

College Writing II

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Reading Questions Week 7

Sebastian Cortes

Aquinas, “The Five Proofs of God”

1. Is founded on the notion that everything in the universe has a cause, there must be an ultimate cause that is uncaused and eternal. That ultimate cause is God, the Cosmological Argument for God's existence is founded on this notion. Aquinas contends that there must be a first mover, who is unmoved and eventually causes all other motion, and that this first mover is what causes motion in the universe. Similarly, he contends that the law of cause and effect in the universe requires a first cause that precedes all other causes and eventually causes them all.
2. The concept of an endless regress states that if we follow the origins of everything in the universe, we will eventually find a first cause. But if the initial cause itself had a cause, we would have to go back in time forever, which would result in an infinite regress. According to Aquinas, an endless regress is impractical, and as a result, God must be the uncaused, eternal first cause.

3. The contingent existence of everything in the universe is the subject of the third of the five ways. Everything in the universe, according to Aquinas, has a contingent existence, which means that everything depends on other things for it to exist. Yet if everything in the cosmos is contingent, then there must be a necessary entity that has its existence within itself and is independent of everything else. God is this vital entity.

Anselm, "The Existence of God"

1. According to Anselm, the greatest being we can imagine is "that than which nothing greater can be conceived." It must possess all the best traits we can think of, including existence.
2. According to Anselm, if we imagine a creature with all the best qualities, such as existence, then this being must logically exist in reality. He contends that existence is a requirement for a being to be the best possible being, not merely another attribute. Thus, there must be the greatest entity that is physically feasible.

Hume, "The Argument from Design"

1. The Teleological Argument, also called the Argument from Design, is predicated on the notion that the universe has signs of design and purpose, which implies the existence of a designer, which is God.

2. Hume contends that we cannot be convinced that a creator or God is the source of order in the cosmos as opposed to something else. He claims that the source of order may exist within matter itself, just as it does within the creations of humans. In essence, he contends that since the universe differs greatly from human inventions, we cannot conclude it by drawing analogies between them and the universe as a whole.

3. Hume's analogy of the universe to a machine and presumption that it must also be constructed raise several issues. Secondly, he makes the case that people build machines because they are familiar with the materials and equipment required to do so. It is not certain that the cosmos was constructed like a machine, though, because we are unaware of the materials and tools that could have been used to make it. Second, Hume contends that because the universe is not a closed system and is always evolving, it differs greatly from a machine. Thus, it is weak to draw a comparison between the cosmos and a machine.