

Lecture 7 Handout

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Argument A The Argument from Clifford's Dictum

A1: A belief is rational only if one has good reason or good evidence to think it. (Premise)

A2: There is good reason or good evidence to think that there is a God only if there is a good argument for the conclusion that there is a God. (Premise)

A3: There is no good argument for the conclusion that there is a God. (Premise)

A4: Therefore, there is no good reason or evidence to think that there is a God. (from A2, A3)

A5: Therefore, belief that there is a God is not rational. (from A1, A4)

A6: If a belief is not rational, then it is irrational. (Premise)

A7: Therefore, belief that there is a God is irrational. (from A5, A6)

Argument B The Parody Argument from Clifford's Dictum

- B1:** A belief is rational only if one has good reason or good evidence to think it. (Premise)
- B2:** There is good reason or good evidence to think that there is a chalkboard in this room only if there is a good argument for the conclusion that there is a chalkboard in this room. (Premise)
- B3:** There is no good argument for the conclusion that there is a chalkboard in this room. (Premise)
- B4:** Therefore, there is no good reason or evidence to think that there is a chalkboard in this room. (from B2, B3)
- B5:** Therefore, belief that there is a chalkboard in this room is not rational. (from B1, B4)
- B6:** If a belief is not rational, then it is irrational. (Premise)
- B7:** Therefore, belief that there is a chalkboard in this room is irrational. (from B5, B6)