to forget a few principles that eliminate gravity as a viable source of causal power for the universe. Firstly, the causal power of gravity is itself limited. When objects are separated by too great a distance gravity loses its effect and can cause nothing. In an expanding limited universe (which is the common position held scientifically) a point must be reached where objects, entities, etc. are so far apart that gravity can have no effect on them, so gravity lost its causal power (at least for a time) between them). Since only conscious entities can regenerate causal

power gravity can not regenerate causal power itself if it loses its causal power. For that reason even if gravity can be bestower it requires a regenerator to have causal power.

Response to the case where the universe is limited in age.

If the universe is limited in age, then it is definitionally a limited entity. As affirmed above if the universe does not have causal power, then some bestower is required for any causal power to be present in the universe.

Response to the case where the universe is unlimited in age.

If the universe is unlimited in age, then there still must be some source for causal power because the universe does not provide for the causal power within itself.

Conclusion

Though arguments based on causation have been formed for over a thousand years they have still until recently been inadequate because of a single realization: the universe does not provide an adequate source for the causal power (ability to cause events) that is bestowed and received in a near infinite number of relationships in reality. The universe is only a sustainer for the causal power that is within the universe, and that causal power is there due to the bestowing of some greater entity outside of the universe. Though this only necessitates some form of bestower, the nature or characteristics of the bestower are irrelevant other than that it exists.

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