

Outline the Cosmological Argument for the existence of God (28 marks)

The cosmological argument dates back from ancient Greece has been used over the centuries by various philosophers and theologians from, Aristotle and Plato to the medieval age of Thomas Aquinas. The key ideas derived from the cosmological arguments are that the universe and everything in it is dependant on something other than themselves for their existence. Thus attempting to justify the existence of God based on nothing could come from nothing therefore God must exist for everything to be there.

The first form of the cosmological argument was developed by the ancient Greek philosopher Plato in his book the 'Law' after examining differing types of motion in the universe from motion in space, motion occurring with changes of state and motion implied through growth and decay. Plato's paradigm was that there must be a first mover which began the motion process as motion has to first be produced which causes an object to be moved.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle idea was similar to that of Plato but Aristotle went on to further elaborate on what the first mover would actual be like. 'The series must start with something, for nothing can come from nothing'. Therefore things could not have always been moving as motion is based around time which means we have to refer to the cause. All events and motion lead back to a cause which also leads back to another cause ...etc. Aristotle suggests an eternal causer in other words God who must be necessary. As motion is not a necessary feature in the world there must be something outside the world not limited by time this must be an eternal being who is an uncaused- causer of everything in the world.

The most popular cosmological arguments for the existence were by Thomas Aquinas and wrote in his Five ways, set on the theory's of Aristotle Aquinas wrote three different forms of cosmological arguments based on the way the world is, why things are in the world and how they could be used as evidence to support the existence of God.

In Aquinas' first way he describes motion. He describes the motion in the world for something to be moving it requires something else moving to move it. As Aquinas was not a follower of the infinite regress the existence of motion in the universe made him consider where and how motion began. Thus suggesting that motion had a first mover and that first mover must be no one other than God.

Aquinas' second way was based analyses causes. Events are taken place in our universe because something else has caused them to happen as every event has a cause. It is impossible for anything to cause itself which means it would have already exist. The universe exists and it could not have caused itself because it would have had to exist prior to that; its existence caused Aquinas to consider what caused this it must have been God.

In Aquinas' third way he describes contingency. As things in our universe did not have to exist they could either be there not for example apples they could not on their own have come into existence. As the universe and everything within it could have not have existed Aquinas was led to think what had to exist for everything else to also exist. God was necessary in existence because as everything else in the universe is contingent meaning it is dependant on something that is necessary to exist which is God. Furthermore Aquinas concluded if there was no God than nothing would have ever existed.

The cosmological argument can be used by many to justify and proof the existence of God however it can backfire as for example with Aquinas' second way of causes. It is said everything has a cause it can be argued then 'shouldn't God have a cause'.