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Third comment on cosmological-argument

1 message

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To: Uri Nodelman <editors@plato.stanford.edu>

The first, advocated by Aquinas, is based on the impossibility of an essentially ordered infinite regress.

In my article (https://www.academia.edu/23340072/WHY_PEOPLE_BELIEVE_GOD_CAUSED_THE_BIG_BANG) I explain why there can be a "infinite regress" of contingent beings. What I left out of this article is an explanation of why this question confuses people. Consider a finite regress of three contingent beings (A, B, and C):

A is caused by B and B is caused by C.

In the first place, what I mean by a contingent being is either a being that begins to exist at some point in time, a finite being, or a being that is a composition of two incomplete beings. This chain is clearly possible because an infinite being (non-contingent or self-sufficient) may exist outside of the chain and give the entire chain its existence. This is true if there is 4 or 5 etc. contingent beings. According to the mathematical process called "induction," it is true if there is an "infinite number" of contingent beings:

A is caused by B, B is caused by C, C is caused by D,

In the order of research, B comes after A, C comes after B, etc. In the order of causality, in other words, you never come to the beginning of the chain. However, the order of causality is entirely different: B comes before A, C comes before B, etc.

Another important point I left out of my essay is the meaning of the word "cause." There are three kinds of causality:

1) Final cause has to do with human action. If you spend 20 minutes washing your car, the final cause is having a clean car.

2) Metaphysical causality applies to a being that begins to exist at some point in time, or is a composition of two incomplete beings (substance and accident for beings that change in time, form and matter for beings that are in a class of other beings, essence and existence for finite beings). In metaphysical causality, cause and effect occur simultaneously. If the cause preceded the effect in the order of time, there would be a cause not causing anything and an effect not being effected by anything.

3) In physics, a causal system is one where the energy is constant. When you drop an object from the tower of Pisa, for example, it seems like the energy is increasing. However, in physics, there is another kind of energy that depends inversely on height. The total energy of the object is constant. That means physicists can calculate the final position of the object from the initial position. One might say, that the initial position causes the final position.