7.5 The First Cause (Cosmological) Argument: 10-minute Pack

AQA 8062 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Whose 'Five Ways' include the First Cause, or cosmological, argument for God's existence?

- ☐ A: David Hume
- ☐ B: Bertrand Russell
- ☐ C: Thomas Aquinas
- ☐ D: Frederick Copleston

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 Give two features of Aquinas's Third Way, the argument from contingency.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

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3 Explain two ways a believer's acceptance of the First Cause argument might shape how they respond to the question of why anything exists at all.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

4 Explain two contrasting philosophical views about Aquinas's Third Way, the argument from contingency. Refer to a philosopher of religion in your answer.

(Total for Question 4 is 5 marks)

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Mark scheme · 7.5 The First Cause (Cosmological) Argument: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

selecting option C, Thomas Aquinas, cao **B1**

Answer: C

Question 2

it observes that everything in the universe is contingent, meaning it could have existed or not existed, and at some point did not exist, oe **B1**

it concludes there must be at least one necessary being, whose existence does not depend on anything else, to explain why anything contingent exists at all, oe **B1**

Answer: E.g. everything in the universe is contingent (it could have not existed); there must be a necessary being to explain why anything contingent exists.

Question 3

point 1: a believer might feel that the existence of a necessary, self-existent God gives a satisfying stopping point to the question, rather than the question remaining permanently unanswerable, oe **B1**

development: for example, when discussing the origin of the universe with a friend, a believer might present belief in a necessary first cause as a more complete answer than simply saying the universe 'just is', oe **B1**

point 2: a believer might see the universe's dependence on a first cause as a reason to treat all existence, including their own life, as a gift rather than something owed to them, oe **B1**

development: for example, this could encourage a sense of humility or gratitude that shapes how the believer approaches worship or daily reflection, oe **B1**

Answer: E.g. a satisfying stopping point to the question of why anything exists; seeing existence as a gift, encouraging gratitude and humility.

Question 4

view 1: Aquinas argued that since everything in the universe is contingent and at some time did not exist, if everything were contingent there would have been a time when nothing existed, and since nothing cannot cause something, nothing would exist now, oe **B1**

development: because things clearly do exist now, Aquinas concluded there must be at least one necessary being, which does not depend on anything else, and he identified this necessary being with God, oe **B1**

view 2: critics such as Hume question whether this reasoning is valid, arguing that even if every individual thing in the universe is contingent, it does not automatically follow that the universe as a whole, or the sequence of contingent things across time, needs a single necessary cause, oe **B1**

development: this mirrors Hume's fallacy of composition objection to the First and Second Ways, that what is true of each part is not necessarily true of the whole collection, oe **B1**

reference to a philosopher of religion made accurately, oe **B1**

Answer: Contrast: Aquinas's argument for a necessary being to explain contingent existence, vs a Hume-style doubt that the whole universe needs a single necessary cause even if its parts are contingent.

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