

The Cosmological Argument

Aquinas considers different versions of the cosmological argument from the origins of motion, causation, and necessity. Here's an example:

Acquinas: Causation

1. I exist.
2. There must be some sequence of causes for my existence.
3. This sequence of causes and effects must either be a) an infinite chain of causes and effects, or b) be anchored in some uncaused cause.
4. There can be no infinite chain of causes and effects
5. Therefore, my existence is ultimately caused by some uncaused cause.
6. Therefore, there must be an uncaused cause

But why should we accept 4? And why should we think that this uncaused cause is God?

Reichenbach: Explanation

1. The universe exists
2. The universe requires an explanation of its existence.
3. This explanation is something other than the universe itself.
4. What explains the existence of the universe being must either be a) only other contingent beings, or b) include a non-contingent (necessary) being.
5. Contingent beings alone cannot explain the existence of a contingent being.
6. Therefore, what explains the existence of the universe being must include a non-contingent (necessary being)
7. Therefore, a necessary being exists.

Why believe Premise 2?

Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR): "Nothing exists without sufficient reason for why it exists, and not something else"

Challenging the PSR:

- 1) Maybe the universe "just is", and requires no explanation. Maybe the parts of the universe require explanation, but not the whole. But why should we say this, when the universe itself seems contingent?
- 2) Maybe the origin of the universe (the Big Bang) is a kind of quantum event for which there is no explanation. But this depends on how quantum physics actually works out.
- 3) The PSR is a claim about the complete intelligibility of the universe; why should the universe cooperate? "We have no right to assume that the universe will comply with out intellectual preferences." (Mackie, p. 225)

Why should God be the sole exception to the PSR?

