

God Essentials

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G R E G H A S W E L L

IS GOD REAL?

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Definition of Proof

The establishment of a fact by the use of evidence. Anything that can make a person believe that a fact or proposition is true or false. It is distinguishable from evidence in that proof is a broad term comprehending everything that may be adduced at a trial, whereas evidence is a narrow term describing certain types of proof that can be admitted at trial.

West's Encyclopedia of American Law, edition 2. Copyright 2008
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The Cosmological Argument

THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

1

Whatever begins to exist
has a cause for its
coming into being.

2

The universe began to
exist.

3

Therefore, the universe
has a cause for its
coming into being.

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The Cosmological Argument

Our present position, then, is this: We have argued that there always was motion and always will be motion throughout all time, and we have explained what is the first principle of this eternal motion: we have explained further which is the primary motion and which is the only motion that can be eternal: and we have pronounced the first movement [or: Prime Mover] to be unmoved.

Aristotle, Physics, Book VIII, chapter 9A

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The Cosmological Argument

All the evidence seems to indicate, that the universe has not existed forever, but that it had a beginning, about 15 billion years ago. This is probably the most remarkable discovery of modern cosmology. Yet it is now taken for granted. . . . Although the laws of science seemed to predict the universe had a beginning, they also seemed to predict that they could not determine how the universe would have begun. This was obviously very unsatisfactory. So there were a number of attempts to get round the conclusion.

Stephen Hawking (The beginning of Time)

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The Cosmological Argument

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 **Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.** 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

John 1:1–3 (90–100 AD)

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 **For in him all things were created:** things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; **all things have been created through him and for him.**

Colossians 1:15–16 (62 AD)

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The argument from Desire

THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIRE

1

Every natural, innate desire in us corresponds to some real object that can satisfy that desire.

2

But there exists in us a desire which nothing in time, nothing on earth, no creature can satisfy.

3

Therefore there must exist something more than time, earth and creatures, which can satisfy this desire.

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The argument from Desire

"Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for these desires exists. A baby feels hunger; well, there is such a thing as food. A dolphin wants to swim; well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire; well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."

(C.S.Lewis, Mere Christianity, Bk. III, chap. 10, "Hope")

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The argument from Desire

“You made us for yourself, O Lord,
and our hearts are restless till they
rest in you.”

St Augustine

“The centre of me is always and
eternally a terrible pain – a curious
wild pain – a searching for
something beyond what the world
contains.”

Bertrand Russel

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The argument from Desire

He has made everything beautiful in its time. **He has also set eternity in the human heart**; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

– Ecclesiastes 3:11 (931 BC)

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The Design argument (Teleological Argument)

THE DESIGN ARGUMENT (TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT)

1. The universe displays a staggering amount of intelligibility, both within the things we observe and in the way these things relate to others outside themselves. The way they exist and coexist display an intricately beautiful order and regularity that can fill even

the most casual observer with wonder. It is the norm in nature for many different beings to work together to produce the same valuable end—for example, the organs in the body work for our life and health.

2. Either this intelligible order is the product of chance or of intelligent design.

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The Design argument (Teleological Argument)

We see that things which lack knowledge, such as natural bodies, act for an end, and this is evident from their acting always, or nearly always, in the same way, so as to obtain the best result. Hence it is plain that they achieve their end, not fortuitously, but designedly. Now whatever lacks knowledge cannot move towards an end, unless it be directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence; as the arrow is directed by the archer. Therefore some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God

(Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Article 3, Question 2)

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The Design argument (Teleological Argument)

Most (if not all) evolutionary theorists admit that biological organs appear to be designed, but they remain committed to the project of explaining apparent design without appealing to a designer.

James R. Beebe, Dept. of Philosophy University at Buffalo

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The Design argument (Teleological Argument)

“Our universe does seem remarkably tuned to Life’s needs.” John Leslie (1989, p. 25)

The point is that within the wide range of universes permitted by the actual laws of physics, scarcely any are life-permitting, and those that are, require incredible fine-tuning of the physical constants and quantities. In fact, Donald Page of Princeton’s Institute for Advanced Study has calculated the odds against the formation of our universe as one out of 10,000,000,000¹²⁴, a number that exceeds all imagination. Craig (1990, p. 143)

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The Design argument (Teleological Argument)

To get a handle on how large this number is, consider the fact that there are estimated to be only 10⁸⁰ elementary particles in the universe (Craig 1990, p. 159). A universe that is inhospitable to life is extraordinarily more likely to have arisen than the one that we, in fact, find ourselves in. Craig (1990, p. 143) claims that the fine-tuning of the universe “cries out for explanation.” And an explanation immediately suggests itself: maybe this improbable “cosmic accident” wasn’t an accident after all.

James R. Beebe quoting Craig, William Lane. 1990. “In Defense of Rational Theism.”

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The Design argument (Teleological Argument)

20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

Romans 1:20 (56 AD)

1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. 2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. 3 They have no speech, they use no words 4 Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

Psalms 19:1–4 (980 BC)

OUR THOUGHTS THIS FAR

1

The Universe had an
uncaused cause

2

Our innate desires speak
to an external and
eternal entity beyond this
life

3

Intricate design and
intelligible order speak to
an intelligent designer

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