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Philosophy 101

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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) In your own words, explain the Cosmological Argument for God's existence in terms of motion and (similarly) cause and effect.

The study of cosmology has traditionally been considered a component of natural theology, which means that it provides proof for God's existence and explains why there can never be anything other than what is already in reality. As a topic associated with natural theology, cosmology has traditionally been viewed as a facet of natural theology. The result of this argument is that some people argue that there is evidence for the existence of God, while others say that there should be nothing beyond the things that already exist. This argument is believed to draw upon nature, religious philosophy, the universe, or a combination of these matter types to demonstrate God's existence. Nevertheless, there is still much controversy and disagreement surrounding the topic. Many proponents of the belief in God assert that we can derive this belief from reason, explanations, transformations, potentialities, and cosmic realities.

2) What does an "infinite regress" mean, and why is it so central to the Cosmological argument?

Infinite setbacks refer to a collection of elements that are all exactly related to one another. Still, there isn't a description of the last component where the previous element guides or creates the next in a certain way. In this way, we can consider an infinite regression argument as one that appeals to the concept of infinite regression.

3) How is the "third" of the five ways about the contingent existence of everything in the universe?

Aquinas believes that the third way to prove the existence of God is based on cosmology, which derives from the possibility that something exists and the need for it. A further reason why the philosophers of this religion have not shown much interest in

using model logic in their analysis of this religion is that religious philosophers need more good in incorporating logical reasoning into their investigation of this argument well. It is noteworthy that religious philosophers have made this observation. There is a distinction in the argument between possible and required beings, whereas viable beings are those that exist or do not exist.

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

1) Explain in your own words what Anselm means by a being "that than which nothing greater can be conceived".

Anselm's statement "that than which nothing greater can be conceived" refers to the concept of the perfect being. According to him, if we imagine the most excellent and most perfect being, we must also believe that this being exists in reality because, if it did not exist, then we wouldn't be able to imagine the most excellent and most perfect being that exists. Therefore, Anselm's philosophy was that God exists as the ultimate source of perfection and greatness that goes far beyond any other being or thing. Essentially, Anselm says that God is the pinnacle of excellence and perfection beyond anything we can imagine or conceive. Therefore, there is a being that is the perfect concept that exists. As a result of the existence of God, this reality is made possible. Neither God nor His presence depends on anything; He may live because it is necessary or illogical for Him to exist. As a result, God must exist, and as a result, He does exist.

2) On 346, what is Anselm's argument about why this greatest possible being *must* exist in reality, by its very nature?

In this sense, the most excellent possible being must exist in truth by its very nature to be considered the greatest. If it did not exist, then it would lack the attribute of existence necessary for it to be considered the greatest of all beings. This means that a being that exists in reality and possesses all these great attributes is of more excellent value than a being that only exists in the mind or the imagination. Anselm's argument is known as the ontological argument for God's existence. The argument of Anselm relates to the question of whether God exists or not. According to him, it is a self-evident truth that God is superior to all others in terms of greatness (in other words, a being that is perfect in every way possible).

Hume, "The Argument from Design", pp. 365-370 (this is Hume's criticism of the "Teleological Argument" for God's existence...64645)

1) Describe the Teleological Argument as presented on pages 365-366.

Teleological arguments attempt to demonstrate the existence of God by showing that nature's purposeful design serves as the basis of God's presence. A discussion of the Teleological Argument, also known as the Design Argument, can be found on pages 365 - 366 of the book. The central idea behind this Argument is relatively familiar to most people, regardless of whether they have ever encountered it before or not. Based on the vast amount of intricate details and designs in the world, we should expect a Creator behind it all. Much complexity and fact cannot be explained by chance alone. Depending on how each views the universe, they may perceive varying degrees of complexity and the purpose behind it. There are many explanations as to how it all came to be, some requiring evidence and logical reasoning while others do not. Some prefer straightforward answers without much thought, and others are influenced by their upbringing to explain things.

2) On 367, Hume, through Philo, states that for all we know, "matter may contain the source or spring of order originally within itself, as well as mind does". What do you think he means by this statement and the paragraph it's found in?

The point Hume makes from my perspective is that we can't determine the connection between two events, even if they coincide. In light of this understanding, he challenges the concept of Causation or Cause and Effect. Although we tend to believe that causes and effects are related, Hume contends that such a belief is irrational and irrelevant. Despite this, he acknowledges that we can observe a causal relationship between events based on the repeated observations that one event follows another. According to Hume, causality is one of our instincts rooted in our biological habits and cannot be questioned or disproved by logic alone. Despite this limitation, we can still operate under the assumption of Cause and Effect if we recognize our limitations. According to religion, the world works based on Cause and Effect; therefore, a First Cause, God, is necessary if the world is to function. The concept of Causation remains elusive in Hume's view; we cannot be confident that there is a First Cause or a place for a Supreme Being within our system.

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?

In his argument, Hume raises many concerns regarding analyzing the universe as if it were a machine and entertaining the idea that it was intentionally designed.

1. **The Challenge of Induction:** There is a process called induction in which general conclusions are drawn based on specific observations. There is always an inherent uncertainty associated with this method, even though it is crucial for empiricism and the scientific process, due to the possibility of new, exceptional data appearing that might contradict what we previously thought.
2. **The complexity of the universe does not necessarily imply design:** In Hume's view, simply because something is complex does not necessarily mean that it was designed with a deliberate purpose. An explanation for complex structures can be provided by natural processes such as evolution without invoking the existence of a God or an intelligent designer.
3. **The existence of evil and imperfection in the world contradicts a benevolent designer:** Does the question arise as to why there should be so much suffering, pain, and imperfect designs in nature if there were a god who is all-powerful and all-good? It suggests that either the designer is not all-good or not omnipotent.