

Teleological (Design) Argument

<u>Sub-topics</u> • The types of reasoning offered by the argument: inductive, a posteriori, synthetic. • Why is the universe the way that it is? Interpretation of experience. • The role of analogy: Paley’s Watch, and the argument from purpose and from regularity. Aquinas’ Fifth Way. • The cumulative effect of evidence: Swinburne’s argument from probability. • Interpretation of the universe: regularities of co-presence and regularities of succession. • The Anthropic Principle as the best explanation for the way that the universe is. • Weakness of the design argument: alternative explanations, including evolution and deism. • David Hume’s criticisms of the design argument.	<u>Key words</u> <u>Inductive reasoning:</u> Inductive arguments provide probable support for their conclusion: if the premises are true, the conclusion is probably true. <u>Deductive reasoning:</u> In deductive arguments, the premises offer logical support for the conclusion: if the premises are true, the conclusion is necessarily true. <u>A posteriori:</u> Based on sense-experience, the evidence of our senses. <u>Necessary truth:</u> A proposition that cannot be false under any circumstances. Analytic proposition: a proposition that is true or false by virtue of meaning. The predicate is contained within the concept of the subject. <u>Synthetic proposition:</u> A proposition the truth of which depends on factors other than the meanings of the terms used; it has to be tested through observations of the world. <u>Predicate:</u> A property, quality or attribute that is affirmed of a subject. <u>Analogy:</u> A comparison between two things or ideas with similar features, usually used to explain the less familiar idea. <u>Anthropic principle:</u> the argument that the reason and purpose of the universe is to support human life. <u>Abductive argument:</u> Reasoning that seeks to produce a hypothesis from an observation using the simplest and most likely explanation- the best explanation. <u>Telos:</u> the end of the purpose of a thing.	<u>Key scholars</u> Thomas Aquinas. William Paley. David Hume. Richard Swinburne. F.R. Tennant. David Hume. Charles Darwin.
<u>Possible H/WK/Questions</u> <u>8 mark</u> Explore ideas about inductive reasoning in the design argument for the existence of God. Explore the key challenges to the design argument for the existence of God. Explore the key ideas of William Paley in relation to the design argument for the existence of God. Explore the key ideas of the anthropic principle in relation to the design argument for the existence of God.	<u>Starting point- Important key facts</u> - The teleological argument is an ‘a posteriori’, inductive argument based on the observation that the universe demonstrates regular motion that follows laws and rules. - At the heart of the design argument is the assertion that certain features within our universe display apparent purpose and design in that they are perfectly adapted to fulfil their function. For example, the human eye is perfectly suited to what it is apparently designed for; seeing. - A second form of the argument draws on analogy between the works of human design and the works of nature, which compels us to conclude that there are sufficient similarities to infer design of a similar nature. Paley put forward two kinds of design argument based on analogy: one from purpose, and one from regularity. - Swinburne’s argument is from probability. He argues that when joined together with the cumulative evidence of other proofs for the existence of God then the design argument raises the probability of God’s existence. - Swinburne suggests that two kinds of regularity in the universe point to the existence of an intelligent creator: regularities of co-presence in the spatial order, and regularities of succession in the temporal order. - The anthropic principle observes that the very precise features necessary for human existence- physical, astronomical and thermal- were all laid down at the time of the Big Bang. The probability of these events happening by chance is so low that there must have been a guiding hand. - The theory of evolution presents an alternative explanation for the way that the universe is. It explains the development of complex life without the need for an omnipotent designer. - Rationalist David Hume pointed out significant problems with teleological arguments. He argued that religious beliefs arise from a natural desire to blame the problems of nature on invisible forces rather than to examine the problems rationally or scientifically.	
<u>12 mark</u> Assess how far the theory of evolution undermines Design Arguments. Assess the weaknesses of the design argument for the existence of God. Assess the contribution of Hume’s contribution to the design argument for the existence of God. Assess the claim that it is impossible to prove the existence of God by a posteriori reasoning alone.		
<u>30 mark</u> Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the design argument for the existence of God. Evaluate the view that arguments for the existence of God can do no more than increase the probability of God’s existence. Evaluate whether a priori or a posteriori arguments are more convincing for the existence of God.		
<u>Stretch and challenge/Suggested further reading</u> Richard Swinburne, ‘Is there a God’? Chapters 2 and 4. John Hick, ‘Philosophy of Religion’. Brian Davies, ‘An introduction to the philosophy of religion’. Chapter 4. https://philosophydungeon.weebly.com/design-argument.html https://iep.utm.edu/hume-rel/		

