

Arguments for the Existence of God (1) - Paper 1 Sect A



Arguments for the existence of God (1)

Paley puts forward his version of the design argument in response to Hume's criticism of Aquinas' argument. He draws an analogy using a watch. Both the watch and the world show purpose and design, which would not occur accidentally. The watch has been designed to work towards an end and needs a designer. In the same way, Paley argues that the world all works together towards the end of existence of humans and, therefore, needs a designer.

Aguinas' fifth way is a form of the design argument in which he argues that everything, seems to work towards an 'end'. Because these objects cannot achieve this 'best result' by themselves, they must be guided to it by an intelligent being, just as 'the arrow is directed by the archer'. This order in the world cannot be self-explanatory - something that 'locks intelligence' cannot act 'with... intelligence'. Therefore, the explanation for this working towards a particular 'end' must be explained by something else controlling it which does have intelligence. This intelligent being is, of course, God.

Background to the Design Argument: Aquinas' Argument The design argument uses inductive reasoning. Inductive reasoning is a form of proof or conclusion based on previous experience. It is reasoning based on premises which do not necessarily prove the conclusion. One can accept the premises as true without having to agree with the conclusion. This is the opposite of deductive reasoning, whereby if you accept the premises (which obviously you don't have to), then the conclusion is necessarily true.

Paley's Argument

The Design Argument

The design and cosmological arguments are a posteriori because they rely on experience of the world and perception and interpretation of the design within it. This means they have an empirical basis - they are based on evidence drawn from the world using the five senses.



Hume's critique of Aguinas' Fifth Way has six main points:

- 1. Causal fallacy
- 2. Weak analogy
- 3. Unknown cause, not designer
- 4. Based on part, not whole
- 5. Could point to a designer, but tells us nothing about him or her or it
- 6. Anthropomorphism

Strengths of the Design Argument

Hume's Critique

particular purpose in mind, e.g. a watch and a watchmaker, a toy and a factory worker. Premise 2: The world looks as though it has been designed for a particular purpose because it works so well and has many intricate, complex parts.

The design argument is based on the following inductive premises reasoning:

Premise 1: Man-made things in the world have been created by a designer with a

In conclusion, the world must have had a designer. This designer must have been God. Therefore, God exists.

It is an inductive argument, which means that it is based on observation, which appeals to the human ability to observe. Paley's analogy is userfriendly; it makes sense and is easy to understand. It fits well with human concepts of purpose for life and for the universe - it seems inconceivable that this vast, complicated universe could be the result of random chaos.

A posteriori

Reasoning based on experience of the empirical world.

An attribute or quality of something that can be possessed or lacked, e.g. a zebra's stripes.



Arguments for the Existence of God (2) - Paper 1 Sect A



Arguments for the existence of God (2)

- Logically works albeit in a vacuum.
- · The conclusion satisfies the logic of the premises.
- Does not require empirical evidence to support it, so avoids the issues which can be associated with the fallibility of empirical evidence.

Strengths of the Ontological Argument The Ontological Argument

Anselm's Form of

the Argument

Critiques of the Ontological Argument

Conclusion: God exists. Anselm is also using a priori reasoning and

He used deductive reasoning. He sets out two premises which, if true,

Anselm of Canterbury first put toward this argument.

God is the greatest conceivable being in the mind

To be the greatest conceivable being, God must

make the conclusion logically necessary:

presents the idea of God as being ascetic.

(in intellectu).

exist in reality (in re).

A form of reasoning which is independent of experience through reason alone.

A priori

Is God omnipotent?

Immanuel Kant:

- Rejects the argument as it treats existence as a predicate.
- Knowing something exists tells us nothing about the thing.
- Non-existence of God is also conceivable.

Would God be a greater being if he were omnipotent rather than if he were not?

Yes God is

omnipotent.

God is NOT omnipotent.

No

Gaunilo:

- Applies Anselm's logic to other things in order to highlight what he viewed as the flaws.
- · In his reply, 'On Behalf of the Fool', he tries to highlight the false reasoning in Anselm's argument by applying the reasoning to other objects (apart from God) which clearly do not exist.
- · For example, if you wish to prove the existence of unicorns, you cannot simply think a lot about what unicorns must be like.
- In this text he specifically uses the example of a perfect Island.
- · Overall, Gaunilo is arguing that there needs to be some kind of empirical proof that the island (and God) exists.
- He concludes that it is not possible to give a definition of the island and from this definition alone decide that God exists.



Arguments for the Existence of God (3) - Paper 1 Sect A



Arguments for the existence of God (3)

On a logical level, the cosmological argument works. The logic fits with our observation of the world.

It fits with current scientific beliefs about the universe, e.g. that it has not always been, but has had a beginning point (i.e. the Big Bang).



Thomas Aguinas presents his Five Ways of God's Existence in his Summa Theologica. Three of these are cosmological.

For the sake of this course, the third way is considered the most important.

Third Way - Argument from Possibility (Contingency) and

The world is made up of contingent beings. There has to be a necessary being which was able to create contingent beings. Only the existence of a necessary being can explain the existence of the contingent beings which we see all around us. This necessary being is God.

First Way - Argument from Motion

Things are in motion and can't move themselves. This forms a chain of 'moved' and 'moving'. This cannot go back forever (infinite regress). There must be an unmoved mover. This is God.

Second Way - Argument from **Efficient Cause**

Everything has a cause as things cannot be self-causing. There must be a necessary, ultimate cause. This is God.

Strengths of the Cosmological Argument

The Cosmological Argument



- The logic used in the cosmological argument means that God must have a cause (which contradicts the idea of necessary
- It is possible that the world could always have existed and, therefore, not have a cause.
- Russell argues that there is no such thing as a necessary being.
- He argues that a whole explanation is not necessary to explain the cause of the world and a partial explanation is satisfactory.
- The universe just is it is a brute fact.



Hume's critique of the cosmological argument has four key points:

- 1. Rejects necessary existence.
- 2. We cannot assume empirically that everything
- 3. The world by this theory could be necessary, not
- 4. Just because parts of the world appear caused, it does not mean the whole world is.



Brute fact

Something that cannot be explained or has no cause.

Something which can create a chain of cause and effect, without being caused itself. The idea is rooted in the thought of Aristotle and is commonly thought to be God.

Infinite regress

A chain of cause and effect that continues forever.

Necessary existence

A being which cannot be conceived of as not existing and was not brought into being by anything else.

Contingent existence

A being or entity which depends on something else for its existence and can be conceived of as not existing.