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Introduction to Philosophy

Reading Questions Week 7

Aquinas, “The Five Proofs of God” – pp. 348-351 (the first three arguments are all versions of the "Cosmological Argument" in favor of God's existence)

1) The Cosmological Argument for God’s existence is based on the idea of cause and effect and motion. Aquinas discusses how something can’t be the mover and the moved. Essentially, something can’t be the cause of change and the undergoing change at the same time. Regarding cause and effect, God is the first (uncaused) cause that starts a chain of events that eventually lead back to God. Therefore, God is “The Mover” or “The First Cause” who started everything that came after.

2) Infinite regress means that there’s no beginning and that causes can go back infinitely. Infinite regress is so central to the Cosmological argument because Aquinas argues that it is impossible. Aquinas discusses that all things have a cause, all things in motion must have a mover and that an unmoved mover or uncaused cause is needed. Therefore, Aquinas argues that God is that unmoved mover or uncaused cause that stops infinite regression.

3) The third of “The Five Proofs of God” by Aquinas is about the contingent existence of everything in the universe. The third proofs involved possibilities and necessities. Aquinas discusses that it is impossible for something to be but then at one point not to be. Aquinas states, “Hence not all beings are possibles, but there must something in the world which is necessary”

(p.350). Aquinas considered God as the necessary being that does not have their own cause but the cause of necessities of other things.

Anselm, "The Existence of God", pp. 345-347 (this is the "Ontological Argument" for God's existence)

1) Anselm presents the definition of God as “that than which nothing greater can be conceived.”

Anselm discusses how God exists as an idea in the mind and a being that exists in the mind and in reality is greater than a being that exists only in the mind. Additionally, Anselm discusses that God is the supreme being because he says that “if God exists only in the mind, then something greater can be thought, which contradicts the original definition” (p.345). Therefore, Anselm argues that since there is nothing that is greater than God, God exists in the mind and in reality.

2) Anselm’s argument about why the greatest possible being must exist, by its very nature since we cannot imagine something that is greater than God and which is why God must be the greatest possible being. Anselm uses the analogy of an artist and his paintings. An artist understands of what they desire to paint but does not understand it to exist. When the painting is created, then the artist has its understanding and understands that it exists. Therefore, if God exists in mind and in reality, then He must be the greatest possible being.

Hume, "The Argument from Design", pp. 365-370 (this is Hume's criticism of the "Teleological Argument" for God's existence...)

1) Teleological Argument is about how the existence of God consists of design. The name of the argument is based on two Greek words: Telos and Logos. Telos means functional purpose or design. Logos means reason. Therefore, the Teleological Argument presents that everything in existence was designed for a certain purpose or reason.

2) When Hume, through Philo, states "matter may contain the source or spring of order originally within itself, as well as mind does", I think it means since our minds can make the connection between events happening then we figure that there is cause and effect. Hume argues that humans can't tell the future, but they are able to see events that follow one another and therefore we may be able to trace things back to its initial cause. The paragraph it's found in is about reasoning a priori and Hume states that "Experience, therefore, proves that there is an original principle of order in mind, not in matter" (p.367).

3) What are some of the problems Hume presents concerning the comparison of the universe to a machine and the assumption that it must also be designed? The problems Hume presents concerning the comparison of the universe to a machine is that it is a weak analogy. Philo discusses that a universe is completely different compared to machines or houses. Houses and machines are made by architects and builders who have experience creating these things, but the universe is nothing alike. The assumption that the universe must also be designed is a poor statement because humans have no idea or experience with creating the things in the universe such as space, time, matter, energy, solar systems, and black holes.