

(b) Analyse the claim that the Cosmological Argument fails to prove the existence of God.

(20)

Plan: intro - Aquinas' 3 ways.

P1 - cosmological: argument from motion <sup>Leibniz principle of sufficient reason.</sup>

P2 - cosmological: causation and contingency

P3 - cosmological: problem of infinite regress

P4 - ontological Anselm

- design

The existence of God is a polemic debate that is discussed amongst scholars. One example is the Cosmological argument which will be the key focus of this essay and analyse the claim that it fails to prove the existence of God.

Aquinas' three ways from motion, causation and contingency create the foundations of the argument. Firstly, the argument from motion can be explained through the analogy of dominoes. There must be an external force applied to these dominoes to make them move. This is the argument that Aquinas uses considering the creation of the universe and he argues that there must be an unmoved prime mover that put all things into existence. Although, Hume has criticised this idea by suggesting that it could have all just happened by chance and why

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if there is a prime mover does this have to be God. Moreover, the inductive, a posteriori argument from Aquinas does suggest valid points that are weakened by criticism from Hume.

In addition, Aquinas' argument disregards the possibility of infinite regress because he believes it is impossible for there to be no finite point of beginning. This is supported by Leibniz' principle of sufficient reason that argues there must be a sufficient reason for everything and so the most probable reason for the universe is an intelligent designer namely God. But, some scholars instead present the reality of infinite regress being true and Russell argues that the universe is just a "brute fact" that has no explanation and one we do not need to go searching for ourselves as this would be meaningless.

The fallacy of composition is another significant criticism of the cosmological argument particularly the necessary proposition that jumps from the existence of ~~necessary~~ <sup>contingent</sup> beings to the reality of a necessary being. Coppleston uses the metaphor of chocolates that add up to infinity, making a comparison to the total of contingent beings adding



up to create the totality of the universe. Here, the assumption is made that a necessary being must have caused all things into being but this is questioned to be a jump and assertion that is made without <sup>sufficient</sup> evidence. Therefore, this agrees with the claim that the cosmological argument fails to prove the existence of God.

Whereas, there are other arguments that claim to prove the existence of God which can weaken the cosmological argument. For instance, the a priori deductive argument ~~is~~ found in Anselm's ontological argument attempts to logically prove the existence of God. The quote 'than that which nothing greater can be conceived' presents the definition for God that if he is the perfect being he must exist both in the mind and in reality. But, this argument is also criticised ~~as~~ by conveying it can be used to prove anything into existence. The example of Gaunilo's island depicts the idea that you can think of the greatest island in the intellect so then it must also exist in reality, which we know is not true. Moreover, Anselm replied to this making it clear that his argument is only relevant concerning necessary beings which links back



to the focus of the cosmological argument on contingent and necessary beings.

Overall, the cosmological argument provides a range of valid points to support the existence of God which have been criticised by scholars. So, this leads me to somewhat disagree with the claim because I do not believe the argument has failed and recognise its significance within the debate for the existence of God.





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(Total for Question 3 = 30 marks)

**TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 30 MARKS**

