

### Explain and illustrate two criticisms of the claims that the universe shows design

Many philosophers have suggested that world shows design to the extent that there can be no other conclusion other than there is a God who created it. This argument has come to be known as the teleological argument (from the Greek 'telos' meaning 'purpose'). The argument is an inductive one, a posterior (knowledge gained from experience) and is put forward to prove the existence of God. Design can refer to qua regularity and qua purpose. The former focuses on order and regularity in the world and the latter focuses on purpose and beauty but does this hold up to scrutiny?

One criticism was put forward by Hume in his Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion says that there is no evidence for order in the world. In fact the evidence given seems to suggest an evil creator; the arbitrary destruction in the world that affects everyone included innocents seems to suggest that there is no design or order in the world. Tsunamis, hurricanes and earthquakes can all be cited in Hume's attack. This is made even more apparent from the fact that modern physics isn't as ordered as the predominant supporter of the design argument, William Paley. Paley gave examples such as the planets and seasons and even gives backing from science saying that Newton's laws govern the very body of nature. However this has been proved to be wrong by Princeton University and their study called 'The Dome', the study in itself shows that Newton's law's are non-deterministic meaning that a ball can drop from any apex (as did in the experiment) without a cause. This shows that even science isn't ordered as Paley made out.

Another criticism is which is also put forward by Hume is that Paley's argument (that there is, indeed, design in the world) is that this is a disanalogy. Paley gave the example of watch stating that it had purpose (it could tell us the time), regularity (evident through second, hour and minute hand) and design (the mechanisms) and he claims that this is analogous to the world. However this is a clear disanalogy according to Hume; for we have experience of watches and we know that they have designers and thus know that they must be designed, we can not however say the same for the universe, as we only have one and we are contained within it. If we were transcendent and had access to more than one universe or even if we had witnessed them being designed we may have been able to accept Paley's claims. Hume also says that it's not analogous because a watch's purpose is axiomatic but this is unlike the universe where it is subjective. For a Christian, the purpose of life is to create a relationship with God so that they can be eschatologically reunited and the universe allows this (it's purpose) however a humanist would say that the universe has no purpose and that we are here to live our lives to the full. Thus Paley's claims are left redundant.

To conclude, these two criticisms have shown that there is question as to whether there is design in the world. Hume has shown that design qua (in relation to) purpose and regularity are merely positions which are nothing more than falsities.

### Explain and illustrate two claims that God's existence is incompatible with the existence of evil

Evil has come to pose one of the single largest threats to theism, indeed, many such as John Stuart Mill and David Hume concluded that God no longer existed because of the existence and the incompatibility of it. Evil has been defined to be the "absence of good" by Aristotle but it mainly refers to two types, either natural evil which entails natural disasters such as tsunamis or moral which refers to morally wrong actions and intents taken by humans such as infanticide or examples such as the Holocaust. Some try to reconcile the ideas of evil and God (in what has come to be known as theodicies) but it is questionable whether they have succeeded.

Hume puts the first criticism forward which is known as the logical problem of evil, a deductive argument, by first reissuing the statements as a theist would accept them;

1. God is omnipotent. Omniscient and omnibenevolent
2. Evil (and thus suffering exist)

Hume claims that the one and two are incompatible. For if he loved us then he would stop suffering and thus he can not be omnibenevolent. Hume developed his argument through

his 'inconsistent triad' which states that God is either unable to stop evil which means he is not omnipotent; that he does not know about the evil which means he is not omniscient. This leads us to the conclusion that God's existence is logically incompatible with the existence of evil and Hume to say that one of the sides of triangle (attributes of God, considering that evil objectively exists) and so Hume says that it is the "death" of classical theism.

The answer to this could be that evil exists so that we can allow us to spiritually grow, for it is true that we can not become courageous unless an instance of danger arises, similarly we can not gain compassion without suffering. So the criticism is solved through God wanting us to experience suffering so we can go through a process of soulmaking (this marks the basis for Iraneus' theodicy).

However this leads to the second criticism which is predominantly put forward by William Rowe, Charles Darwin and David Hume says that even if we were to accept that evil should exist and it is compatible, the sheer amount and the distribution of it shows that the existence of God and evil is less probable. This inductive argument cites points in history that show that the distribution doesn't seem to amount justification for soul-making; it can accept the death of an adult, but what of the Gulag and Holocaust? Rowe also notes that there are evils which do not lead to spiritual growth such as people who never recover such as child who has had his whole family burned. Rowe also gives the example of a fawn who burns in a forest but no one is around to see it, who is growing spiritually, what compassion has been encompassed? This anthropocentric approach (by implication) also fails because it leaves animal suffering unanswered.

Thus, the view that evil and God's existence is compatible is made redundant not only in the face of the incompatibility of God's very nature and the existence of evil but the sheer amount and distribution of it.