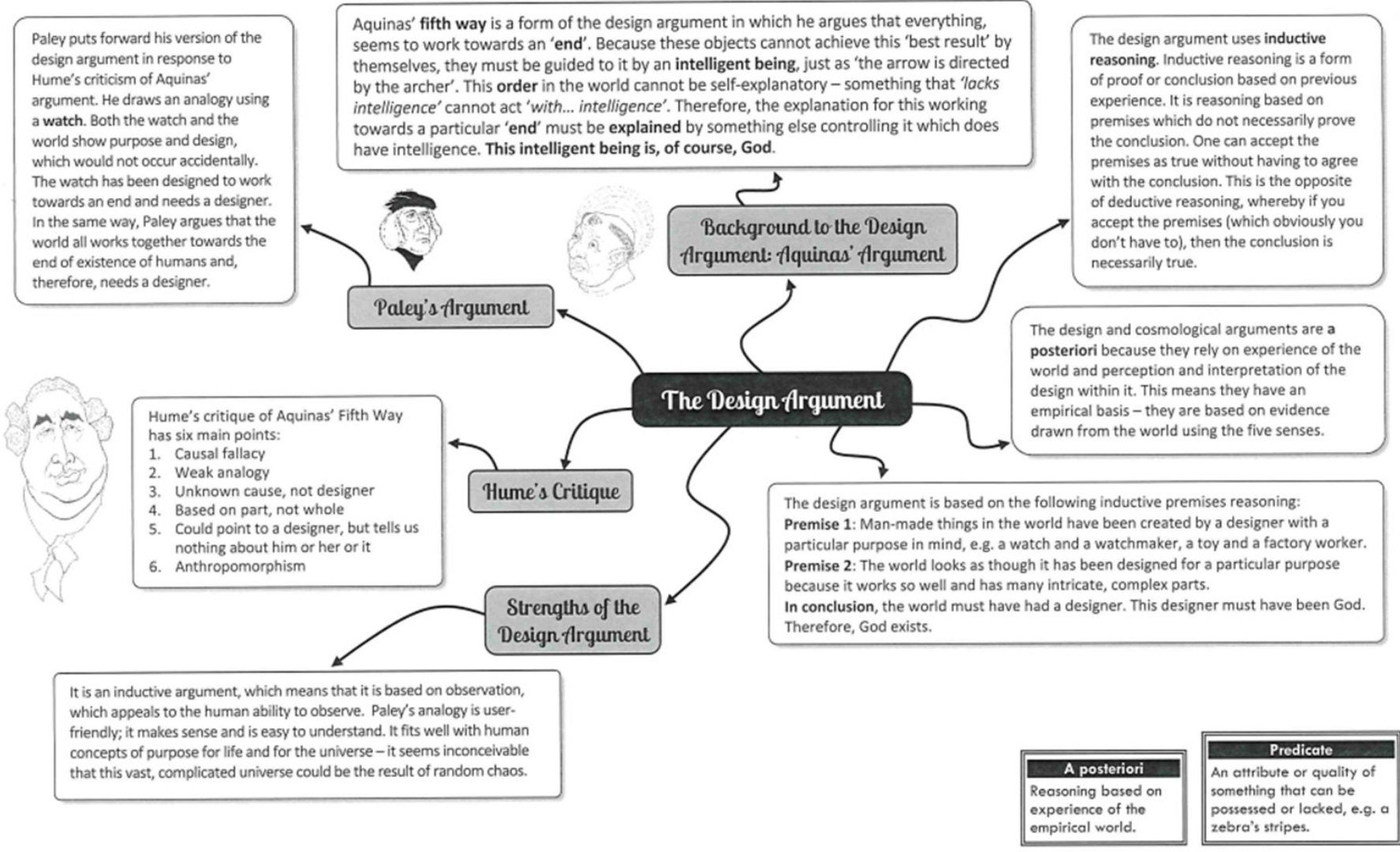


Arguments for the Existence of God (1) - Paper 1 Sect A

Arguments for the existence of God (1)

1a

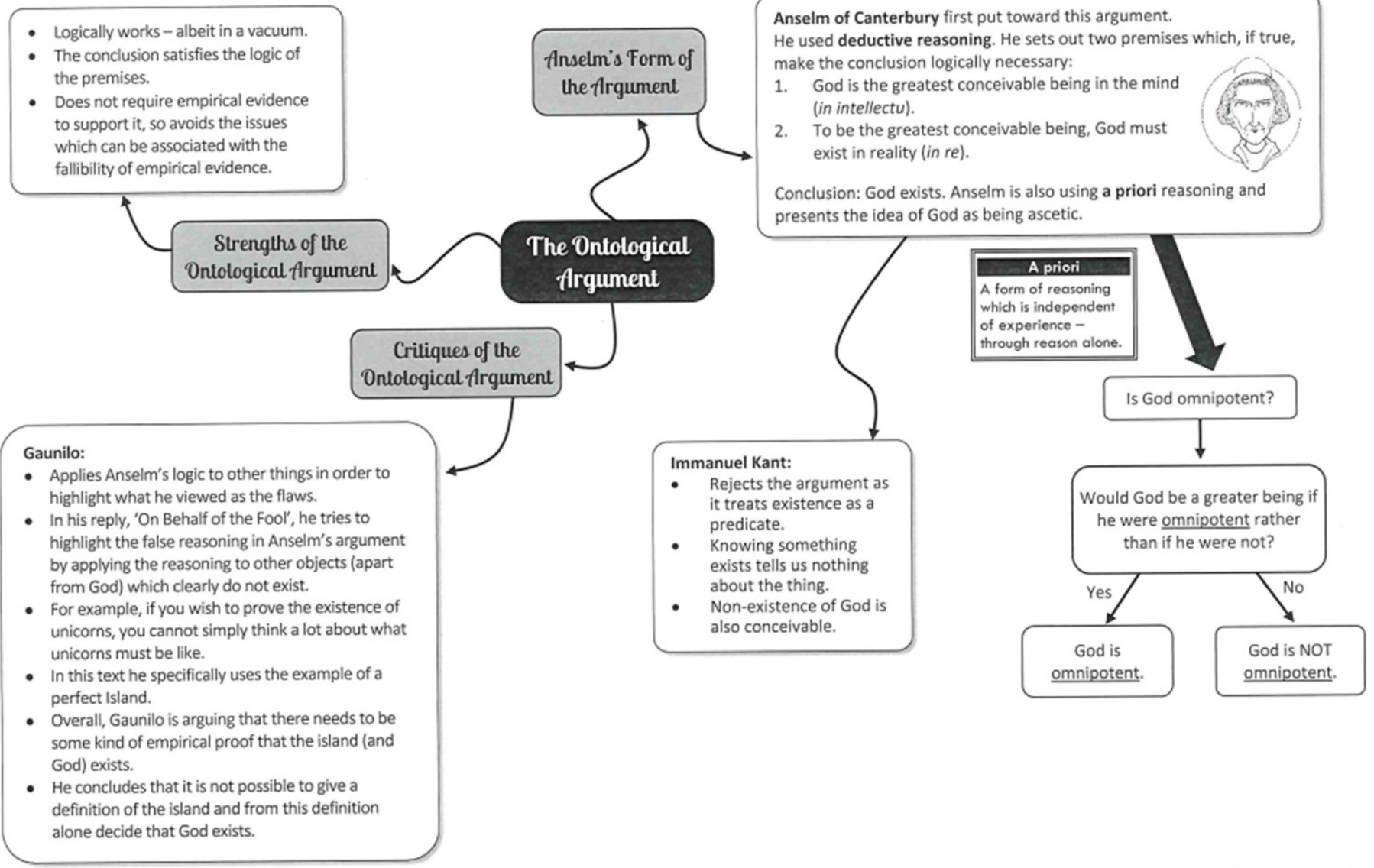


A posteriori
Reasoning based on experience of the empirical world.

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

1b

Arguments for the existence of God (2)



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

Arguments for the existence of God (3)

1c

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 Aquinas 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 Necessity

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

Critiques of the Cosmological Argument



Bertrand Russell:

- The logic used in the cosmological argument means that **God must have a cause** (which contradicts the idea of necessary existence).
- 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 has a cause.
3. The world by this theory could be necessary, not needing God.
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.

First 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.