

Outline and explain two criticisms of the teleological argument

The word teleology comes from the Greek word telos which means 'an account of' and originally meant the final ends, but now takes the meaning that everything has a purpose and a goal. The teleological argument attempts to establish the existence of God relevant to the observations of order and purpose in the universe, the teleological argument is also referred to as the argument from design as it takes the view point that there is evidence for the God, the designer. Although as Antony Flew had discovered that really it is an argument to design where as an argument from design infers that it argues from the premise that the world had been designed which petition principi, assumes what it is trying to prove.

William Paley's argument from analogy begins with him imagining himself kicking a stone whilst walking, and then later finding a watch; he asks the same question of 'how did that object come to be here?'. Paley can accept that the stone may have been there forever, but the watch which is a man-made object surely could not have been there forever, therefore there must be something about the presence of the watch which requires further explanation. Paley notes down the differences between the watch and the stone, he discovers that the watch has means, ends and adaptation as it is able to tell the time; the watch has a specific shape with hands which move around and the overall mechanism means you have to conclude that it is designed for a particular purpose, to think that it came around by chance is spurious that all the cogs and battery and hands fell into place and served the purpose of a watch. This leads Paley to believe that there must be some sort of design of the watch due to its complexity; the watch is evidence of what Paley terms 'contrivance' which is to say there is a design, and therefore there must be a designer or contriver. Paley then notes the complexity of the watch and compares it to the natural world and realises that everything in the natural world indicates that there is a design, such as the human design. Paley then concludes that the universe which is like the watch had been designed, but by a wondrous universe maker, God.

David Hume states that we can only recognise that there is a designer of certain objects such as machines as we have an experience of the object being designed and created. Like the watch we have experience of the creation with cogs and all the necessary parts of a watch that we have come to know that they require a designer, but if we had never had any experience of the creation or design of the watch, we would not know that there is a designer. Hume relates this to the universe; he states that as we have not had any experience of the creation of the universe, it is spurious to say that there is a designer or that the universe has even been made as we have had absolutely no experience of the creation of the universe, nobody has experienced the creation of the earth, so how is it possible they can assume that it has been created and designed if they have no experience of the designer or the creation of the earth. Hume also observes that if the designer is responsible for this world, 'it must be the work of an infant deity on one of his first attempts, as there are so many mistakes' This is due prima facie it is not the work of a perfect being, because if the creator was perfect, then how is it possible that there are extinct animals.

As the teleological argument is an argument from analogy, Hume argues that analogous elements are weak. Hume argues that the universe itself is not remotely like a machine but it resembles something organic rather than mechanical; the universe is much more like a human or a blade of grass than something that an organic object has created as the visible function and purpose of the universe is due more to 'generation or vegetation than to reason or design'. As a vegetable does not have a designer, and its organisation seems to just grow as a natural process we are not able to suppose that the universe is designed; the universe could possibly have just grown. This seems absurd, but it is how Hume conveys that it is ridiculous to compare the universe to a machine. The analogous argument is flawed as for it to be reliable the two things that are to be compared need to be similar in relevant ways. Paley falls at this point as he attempts to compare two things, one which is a man-

made object and the universe which are totally dissimilar and therefore Paley cannot conclude that on the basis of analogy with a machine that the universe has a designer.