7.5 The First Cause (Cosmological) Argument: Test Pack

AQA 8062 · about 20 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 In the First Cause argument, which term describes something that depends on something else for its existence and could have not existed?

- ☐ A: Necessary
- ☐ B: Contingent
- ☒ C: Causation
- ☐ D: Infinite regress

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

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2 This question checks key vocabulary used in the First Cause argument.

(a) State what is meant by the cosmological argument. **(1)**

(b) State what is meant by causation, in the context of Aquinas's argument. **(1)**

(c) State what is meant by contingent. **(1)**

(d) State what is meant by a necessary being. **(1)**

(e) State what is meant by infinite regress. **(1)**

(Total for Question 2 is 5 marks)

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3 Give two reasons Aquinas gave for why the first cause itself does not need a further cause.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

4 Explain two contrasting philosophical views about whether the First Cause argument, even if successful, proves the existence of the God worshipped in religious belief. Refer to a philosopher of religion in your answer.

(Total for Question 4 is 5 marks)

5 Explain two ways belief in God as the 'uncaused cause' might affect how a believer thinks about the world today.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 7.5 The First Cause (Cosmological) Argument: Test Pack

Question 1

selecting option B, contingent, cao **B1**

Answer: B

Question 2

(a) an argument for God's existence based on the existence of the universe and the belief that it must have a cause, oe **B1**

(a) Answer: An argument for God's existence based on the belief that the universe must have a cause.

(b) the relationship between a cause and its effect, the idea that every effect results from a prior cause, oe **B1**

(b) Answer: The relationship between a cause and its effect; every effect results from a prior cause.

(c) dependent on something else for its existence; something that could have not existed, oe **B1**

(c) Answer: Dependent on something else for its existence; something that could have not existed.

(d) a being whose existence does not depend on anything else and cannot fail to exist, oe **B1**

(d) Answer: A being whose existence does not depend on anything else and cannot fail to exist.

(e) an endless series of causes or events with no first member, oe **B1**

(e) Answer: An endless series of causes or events with no first member.

Question 3

Aquinas argued the first cause is a necessary being, one that exists by its own nature and does not depend on anything else, unlike everything else in the causal chain, oe **B1**

only a being that is itself uncaused can bring the chain of causes to a stopping point, so an uncaused cause is required to avoid an infinite regress, oe **B1**

Answer: E.g. the first cause is a necessary being, existing by its own nature; only an uncaused cause can stop the chain and avoid an infinite regress.

Question 4

view 1: some argue that even if the argument successfully shows there is a first, uncaused cause, this alone does not prove that cause is personal, loving or aware of human beings, since the argument only establishes that something exists which is not itself caused, oe **B1**

development: this kind of criticism is associated with philosophers in the tradition of Hume, who questioned whether reason alone could establish the detailed, personal characteristics that religious believers attribute to God, oe **B1**

view 2: others argue that Aquinas himself did not see the Five Ways as standing alone, but as a first step that, alongside scripture and religious experience, supports belief in the fuller, personal God of Christian faith, oe **B1**

development: on this view, the argument is not meant to prove every religious belief about God by reason alone, but to show that belief in a necessary first cause is rational, which can then be developed through faith into fuller religious belief, oe **B1**

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

Answer: Contrast: the argument alone does not prove a personal, loving God (a Hume-style critique) vs Aquinas treating the Five Ways as one rational step toward, not the whole of, belief in the fuller God of faith.

Question 5

point 1: a believer might feel a sense of dependence and gratitude towards God, seeing their own existence, and that of the whole universe, as reliant on God for its being, oe **B1**

development: e.g. this might be expressed through prayers of thanksgiving or worship that acknowledge God as creator and sustainer of all things, oe **B1**

point 2: a believer might find in this argument a rational basis for religious commitment, seeing philosophy and reason as supporting, rather than conflicting with, their faith, oe **B1**

development: e.g. some believers use natural theology arguments like this one when discussing faith with sceptics, as evidence that belief in God need not rest on faith alone, oe **B1**

Answer: E.g. a sense of dependence/gratitude expressed in worship; a rational basis for faith used in discussion with sceptics.

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