

Design Argument

The Design Argument also known as the Teleological Argument or 'telos' meaning end or purpose in Greek. It is an posteriori argument, where it is based on the observation of the apparent order of the universe and the natural world, which supports that we are not just here by chance but out of design. It starts with finding meaning and purpose in parts of the world and later moving onto the universe as a whole, looking at the progress of the world and its part towards an ultimate goal. There are two main arguments within the design argument; the first is an analogical argument, where an analogy is made between the world or its parts and objects to human design. The second is the inductive argument, which is based on the observation that the universe shows regular motion both in its parts and in the whole, a system that abides by laws and rules. The argument argues design qua purpose, the universe is designed to fulfil a purpose and design qua regularity, the universe behaves according to some order.

Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) a philosopher who wrote Summa Theologica, argues that the general order and purpose of the universe is proof of a designer behind it. The apparent purposeful behaviour of non-rational thing in the universe can only be explained by God. For example, every year groups of grey whales migrate from their sub-arctic feeding grounds off the Alaskan coast to their Mexican breeding grounds. This is a journey of 20,000 kilometres which takes up to three months. These behaviour patterns rarely change, and their end result is beneficial to the whales, so there is purpose in them. According to Aquinas, something must be directing them to do this, and he believed it is God.' We see that things which lack knowledge such as natural bodies act for an end, and this is evident from their acting always in the same way so as to obtain the result.' Aquinas said that there is beneficial order in the universe, where things on the universe are working towards their end or purpose. This could not have happened by chance. Many objects in the universe do not have the intelligence to work towards an end or purpose, therefore they must be directed by someone that does not have intelligence and God exists as the explanation of beneficial order; the universe cannot be explained because the universe itself is not self-explanatory and does not exhibit intelligence in its own right.

Paley came to the conclusion that we are to put on this earth for a purpose and that we are not just here by chance. Paley uses the analogy of a watch to explain his argument; if we were to come across a watch we would assume that it had a creator, this is mainly due to the fact it has such an intricate design, like