

The General Causality Argument (Contingency)

Arguments for God's Existence

The validity of the principle of causality or sufficient reason is the base of the logical thinking on which all sciences and all human knowledge is built. That's why in the following we use it as the premise of our reasoning. This is one of the four basic laws of thinking (the law of identity, the law of contradiction, the law of the excluded middle and the law of sufficient reason) that all people use in everyday life, even if they are not aware of it.

This principle says that whatever exists or takes place must have a satisfactory reason either in itself or in something else.

Theoretically we could distinguish two categories of existence: the absolute necessary existence which is self-explanatory regarding its own existence and contingent existence which could be explained only by a proportionate cause exterior to it. If we try to categorise everything around ourselves into these two categories then sooner or later we must draw the conclusion that in reality **everything must be regarded as belonging to the category of contingent existence**. Going further with the conclusion drawn we extend our principle to the whole universe because if we claim that the elements of a cluster are contingent, then the whole cluster must be contingent as well. We cannot assume that elements to which we ascribe only contingent characteristics just because of their connection to one another could give absolute features to the cluster they form. That's why when someone supposes that although all the elements of the universe are contingent but the universe as a whole is self-explanatory and self-existent we must say that his statement is illogical because it neglects the fact that we call absolute features just those attributes which are not consequences or results of preceding processes or causes. But here the supposed "absolute character" is dependent on the connection of the particular contingent elements. Consequently, the **whole made of contingent elements must be contingent as well, which means that we have to find a satisfactory reason of the coming to existence of the whole Universe, external to it**.

William Ockham, a philosopher from the 13th. century, formulated a basic principle of scientific investigation when someone looking for the answer to an unexplained phenomenon must apply as few suppositions as it is really necessary.

Some atheists using this idea came to the conclusion that it is baseless to suppose the existence of God just because we can not explain the universe and its coming into existence. They think it's more logical to believe that the cosmos is self-explanatory. However, in reality, just because of this principle, it is easier and more logical to suppose a single transcendent being as the source of every existence, which by its nature owns perfect qualities and from this supposition every other features would be logically derived than to ascribe separately many different absolute attributes to the universe that, according to our observations, does not possess these qualities. Investigating any element of the universe we do not have even the least allusion to an absolute or self-explanatory attribute of our world. Is it really more childish to suppose the existence of an invisible first cause than the existence of invisible absolute attributes?

Why is it not contradictory to say that everything must have a preceding cause but nevertheless there is an uncaused first cause?

When we say that everything must have a preceding cause we think of the immanent elements of our contingent world. Our claim about the first cause is that it is transcendent to it. The contradiction would

stand only if we regarded God as an immanent element of the universe. Consequently the features that we ascribe to the source of the world needn't be the same as the features we ascribe to the world itself.

Many people naturally come to the idea by themselves, even without thorough philosophical or theological reasoning that **the universe has a final cause in its background**. Their only question is what we should call it and often a more exact answer is not significant for them. We frequently hear people say it might be called: the **ancient Matter, the Atom, the Absolute, the Idea, the Spirit, something or somebody**. Some of these proposed descriptions of the final cause could be easily recognised as wrong just because of the meaning of these terms. For example, if we use the term "Matter", we cannot forget about the fact that according to our experience everything that is material is contingent and belongs to the elements of our contingent universe and that's why we must suppose that the superior existence of the final cause should also have superior characters, not changeable or perishable like matter or atoms or any other element of the material world.

Here it must be mentioned that sometimes people expand the limits of the theory of evolution too broad and misunderstand its purpose. The theory of evolution cannot explain the final origin of the world since its field is the development of the existing things and not the question how existence came from non-existence.

Others who claim **that the final cause is of spiritual character**, like the Absolute, the Idea, the Spirit often deny it to be personal.

We experience that man's spiritual nature is manifested in his intelligence, free will, ability to love, ability to build selfless relationships with other spiritual beings. We include all these features when using the term "person". If we start from the previously mentioned principle, namely that the characters of the absolute and definitive cause can not be inferior to the characteristics of the contingent elements, then consequently we must admit that the absolute and definitive cause must also be on a higher level than the impersonal existence.

The term person is misunderstandable if we think of its daily sense. This term we usually don't separate from the specific and determined limits of a human being. Man lives in space and time, he has a body and limits in communication and ability to express his love. Of course, God is not subject to these limits, that is why using the term "person" we only mean someone being able for personal relationship and dialogue with his intelligent creatures. **For this reason, He must be someone who possesses intelligence, free will, self-awareness.**

Therefore, the existence of an intelligent and free First Cause, a personal God, distinct from the material universe and the human mind, is an absolute necessity.

All the approaches which miss the idea of the existence of an independent and personal Creator and explain the existence of the world by interior reasons, ascribing self-existence to the matter or spirit or anything else from the contingent world, could be regarded as different forms of indirect Pantheism. This way of thinking leads to contradiction in terms because it confuses the cause with the effect, the contingent with the self-existent, the finite with infinite. In the case of many people the consequence of this turn of mind is a pessimistic and hopeless attitude to the world because the one who believes it must regard evilness and everything bad in the world as eternal and unavoidable necessities. If man substitutes God with something else, he might lose his own human values like personality, responsibility and his common sense convictions and might lose the right motive to good conduct.

The one who accepts the existence of a personal loving God has the possibility to recognise the way out of this pessimistic and hopeless thinking, because the mentioned negative things don't belong to God's independent and perfect nature. Man has the possibility to assess also himself concerning his contribution

to the development of the world instead of accusing the final cause.

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