

Objection 1: If everything that exists has an explanation of its existence, then God would have to have an explanation of His existence, but that would be impossible since God is supposed to exist without explanation, His existence is supposed to be a brute fact. If God's existence is just a brute fact, then why can't the universe exist as a brute fact?

Response: On Leibniz' view, there are two kinds of things: 1) Things which exist necessarily (i.e. numbers, sets, etc.) and 2) Things which exist in virtue of an external cause; contingent beings (chairs, people, planets, galaxies). Thus, everything that exists will have an explanation of its existence either in the necessity of its own nature, or in an external cause. Thus, God does have an explanation of his existence; He exists by the necessity of His nature. He is a necessary and uncaused being. His existence is not a brute fact. Thus, this modified principle of sufficient reason says that *things* which exist have an explanation, and this perfectly compatible with their being brute *facts*, but facts and things are not the same. For example, if things exist that exhibit agent causation, then the existence of such things would require an explanation of their existence, but facts about why such agents make free choices would be brute facts since such facts are neither necessary, nor rooted in an external cause; they are brute facts.

Objection 2: Isn't it logically possible that there was nothing instead of something? If so, then God isn't logically necessary.

Response: When philosophers speak of necessity and possibility, they aren't speaking of what is *strictly logically possible*, but what is broadly logically possible. For example, the statement the prime minister is a prime number isn't strictly logically impossible, but it is *broadly logically impossible* since the essence of a prime number and the essence of a prime minister are ontologically distinct.

Objection 3: Hume said that whereas truths can be necessary, it seems that things cannot be necessary.

Response: This isn't an argument, it is an assertion, and nobody has been able to offer any argument to show that a necessary being cannot exist. There is nothing logically incoherent about the notion of a necessary being, and Hume's objection ignores a great Platonic tradition that defends the existence of a great number of necessarily existing beings.

Objection 4: Premise 1 may be true of everything in the universe, but it may not be true of the universe.

Response: This response commits the taxi-cab fallacy. According to this fallacy, you cannot dismiss this principle when you have arrived at your desired location without being grossly arbitrary which is what the atheist does with premise 1 when she arrives at the level of the universe as a whole. Recall that premise 1 doesn't arbitrarily dismiss God as requiring no

explanation. If anything, the universe would need an explanation even more than something like a planet wouldn't? Moreover, this attitude is grossly unscientific as well since the whole enterprise of cosmology is aimed at explaining why our universe exists. Lastly, premise 1 is not a physical principle that applies to things in the universe, but it is a metaphysical principle that applies to all things that exist. Thus, an atheist will have to come up with a justification for why the universe should be considered an exception to the premise 1.

Objection 5: Isn't premise 1 disconfirmed by virtual particles in the quantum vacuum?

Response: Virtual particles don't arise from nothing. "They are fluctuations of the energy in the vacuum that have indeterminate causes. The quantum vacuum is not nothing. It is a roiling sea of energy. The German philosopher of science Bernulf Kanitscheider emphasizes that in so-called quantum creation events we're dealing with "a causal process leading from a primordial substratum with a rich physical structure to a materialized substratum of the vacuum. Admittedly this process is not deterministic, it includes that weak kind of causal dependence peculiar to every quantum mechanical process" (Bernulf Kanitscheider, "Does Physical Cosmology Transcend the Limits of Naturalistic Reasoning?" in *Studies on Mario Bunge's "Treatise,"* ed. Weingartner and G. J. W. Doen [Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1990], pp. 346-74). "Thus, the vacuum constitutes an explanation of the existence of virtual particles; they are fluctuations in the vacuum.

Objection 6: It is impossible for the universe to have an explanation since that would require a state of affairs beyond the universe in which nothing exists, and since the universe is everything that there is, that would mean that nothingness explains the universe, but nothing cannot explain anything, and therefore, the universe cannot have an explanation of its existence.

Response: This objection begs the question that atheism is true by saying that reality is exhausted by space-time and its contents. But, a state of affairs beyond the universe doesn't haven't to be nothingness, it could contain abstract objects and God as well, or one and not the other.

Objection 7: What about M-theory? Doesn't this theory show that the universe is necessary?

While it is true that the internal coherence of the 5 laws on string theory can be reduced to a fundamental M-theory which explains why the 5 laws necessitate each other, the whole universe isn't made necessary by this theory. In fact, there are 10^{500} possible universes on M-Theory that are possible in the cosmic landscape of M-theory.

Objection 8: It is necessary that something or other exists, but there isn't anything that exists necessarily.

Response: William Lane Craig writes, “Alexander Pruss has raised an intriguing philosophical objection to it. A conjunction of statements about things that do not exist--*e.g.*, “Horses do not exist, and mountains do not exist, and leaves do not exist, and pencils do not exist, and so on” would not seem to entail that a specific thing, say, unicorns, does exist. But on Rundle’s view a conjunction predicating non-existence of every contingent thing other than unicorns entails that unicorns exist! For *something* contingent has to exist on Rundle’s view, and it can’t be any of those other things, so it must be unicorns, which seems crazy!

Second, notice that premise 1 shares a similar logic to the argument that an infinite regress of events is impossible, so that ultimately, we would have to arrive at an ultimate being that provides the explanation for the existence of everything else since it would exist of the necessity of its own nature. This would mean, contra Rundle, that it is necessary that something necessary exists since the series of external causes cannot go on forever.

Third, this objection is very very ad hoc.