

Examine the design argument for the existence of God.

What are the strengths of the design argument?

Comment on some of the criticisms raised against the design argument.

A Design argument is “a posteriori” as it is based on external evidence. The universe itself has order and regularity and the complexity of it shows evidence of the Design. That Designer has a Designer and so on till we get to the ‘original’ designer who is “God”.

The Teleological argument has two sides one of which is called the Analogical. These are arguments based on analogy that some objects are bound to be similar in some ways but different in others. For instance a sparrow is very different from a car, but both are similar in that they both move. The other type of argument is Abductive arguments; these begin with evidence that needs explaining and conclude with the best explanation for this evidence.

St. Thomas Aquinas came up with the Five ways to prove the existence of God. 1) Motion; 2) Causation; 3) Contingency; 4) Goodness; 5) Design. The First way is the argument from Motion; this means that there is something moving and that movement is caused by something that is making it moving. These movements however cannot be traced all the way back; therefore its first mover is God (the unmoved mover). The second way is the argument of Causation; this deals with the issues of existence. Aquinas argues that there must be an Uncaused Causer (God) who began the chain of existence. It explains that nothing can be the cause of itself, and we cannot create an endless string of objects causing other objects to exist. The third way is Contingency, a contingent being cannot exist without a necessary being, being able to create it. Aquinas believed that the existence of contingent beings would ultimately necessitate a being which must exist for all of the contingent beings to exist. The necessary being in this is God. The fourth way is Goodness; Thomas Aquinas formulated this idea from observation of interesting objects and qualities of things. For instance if we saw two paintings we could say that one is more beautiful than the other. So we could say that one has a higher degree of beauty than the other. For Aquinas this meant this could be used for any quality, such as beauty, knowledge, intelligence etc and there must be a perfect standard set for all these qualities. And that perfection is God. The fifth and final way is that of Design, St. Thomas Aquinas speaks of the observable universe and the order of nature. Aquinas states that common sense tells us the universe works in such a way, that one can conclude that was designed by an intelligent designer, God. In other words, all physical laws and the order of nature and life were designed and ordered by God, the intelligent designer.

William Paley argued from the point Qua Purpose. For instance if we saw a stone we would think nothing of it, and would not think it had a special design. However

if we saw a watch we could see all the intricate details and knobs that had made the watch. We would see that the watch hadn't just happened to come into existence we would see that someone has designed it. In the same way we look at the design of the world we can see that it has a specific design by the way it all fits together for a purpose. The 'designing creator' for him was also God. Scientists also see that the universe works as a machine. It is affected by the result of one movement, which leads to another movement and so on. Another of Paley's example is that of the eye and the way it is adapted for sight. Its different parts work together in complex ways to create our sight. He believes the eye is designed for a specific purpose of seeing so this specific purpose suggests an intelligent designer.

Evidence such as this could be the result of the designing creator, for Paley, 'God'. The second part of Paley's argument for the existence of God is Qua Regularity based on Newton's laws of motion and gravity. He points out the solar system and the way the planets keep their rotation due to the force of gravity. He says that this could not have happened by chance, and that there must be an external force coming from beyond the world. That external force is God.

A person who firmly disagrees with these arguments is of course David Hume. He argues as to why humans have knowledge and experience of the world to conclude that there is only one designer, humans only have knowledge of the things they themselves create and design. He also believes that the world is like a vegetable, that grows of its own accord rather than something made by God.

The Anthropic principle is the recent development of the teleological argument. This argument doesn't think that there is a chain of coincidences that has led to evolution on the planet and humans. It believes that the world has a designer, which is God. E.R Tennant developed the Anthropic principle in his book Philosophical Teleology. He believed in three types of natural evidence in the world that pointed in the favour of the designer. "1. The fact that the world can be analysed in a rational manner. 2. The way in which the inorganic world has provided the basic necessities required for maintaining life and thirdly the progress of evolution towards human intelligence."

Tennant's other part of the argument is referred to as the Aesthetic argument. This is where the universe appears to be on beautiful levels to prove God's existence.