

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 Cosmological Argument is a way of trying to prove that God exists. It is based on the idea that everything in the universe is in motion, and that motion must have been started by something or someone. The argument starts by asking the question, "Why is there motion in the universe?" According to Aquinas, there must be a first cause for everything in the universe, including motion. This first cause is God. Aquinas argues that everything that is in motion must have been put in motion by something else. For example, a ball rolling on the ground is in motion because someone or something (like a person kicking it) put it in motion. And that thing that put the ball in motion was also put in motion by something else, and so on. But this chain of causes and effects cannot go on forever. There must be a first cause, an uncaused cause, that started the chain of motion. And according to Aquinas, that first cause is God. So in summary, the Cosmological Argument states that since everything in the universe is in motion, there must be a first cause of that motion, and that first cause is God.

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

An "infinite regress" is a never-ending series of causes and effects. In other words, it's the idea that there is always a cause for something, which leads to another cause, and so on, with no end in sight. The Cosmological Argument relies on the idea that everything in the universe has a

cause. However, if we accept the idea of an infinite regress, then it would mean that there is no original cause or first cause, which would contradict the argument. If everything has a cause, and there is no first cause, then there must be an infinite chain of causes, which would make it impossible to explain why anything exists at all. To avoid this problem, the Cosmological Argument asserts that there must be a first cause, an uncaused cause, that started the chain of causes and effects. This first cause is what Aquinas and other philosophers and theologians refer to as God. In other words, the Cosmological Argument is an attempt to break out of the infinite regress problem by positing that there must be a point at which the chain of causes and effects begins, and that point is God.

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

The "third way" in the Five Ways argument is based on the concept of contingency, which means that things in the universe are dependent on other things for their existence. In other words, they could either exist or not exist, and they require something else to sustain them. Aquinas argued that everything we see in the world around us is contingent, meaning that it exists only because something else caused it to exist. For example, a tree exists because it was planted as a seed, and the seed existed because it was produced by another tree, and so on. But if everything in the universe is contingent, then there must have been a time when nothing existed, because there was nothing to cause anything else to exist. This means that everything in the universe is dependent on something else for its existence, and that there must be a necessary being that exists independently and is the cause of all other contingent beings. This necessary being is what Aquinas referred to as God. He argued that God is the only thing that is self-existent and doesn't

rely on anything else for its existence. Therefore, God is the ultimate cause of everything in the universe, and without God, nothing else would 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 was a medieval philosopher and theologian who believed in the existence of God. He came up with the concept of a being "that than which nothing greater can be conceived." This concept refers to the idea of an all-powerful, all-knowing, and perfect being that exists beyond our imagination. In other words, this being is the greatest conceivable being that we can think of, and nothing can surpass it. Anselm argued that if we can conceive of such a being, then it must exist. The reason for this is that something that exists in reality is greater than something that only exists in the imagination. Therefore, if we can imagine a being "that than which nothing greater can be conceived," then that being must exist in reality. Anselm's argument is known as the ontological argument for the existence of God. It is a philosophical argument that seeks to prove the existence of God based on the idea of a perfect being that exists beyond our imagination.

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

Anselm's argument for why the greatest possible being, which he refers to as "that than which nothing greater can be conceived," must exist in reality is known as the ontological argument. The argument is based on the idea that the concept of a perfect being includes the attribute of

existence. In other words, if we conceive of a being that has all possible perfections, then we must include existence as one of those perfections. Anselm argues that it is greater for something to exist in reality than to exist only in the mind. Therefore, if a being "that than which nothing greater can be conceived" only exists in the mind, then it is not the greatest possible being because a being that exists in reality would be greater. Therefore, if we can conceive of a being that has all possible perfections, including existence, then that being must exist in reality. Anselm concludes that this being is God. Critics of Anselm's argument argue that existence cannot be treated as a characteristic of an object, like other characteristics such as color or size. They also argue that just because we can conceive of something, it doesn't necessarily mean it exists in reality. Nevertheless, Anselm's ontological argument remains a prominent and influential philosophical argument for the existence of God.

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

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

David Hume was skeptical of the traditional arguments for the existence of God, including the Teleological Argument. The Teleological Argument, also known as the Argument from Design, is based on the idea that the natural world shows evidence of purposeful design, and that this design implies the existence of a designer (God). However, Hume argued against this argument by pointing out the limitations of human knowledge and experience. He argued that we cannot infer the existence of a designer just because we see order and purpose in the world. Hume

believed that the natural world could be explained through natural causes and natural laws, without the need to invoke a designer. He also argued that the analogy between the natural world and human-made artifacts was flawed, because we have direct experience of humans making artifacts, but we have no experience of a divine creator making the natural world. Overall, Hume's critique of the Teleological Argument was based on the idea that we cannot make inferences about supernatural entities based on our limited human experience and knowledge. Instead, we should focus on natural causes and laws to explain the world around us.

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?

When Hume, through Philo, states that "matter may contain the source or spring of order originally within itself, as well as mind does," he is suggesting that the order and organization we see in the natural world could have arisen from natural causes and without the intervention of a divine creator. In his critique of the Teleological Argument, Hume argues that the analogy between the natural world and human-made artifacts is flawed. Human-made artifacts are designed and created by humans, so it is reasonable to infer that they have a designer. However, the natural world is not created by humans, and we have no direct experience of a divine creator designing it. Philo's statement suggests that order and organization may be inherent in matter itself, rather than imposed by a divine creator. This idea challenges the assumption that the natural world requires a designer and opens up the possibility of a naturalistic explanation for the origin of life and the universe. Hume's argument is based on the idea that we cannot make inferences about supernatural entities based on our limited human experience and knowledge. Instead, we should focus on natural causes and laws to explain the world around us.

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?

David Hume presents several problems with the comparison of the universe to a machine and the assumption that it must also be designed. His points are as follows:

- Firstly, Hume argues that the analogy between the universe and a machine is flawed because we have no experience of the universe being created or designed by a human-like intelligence. We have direct experience of machines being created and designed by humans, but we have no such experience of the universe being created or designed by a divine creator.
- Secondly, Hume argues that the universe is not a perfect or flawless system, as we would expect from a machine designed by an all-powerful and all-knowing God. The existence of evil, suffering, and imperfection in the world suggest that the universe is not the product of a perfect designer.
- Thirdly, Hume points out that the idea of a designer leads to an infinite regress. If the universe requires a designer, then the designer itself must also require a designer, and so on. This creates an infinite regress of designers, which is an unsatisfactory explanation for the origin of the universe.
- Finally, Hume suggests that the universe may have arisen from natural causes and without the intervention of a divine creator. He argues that the order and organization we see in the natural world could have arisen from natural causes and without the need to invoke a designer.

Hume's critique of the argument from design challenges the assumption that the universe requires a designer and suggests that natural causes and laws may provide a better explanation for the origin of the universe.