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Reading Questions - Lesson 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 the idea that everything in nature depends on something else for their existence. So if something is in motion it is moved by something else. The problem is that if we keep going down the line there are no more objects to move the next and so there must be a first mover that itself is not moved, and this is understood to be God. This is the same for cause and effect, there needs to be a first efficient cause to set in place the intermediate and final items, otherwise, the series dies and there is no beginning, middle, or end, and so we have God.

2) Infinite regress is a sequence of reasoning that never ends, which Aquinas writes as ad infinitum. Ad infinitum is Latin for to infinity and means again and again the same way, or forever. This is key in the Cosmological Argument because it is to say that if we go all the way back through history, motion, cause and effect, etc. we will always come to one key beginning, God. it also tells us that while going back we can’t find the beginning and so we must make something the beginning, and so we place God at the start.

3) The third proof talks about the possibility of existence and non-existence that can be in a single object. This is to say that if everything has the possibility to not exist at one point

then it would not exist at another. This is why God is believed to be the cause of necessity both within and without, meaning He created himself and the universe.

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

1) When Anselm says this he is saying that there is nothing greater than God. He says "... that than which a greater cannot be thought..." meaning that we can't think of something greater than God, therefore "... that than which nothing greater can be conceived". If we can't think of something greater than God then something can not be made greater than God.

2) Anselm believes that if we understand God to exist, it is because we understand God and in our understanding, God exists. Once granted that God exists, if only in understanding, God exists in reality. Anselm compares this to a painter seeing the picture he wants to paint and not yet putting it on canvas and then when the painting is complete.

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

1) The Teleological Argument is the idea that God exists in order, organization, and the design of nature. God exists in the way we all work like a machine. Such as a food chain, each plays its part so that the next may as well. All of the machines are designed to work in unison.

2) I think what Hume means is that similar to the way the human brain has lobes with different functions and they do so without needing to be told, the matter is the same. The matter may remember its arrangement or its place in the machine without having to be reconstructed.

3) Hume finds it difficult to believe that the machine on our planet would work the same on another. Each situation is different, our nature may be different. He also doesn't believe that the operations of a world constituted, arranged, adjusted, can be extended to a world that is still embryonic.