

- 一、試評約翰·希克對於佛陀有關輪迴看法的理解？25%
- 二、在宗教信仰多元化的今天，我們如何化解宗教間彼此教義衝突的問題？25%
- 三、根據禪宗的觀點，有關宗教語言的問題應當如何解決？理由為何？20%
- 四、請閱讀一段英文文章並以中文回答所列問題：30%

We may concentrate upon Aquinas' second proof. His second proof, known as the First Cause argument, is presented as follows: everything that happens has a cause, and this cause in turn has a cause, and so on in a series that must either be infinite or have its starting point in a first cause. Aquinas excludes the possibility of an infinite regress of causes and so concludes that there must be a First Cause, which we call God.

The weakness of the argument as Aquinas states it lies in the difficulty of excluding as impossible an endless regress of events, requiring no first state.

However, some contemporary Thomists have reformulated the argument in order to avoid this difficulty. They interpret the endless series that it excludes, not as a regress of events back in time, but as an endless and therefore eternally inconclusive regress of explanations. If fact A is made intelligible by its relation to facts B, C, and D (which may be antecedent to or contemporary with A), and if each of these is in turn rendered intelligible by other facts, at the back of the complex there must be a reality which is self-explanation, whose existence constitutes the ultimate explanation of the whole. If no such reality exists, the universe is a mere unintelligible brute fact.

However, this reinterpretation still leaves the argument open to two major difficulties. First, how do we know that the universe is not "a mere unintelligible brute fact"? Apart from the emotional coloring suggested by the phrase, this is precisely what the skeptic believes it to be; and to exclude this possibility at the outset is merely to beg the question at issue. The argument in effect presents the dilemma: either there is a First Cause or the universe is ultimately unintelligible; but it does not compel us to accept one horn of the dilemma rather than the other.

Second, the argument still depends upon a view of causality that can be, and has been, questioned. The assumption of the reformulated argument is that to indicate the causal conditions of an event is thereby to render that event intelligible. Although this assumption is true on the basis of some theories of the nature of causality, it is not true on the basis of others. For example, if (as much contemporary science assumes) causal laws state statistical probabilities, or if (as Hume argued) causal connections represent mere observed sequences, or are (as Kant suggested) projections of the structure of the human mind, the Thomist argument fails.

1. 請問 Aquinas 的論證為何？有何缺點？
2. 請問後來的追隨者如何化解上述的難題？有無困難存在？