



 Key words: 

**A posteriori:** argument based on experience. 

**Empirical:** we use our 5 senses to gain this experience.

**Cosmos:** means universe. 

The argument is based on the fact we can SEE that the universe exists.

**Key Philosopher: Saint Thomas Aquinas.**

Aquinas has 5 arguments for the existence of God- The Five Ways.

**First way: argument from motion**

The first and most obvious way is the argument from motion. It is obvious that in the world some things are in motion. **Whatever is moved, is moved by another...**it is impossible that in the same respect and in the same way a thing could be both mover and moved, i.e, that it should move itself.

Whatever is moved is moved by another. If that by which it is moved is itself self moving, **then this must also be moved by something else** and something else again. **But this cannot go on to infinity, because there would then be no first mover, and, consequently not subsequent mover,** as subsequent movers move only insofar as they are moved by the first mover, just as staff moves only because it is moved by the hand. **So there must be a first mover, itself unmoved; and this everyone understands to be God.**

1. Everything that moves is moved by mover/ Everything in motion is put into motion by something else.
2. That mover must also be moved by something else.
3. But you cannot have an infinite chain of movers. A chain of moving going backwards forever.
4. Because then there would be no reason for the movement to get started at all. This is because everything moving is a secondary mover- it has been moved by something else and if this is the case the movement would have never began.
5. Therefore there must be an unmoved mover, producing movement in everything else, without itself being moved.
6. This unmoved mover is 'God'.

Example. In a chain of falling dominoes each domino falls due to the one before falling. Each domino is a secondary mover and did not start the movement- it was reliant on something else for motion. In order for the chain to fall it relies the primary mover – the finger that pushes the first domino...just like the universe relied on the primary movement of God.



Can be linked to Aristotle Prime Mover.

**Second Way: First cause: Argument from causation** 

The second way is from the nature of efficient causes. In the world of sensible things we find an order of efficient causes. **There is no case known (it would be impossible) in which a thing is found to be its own efficient cause;** to be so it would have to exist prior to itself, which is impossible. In efficient causes we cannot go on to infinity, because in any order of efficient causes, the first is the cause of the intermediate and the intermediate of the last, whether there are several intermediate causes or only one. Without a cause, there is no effect. **Thus, if there were not first cause ...there would be no intermediate causes, and no last. If we could go to infinity in efficient causes, there would be no first cause;** if that were true, there would be no intermediate cause, and no present effects for us to see. Plainly this is not the case. **So we must admit a first efficient cause, [itself uncaused], which everyone calls God.**

1. The universe exists.
2. Something cannot come from nothing- everything is caused.
3. Without a first cause there would be nothing, but things do exist so there must be a first cause.
4. Aquinas said this first cause was God.
5. Therefore God exists.

We can see, using empirical evidence, links of cause and effect- one thing coming about due to another.

Baby---Parents---Grandparents---Great Grandparents--- Continuous chain until we reach the first humans. Humans had to start somewhere.

So we can see that everything requires a cause. But things had to start somewhere, with a cause that itself did not require a cause. This is God, the first cause.



**Third Way: Necessity and contingency**

The third way is taken from possibility and necessity. In nature we find things that are possible to be and not to be- they are found to be generated and corrupted- and so it is possible for them to be and possible not to be. It is impossible for them always to exist, for that which is possible not to be at some time does not exist. If everything is like that, at one time nothing existed. If that were true, there would be nothing in existence now, because things only come to exist because of things already existing. If at some time nothing existed, there would be nothing today, which is obviously false. So, not all things are merely possible- there must exist something whose existence is necessary. Every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by something else or it does not. As we saw when we considered efficient causes, it would be impossible to go on to infinity in a chain of things which have their necessity caused by another necessary being. We have to admit the existence of some being whose necessity lies in itself (and not received from something else), which is the source of necessity in others. This all men call God.

**CONTINGENT:** Something which did not have to exist and relies on something else for its existence.

**NECESSARY:** must exist and does not require anything else for its existence.

1. There are contingent things.
2. Contingent things can cause other contingent things, but there cannot only be contingent things.
3. If there were only contingent things there would have been a time when nothing existed. If this was the case there would be nothing now.
4. Things do exist now we have evidence.
5. Therefore a necessary being must exist to create contingent things.
6. This necessary being is God.

**Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716): Principle of Sufficient Reason**

“Why is there something rather than nothing?”

Any contingent fact about the world has an explanation.

**Simply put:** ‘no fact could ever be true...unless there were a sufficient reason **why** it was...’

*Leibniz means that you should be able to give an explanation of **why** something is in order to have a sufficient explanation.*

The fact there are contingent things must have an explanation. This cannot be explained by contingent things. Therefore the explanation must be necessary. There must be an explanation, so there must be a necessary being. This being is God.



## Hume's Criticisms



### 1. Fallacy of Composition: Just because something is true of the parts does not mean it needs to be true of the whole.

1<sup>st</sup> way: Motion- things in the world must be put into motion by something else as a result the universe itself must have been into motion by something else.

2<sup>nd</sup> way: Cause- everything in the universe has a cause so the universe must too.

3<sup>rd</sup> way: Contingency- if all contingent things need a cause this means the universe also needs a cause.

Just because parts of the universe need cause or to be put into motion does not mean that is true of the whole. Aquinas makes this fundamental error in his argument, therefore his argument is not valid.

### 2. Hume maintained it could be possible to reject the idea of a beginning of a universe.

In 1940s Sir Fred Hoyle developed 'Steady State theory'. The theory maintains the universe did not have a beginning- instead the universe is eternal. This idea would also lead to rejection of the impossibility of an infinite regress. After all if the universe has no beginning and is eternal that means it has existed infinitely. So an infinite regress would be possible and the need for a first cause would be obsolete.

However...However, there are other scientific views that do support the idea that the world came into existence. Big Bang.

### 3. Reality and speculation.

Speculation: the activity of the mind thinking about the various logical possibilities regarding any given point or issue. even if the universe does have a starting point and a cause it is merely speculation to say that cause was God. The argument is inductive- moving towards a conclusion which is at best probable. It can be referred to as speculation.

### 4. The Problem of Induction

Induction is essentially predicting future events based on what has happened in the past. We are often certain, when actually we cannot be. At best we can make probable assumptions. For example: we predict that the sun will rise tomorrow, because it has every other day so far.

The Cosmological Argument is based on assumptions about cause and effect- essentially the assumption is that things have effects on one another. Hume maintains that we can never truly be sure of the connection between cause and effect. Hume stated cause and effect may not even be a real thing but what we say is a cause and effect is just a statistical correlation. Instead of saying "x causes y" we could say "when x, y". You don't need to mention cause. If cause and effect isn't a real thing then the notion on which Aquinas's bases his argument is flawed.

## F C Copleston 1907-1994 vs. Bertrand Russell 1872-1970

Copleston: Well, for clarity's sake, I'll divide the argument into distinct stages. First of all, I should say, we know that there are at least some beings in the world which do not contain in themselves the reason for their existence. For example, I depend on my parents, and now on the air, and on food, and so on. Now, secondly, the world is simply the real or imagined totality or aggregate of individual objects, none of which contain in themselves alone the reason for their existence. There isn't any world distinct from the objects which form it, any more than the human race is something apart from the members. Therefore, I should say, since objects or events exist, and since no object of experience contains within itself reason of its existence, this reason, the totality of objects, must have a reason external to itself. That reason must be an existent being. Well, this being is either itself the reason for its own existence, or it is not. If it is, well and good. If it is not, then we must proceed farther. But if we proceed to infinity in that sense, then there's no explanation of existence at all. So, I should say, in order to explain existence, we must come to a being which contains within itself the reason for its own existence, that is to say, which cannot not exist.

1. We know that there are at least some beings in the world are not the reason for their own existence.
2. The world is made up of these individuals.
3. The world is made up of these individuals.
4. The reason must be an existent being.
5. This being must either be the reason for its own existence or not. If not we will end up going back infinitely searching for a cause. Therefore we must come to a being which is the reason for its own existence (necessary being).
6. For Copleston this being would be God.



### Russell's responses:



1. The universe is a brute fact.

'I should say that the universe is just there and that is all'.

Is this just a cop out, that Russell just simply stops questioning the universe at this stage? McCabe to say the universe is "Just there" is to make a comment such as "dogs are just there". It is arbitrary. Whilst asking why the universe exists is a mysterious question, it is not an "unaskable" question.

To support Russell we could say that to stop at God as the answer is not that satisfying. However, it could be argued that to say God is the cause of the universe actually raises MORE questions. Eg. Problem of suffering.

2. The concept of a necessary being = meaningless.

For Russell you can only have necessary statements of logic, it cannot be applied to things. To say that God was a necessary being would put God in a unique category that we cannot possibly understand.

So for Russell the only necessary statements that can possibly have meaning would be statements such as ' a square must have 4 sides' as logically you cannot call a shape a square unless it has 4 sides.

### 3. Fallacy of Composition: Just because something is true of the parts does not mean it needs to be true of the whole.

"Every man that exists has a mother, therefore the human race must have a mother...but obviously the human race hasn't a mother- that is a different logical sphere."

The Fallacy of Composition is based on the idea that the Cosmological Argument uses deductive reasoning incorrectly, in order to get to the conclusion that God is the cause of the universe so must exist.

Deductive reasoning: if the premises of an argument are true, then the conclusion is true.

Russell is maintaining that you cannot deduce that if something is true of the parts it must be true of the whole. So whilst you can see that contingent things in the universe have a cause, you cannot say that the universe as well has a cause. The argument is **INDUCTIVE** because at best the conclusion is probable.

### 4. Scientists were discovering "first causes which haven't in themselves got causes".

This would undermine Aquinas's third way and the principle of sufficient reason.

### Kant's Criticism

The idea of everything having a cause can only be applied in a world of sense experience. We can use our senses to experience the causes.

We cannot apply the notion of cause to something we have not experienced.

We have not experienced God. For Kant God is outside of space and time (therefore cannot be experienced).

Therefore, there can be no justification for saying God. is the cause of the universe.

After all it could be said that the argument itself is a posteriori- based on what we can experience, so why should an entity which we cannot experience be a sensible conclusion?

Response: individuals who have had a religious experience.

Weak response as this only gives evidence for the individual.

