

A Cosmological Argument that God Exists

I

Part A

1. A being whose existence and properties are sufficiently explained by its own nature is an independently existing being.
2. A being whose existence and properties are not sufficiently explained by its own nature is a dependently existing being.
3. Each being is such that either its existence and properties are sufficiently explained by its own nature or its existence and properties are not sufficiently explained by its own nature.

Therefore:

4. Each being is either an independently existing being or a dependently existing being.

Part B

5. Each being (that has existed, currently exists, or will exist) is such that there exists some being whose existence sufficiently explains the existence and properties of that being. (Everything has a sufficient reason for existing and for having the properties it has; nothing is without sufficient reason. This premise is traditionally called the Principle of Sufficient Reason.)

Therefore:

6. Each dependently existing being is such that its existence and properties are sufficiently explained either by some other dependently existing being or by an independently existing being.

Therefore:

7. No dependently existing being is such that no thing exists that sufficiently explains its existence or properties.

Part C

8. The universe is that being composed all of the dependently existing beings that have existed, do exist, or will exist.

Therefore:

9. There is no dependently existing being whose existence explains the existence and properties of

the universe.

Therefore:

10. There is an independently existing being whose existence sufficiently explains the existence and properties of the universe.

Part D

11. a) The universe need not have existed at all.

b) The universe need not have existed in exactly the form it does exist (it might have contained more or fewer objects, or different objects, or the arrangement of the objects in it might have been different, or it might have been governed by different physical laws).

Therefore (given either a) or b)):

12. The universe is not its own explanation of the fact that it exists or has the properties it does.

Therefore:

13. The universe is not an independently existing being.

Therefore:

14. The universe is a dependently existing being.

Therefore (final conclusion to Argument I):

15. There is an independently existing being whose existence sufficiently explains the existence and properties of the universe.

II

[What is needed in Part II are arguments about what a being whose existence explains the fact that the universe exists and has the properties that it has would be like. These would be arguments to the effect that the being whose existence explains the existence and nature of the universe would have to be omniscient, omnipotent, and all just and all loving. And, of course, since each of two knowledgeable or powerful beings must place a limit on the other=s knowledge or power, any omniscient or omnipotent being exists uniquely.]

Therefore (desired final conclusion):

N.: God exists. (There exists a unique being who is omnipotent, omniscient, and all just and all loving.)

Points of objection to this cosmological argument that God exists:

1) It is hard to see how Part II will get us the conclusion that the independently existing being whose existence explains that of the universe is all just and all loving. At most, the argument of Part I sets up an argument to the conclusion that there exists an omnipotent and omniscient being; it would seem to be silent on whether this being is also in any sense good.

2) The universe might not itself be a dependently existing being. As the collection of all dependently existing beings, it might be an independently existing being, its own sufficient explanation consisting simply in the totality of the sufficient explanations it collects.

3) The universe might not itself be a proper being at all. The existence and nature of the universe might not be anything over and above the existence and natures of the things and events in it, such that once the existence and natures of the things in it are explained, there is nothing left over to be explained.

4) The argument as a whole is no more or less acceptable to reason than is the principle of sufficient reason. We need a prior compelling argument that has as its conclusion that everything has a sufficient reason for existing and for having the properties it has.