

What are the key ideas of the cosmological argument for the existence of God? (7)

Does God exist? This is an ultimate question as it has no definite answer. There are many theories and ideas that attempt to prove that there is a god, and that he is the creator. The cosmological argument is no exception as it too is concerned with finding an explanation for how the universe came about.

The argument is a posteriori, synthetic and inductive, this means that we do not learn any more from the conclusion than we already knew from the premises, and that the use of analytic terms means that we are using terms that have a clear and distinct meaning and cannot therefore be misinterpreted.

The cosmological argument is the argument that the existence of the world or universe is strong evidence for the existence of a God who created it. The existence of the universe, the argument claims, stands in need of explanation, and the only reasonable explanation for its existence is that God created it.

The cosmological and the teleological argument have looked to the universe and found that it is not self-explanatory, therefore many questions arise from this as to what is the origin, nature and purpose of the world. Also, why does the universe exist in the way that it does, and not in some other form?

The cosmological argument is not just a Christian theory. Plato and Aristotle both stated that a basis is needed for the cause of all things. There is also an Islamic form of the argument, which is known as the 'Kalam' argument. It proposes that whatever comes into being must have a cause, the universe came into being, therefore the universe must have a cause.

This principle claims that if something cannot be the cause of its own existence then it must have been caused by something else, and by something else and so forth. This chain can be said to be completed only when we arrive at a self-causing state.

Thomas Aquinas proposed the most famous Christian application of the cosmological argument. He stated five ways that proved the existence of God, the first three are cosmological arguments, the fourth is a form of ontological argument and the last one is a teleological argument.

Firstly, he uses the idea of motion and states that in this world, there are things that are in motion. Whatever is in motion must have been moved by something else that can be classed as the first or prime mover. Aquinas's argument was that his prime mover is God.

The second way is from cause. He stated that everything that exists must have a cause. There must have been a first cause that was not caused by anything else otherwise this process would go on for eternity. This first cause must be God.

The third way is from necessity and contingency. Contingent is something that is dependent upon something else and necessity, in this particular case is something that is independent and self causing. Aquinas said that everything that exists, at one time did not, and may not at some time in the future.

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However, at one time none of these things existed, but because "nothing can come from nothing" there must have been something whose existence was necessary. This being must be God.

In 1710, Leibniz explained the cosmological argument according to the principle of sufficient reasoning. He argued that why is there something rather than nothing? Every event must have a sufficient reason for its happening. Everything in the world requires a reason for its existence, as nothing happens without a reason. Everything in the world can be explained with relation to something else within the world. Therefore, the ultimate reason why there is something rather than nothing must come from outside the world, there must be a being able to create existence, which we call God.