

Arguments For the Existence of God

I. Teleological Arguments

Teleological Arguments are *arguments from design*. The intelligent design stuff that's coming up in the news is *but one kind* of teleological argument. Usually, teleological arguments identify some sort of complexity that can only be explained by the existence of God.

First Version of Teleological Argument

- (1) The best explanation of the existence of eyes, hearts, kidneys, plants, and animals includes an intelligent designer. [supported by analogy to (P)]
- (2) If the best explanation of the existence of eyes, hearts, kidneys, plants, and animals includes an intelligent designer, then it is reasonable to believe that there is an intelligent designer. [epistemic principle]
- (3) Therefore it is reasonable to believe that there is an intelligent designer.

Revised Version of Teleological Argument

- (1) The best explanation of atoms, electrons, and laws of nature includes an intelligent designer. [supported by analogy to (P)]
- (2) If the best explanation of atoms, electrons, and laws of nature includes an intelligent designer, then it is reasonable to believe that there is an intelligent designer. [epistemic principle]
- (3) Therefore it is reasonable to believe that there is an intelligent designer.

II. Cosmological Arguments

Cosmological Arguments differ from Teleological Arguments in terms of what they posit we need God to explain. How did we all get here in the first place? How did the whole process get started?

Aquinas' Second Way

- (1) Either everything has a cause, or at least one thing causes itself, or at least one thing is uncaused.
- (2) If at least one thing caused itself, then it would be possible for something to precede itself.
- (3) It is not possible for something to precede itself.
- (4) Therefore, it is not the case that at least one thing causes itself.
- (5) Therefore, either everything has a cause, or at least one thing is uncaused.
- (6) If everything has a cause, then a series of causes can go back in time forever (infinitely)
- (7) A series of causes cannot go back in time forever.
- (8) Therefore, it's not the case that everything has a cause.
- (9) Therefore, there is at least one uncaused cause.

Leibnizian Version

- (1) Either everything is a contingent being, or there is a necessary being.
- (2) It cannot be the case that everything is a contingent being.
- (3) Therefore, there is a necessary being.

(OVER)

III. **Ontological Arguments**

It's more difficult to find a unifying feature in Ontological Arguments.
The general idea is that after reflecting on the nature of some concept we have, we'll see that God must exist.

Anselm's Version (Not so clear, but very famous)

- (1) God (a being than which none greater is possible) exists in the understanding.
- (2) God might have existed in reality (God is a possible being).
- (3) If something exists only in the understanding and might have existed in reality, then it might have been greater than it is.

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- (4) [Assume for *reductio*] God exists **only** in the understanding.
 - (5) Therefore, God might have been greater than he is.
 - (6) God is a being than which none greater is possible.
 - (7) The being than which none greater is possible is a being than which a greater is possible.
 - (8) Therefore, It is false that God exists only in the understanding.
 - (9) If God exists in the understanding and it is false that God exists only in the understanding, then God exists in reality as well as the understanding.
 - (10) Therefore, God exists in reality as well as the understanding.

Plantinga's Modal Version (Simplified)

- (1) It's possible that God (a necessary being) exists.
- (2) If it's possible that God (a necessary being) exists, then God exists.
- (3) Therefore, God exists.

Plantinga's Modal Version

- (1) There is a possible world where maximal greatness is instantiated.
- (2) Necessarily, a being is maximally great in some possible world only if it has maximal excellence in every world.
- (3) Necessarily, a being has maximal excellence in every world only if it has omnipotence, omniscience, and moral perfection in every world.
- (4) If (1), (2), and (3), then a OOO-being exists.