



David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

Cosmological Argument

4 messages

David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>
 To: "Edward N. Zalta" <zalta@stanford.edu>
 Cc: staff@rutherford.org

Wed, Dec 14, 2016 at 8:05 AM

Dear Dr. Zalta,

I've been corresponding with Helen De Cruz about her proposed entry on science and religion. You should be particularly interested in my criticism of the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy's entry about the existence of God:

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/cosmological-argument/>

which is here in the first paragraph:

<http://www.newevangelization.info/helen-cruz/cruz.html>

The reasons you should be interested is that my criticism of your article, I kid you not, a legal matter in New York State.

What happened is that I offered to give a lesson/lecture on the "cosmological-argument" to the University Chaplain of Columbia University, which supervises about a dozen other campus clubs. Columbia University is committed to the principles of academic freedom. In my opinion, academic freedom is rooted in the drive human beings have to know and understand everything. Civil liberties, on the other hand, are rooted in our freedom of will.

The University Minister declined my offer, and I complained to the National Association of Scholars that Columbia U. is violating the academic freedom of its students and faculty. The President of the NAS said this is not true because the University Chaplain knows all about the "cosmological-argument" and does not need my help. My correspondence with the NAS is here

<http://www.newevangelist.me/>

You might think that this would be the end of the matter. However, it was not for two reasons: 1) The NAS misconstrued the content of what I was going to explain the the students and faculty of Columbia. 2) The University Chaplain did not herself respond to my email. Instead, the General Counsel of Columbia U. sent me a letter threatening me with legal action if I contacted any students or faculty of Columbia about the arguments for God's existence. I filed an ethics complaint against the General Counsel on October 18, 2016, with the New York State Unified Court System.

My ideas about the arguments for God's existence are here:

https://www.academia.edu/23340072/WHY_PEOPLE_BELIEVE_GOD_CAUSED_THE_BIG_BANG

Very truly yours,
 David Roemer
 347-414-2285

Edward N. Zalta <zalta@stanford.edu>
 To: David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

Wed, Dec 14, 2016 at 8:58 PM

Dear David,

Your message has been forwarded to "editors@plato.stanford.edu", which is where we handle email concerning the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. It will be answered there in the order received. (At present, I am traveling, and so some one else may respond.)

All the best,
 Yours,
 Ed

 Edward N. Zalta <http://mally.stanford.edu/zalta.html>

Senior Research Scholar
 CSLI/Cordura Hall zalta@mally.stanford.edu
 Stanford University ph. 650-723-0488
 Stanford, CA 94305-4115 fx. 650-725-2166

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Stanford Encyclopedia Editors <editors@plato.stanford.edu>
 To: David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

Fri, Dec 16, 2016 at 8:31 AM

B1;95;0cDear David,

Thanks for your message. We take critiques of SEP entries seriously -- especially if there are claims about the errors of fact (or of omission) or claims about violations of SEP guidelines seriously. At present, however, we don't know exactly which passages you find problematic. From a quick read of your linked page, it seems like you think there ought to be some citation of Etienne Gilson's work and possibly Alan Bennett's work. But for us to proceed, there is a certain protocol that we have to follow. Please send us a bulleted list, with a bullet point for each specific error of fact or omission. For each bullet point, you will need to:

- * indicate the section of the article in which the problem lies,
- * quote the sentence or sentences in the entry which you believe to be in error or which fail, by omission, to represent the facts, and
- * present your case, with documentation, as to why the sentences are in error or fail to comply with SEP guidelines:
 - For errors of fact, the documentation has to be citations to the primary or secondary literature that we can actually get ahold of and examine.
 - For problems of omission, we'll need documentation of specific facts or arguments omitted along with an explanation of why they should be included.
 - For failures to comply with SEP guidelines, please cite the guideline listed at <http://plato.stanford.edu/guidelines.html>

Once you send us your bulleted list, my office will inspect your points and determine whether the evidence you present merits a further investigation. If you've presented a solid prima facie case, we'll raise the matter either with the author or with the subject editors, depending on the nature of the problems you raise.

I trust you can understand that we can't simply present general observations to our authors and ask them to make changes, but rather have to identify specific, evidence-based problems with their entries. If you document the problems, we'll certainly investigate.

All the best,
 Yours,
 Uri

 Uri Nodelman
 Senior Editor, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
 Center for the Study of Language and Information
 Stanford University | Stanford, CA 94305-4115

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David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>
 To: Stanford Encyclopedia Editors <editors@plato.stanford.edu>

Fri, Dec 16, 2016 at 10:15 AM

Dear Uri,

I'm delighted to get your email. I just got up to the fifth paragraph of the Historical Overview of the entry and thought it would be helpful to show you what I have written so far. My reference will be "The One and the Many" by Norris Clarke, S.J., who was my metaphysics teacher at Fordham. I have this volume in another apartment and won't be able to get it until next week.

Cosmological Argument

"Among these initial facts are that particular beings or events in the universe are causally dependent or contingent, that the universe (as the totality of contingent things) is contingent in that it could have been other than it is, that the Big Conjunctive Contingent Fact possibly has an explanation, or that the universe came into being. From these facts philosophers infer deductively, inductively, or abductively by inference to the best explanation that a first or sustaining cause, a necessary being, an unmoved mover, or a personal being (God) exists that caused and/or sustains the universe."

The important "initial fact" relevant to God's existence, that is not mentioned in the article, is that human beings have free will and the conscious knowledge of human beings as opposed to the sense knowledge of animals. The sense knowledge of animals is a scientific observation, but our knowledge of human free will and conscious knowledge arises from our ability to make ourselves the subject of our own knowledge.

"On the one hand, the argument arises from human curiosity as to why there is something rather than nothing or than something else."

This question does not arise from "human curiosity." It comes from Martin Heidegger who did his work before Etienne Gilson and who was a Nazi sympathizer. The observation that leads to God's existence is that other human beings exist. This means human beings are finite beings. Human curiosity produces the questions: "What causes finite beings to exist?" "What is a human being."

Historical Overview

"Both theists and nontheists in the last part of the 20th century and the first part of the 21st century generally have shown a healthy skepticism about the argument."

There are in fact two arguments for God's existence that are called the "cosmological argument." (Reference: "One and the Many," by Norris Clarke, S.J.) What this article is discussing is the "first cause" argument by Thomas Aquinas or the argument from design. In my opinion, this argument does not deserve even "healthy skepticism" because it is patently absurd. It is succinctly refuted by saying, "What caused God?" and "Who Designed the Designer?" In the following article, I suggest a psychological theory explaining why people find the argument persuasive:

https://www.academia.edu/23340072/WHY_PEOPLE_BELIEVE_GOD_CAUSED_THE_BIG_BANG

The other cosmological argument is the one that makes sense: Finite beings exist. Finite beings need a cause. Hence, and infinite being exists. The above article explains this in more detail. This argument comes from the metaphysics of Aquinas as brought out by Etienne Gilson in the 1920s.

Very truly yours,
David Roemer
347-414-2285

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