

Candidate 2 evidence

Advanced Higher Dissertation 2

To what extent is the Teleological Argument Convincing?

In this dissertation, I will evaluate how convincing the Teleological Argument is. I am aiming to examine the arguments of Aquinas, focussing on design qua regularity and design qua purpose, to consider Paley's arguments around complex design and then to evaluate his arguments that complex design needs an intelligent designer which he argues is God. My final aim is to evaluate this in the light of evolutionary discoveries.

Aquinas fifth way attempts to prove that God is the designer of the universe as there is evidence of complex intelligent designs within the world. "Some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God."

This means that God had created these complex and intelligent beings for a purpose and with each a specific design with different intentions and purposes. However, Hume counters this, arguing that humans do not contain the sufficient knowledge and experience of the creation of the world to accurately conclude that there is only one designer. This means that because humans haven't experienced God or were present in the time of creation then we cannot claim to know all about God or how humans came to be as we were not there. I believe that Aquinas's fifth way is not convincing enough to prove the existence of design within the Teleological argument as we have no actual evidence that proves the world is designed or even needs a designer as we could just exist. I agree with Hume because it is impossible to conclude that God designed the world when you do not have the knowledge or experience concerning the creation of the universe.

Aquinas argued from design qua regularity and believed that the overall order he had seen in the world must be proof of a designer, stating that everything within the universe works to achieve and gain order, despite inanimate objects having no consciousness or mind to be able to achieve this. This means that for these objects to gain order they must have had a designer to help them achieve order as they are incapable of doing so of their own volition. Aquinas explained his point of design by using the example of an arrow, explaining that for the arrow to reach its destination it must have an archer. "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."

This means that the 'natural bodies' that act in a way to achieve a specific purpose are compared to the arrow in how they need to be directed to reach their purpose meaning the God is the director

for the 'natural bodies' alike the archer. This means that in order to reach the arrow's destination then there must have been an archer to help it arrive, or else it would have never moved. This fails to be a convincing argument for design because it is a weak analogy as it only suggests the two shared characteristics because they are not one in the same. This is an unconvincing argument for design as it is impossible to link the relationship between God and humans to the relationship between an arrow and an archer because there is no proper link between the two and the assumption of the world needing something to help progress is too far-fetched as there is no evidence.

With design qua regularity, Aquinas considered the order and regularity evident in the universe is evidence of the universe having a designer. The argument uses an analogy of a formal garden showing the evidence of a gardener due to the universe showing evidence of God. This means that just as the garden shows evidence of order and regularity so does the universe, therefore for this evidence it needs an intelligent designer. I believe that this is an unconvincing argument for design as it is difficult to compare a garden to the universe as in some cases there are gardens that do not require a gardener to design it and it could just grow naturally rather than having some complex design to it. The rotation of planets and the natural law of the universe acts as proof of intelligent design within the universe as philosophers conclude that these things cannot have just happened by random chance. This means that the planetary rotations and natural laws in the universe contain far too much regularity and order to be a random chance that naturally came to be therefore it must have been some designer that made it so well designed as it contains too much complexity. I think that this argument is convincing for design as it shows that all the planets contain order to be able to work in a way to make the universe fully functional as there is a lack of chaos this seems to prove that there is some kind of order and if there is order this implies design and purpose.

Kant disagreed with this teleological argument; Kant emphasised that the argument is depended on the assumption that the universe does have a design. Kant argued that the universe may be in chaos but due to the way in which our minds organise our experience, the world appears to be ordered and regular. Kant believed that we impose the design on the world ourselves and therefore cannot be certain of the reality of the situation. This means that we assume that the world has order because if we actively look for order, we become biased and interpret the world to make it seem like it is not in chaos but rather order does exist within the universe. I think that Kant's argument makes Teleological argument unconvincing because when people are looking for evidence of order and

regularity they are purposely ignoring evidence that goes against their beliefs and instead their argument consists of confirmation bias in favour of their beliefs.

Design qua purpose looked at the evidence of design in which different parts of the universe that seems to fit together for a purpose. The argument used an analogy of which the universe is compared to a hand-made machine with a designer that has fitted all the pieces together for a specific purpose and function. For a modern example, the parts in a car engine fit together manually to allow the car to work, if these parts were fitted randomly then the car would not run at all. The analogy means that without a designer the world could not work as it would be disordered and purposeless. This argument is not convincing because the universe does not necessarily need a purpose to function and could just come together on its own without any purposes. I think that people investigate the universe searching for a purpose when the universe does not need a purpose but rather, they want to give the universe a purpose to grant it more meaning in life therefore making the evidence for design unconvincing.

Overall, I conclude that Aquinas' fifth way argument and his particular focus on design qua purpose and design qua regularity are unconvincing because I believe that Aquinas used weak overreaching analogies in attempt to prove the existence of design and God. I think that Aquinas' arguments are unconvincing for the Teleological argument because Hume and Kant were able to find weaknesses in his arguments and critique his argument thoroughly for example, Kant's argument against design qua regularity and how the world could actually be in chaos and our minds are tricking us into believing that it is not. In this section, I will be examining Paley's arguments for the Teleological argument of design and whether it is convincing.

Paley claimed that there is evidence that parts of the universe appear to fit together for a specific purpose and designed that way for a reason. He put forward an analogy to support his point, he stated that if a watch were found somewhere unusual then that watch has a reason for being there and could not just be left to chance. *"Suppose I had found a watch upon the ground, and it should be inquired how the watch happened to be in that place."* In this analogy the watch represents the universe and the parts inside the watch are the parts that work together to make up the universe. This means if we were to come across this watch then we would notice how all the parts fitted together perfectly for a specific purpose, much alike Paley's comparison to how the universe is made up with numerous parts that all come together for one purpose that is functioning the universe. However, this fails to be a convincing argument for the Teleological

argument as I believe that this analogy is weak because humans designed watches and contain all the knowledge on how to design, build and create pocket watches however humans know almost nothing on the function of the universe therefore it is extremely difficult to compare the universe to a mere pocket watch.

Paley continued his argument by using the human eye as an example of how the different parts cooperate in such complex ways to produce something else such as sight. Paley believed that eyes have a specific design which was to be able to see, and that this complex design suggests an intelligent designer. This means that due to the complexity of the design it would be far too complicated for it to just appear naturally or as a coincidence, there must have been an intelligent designer behind the design such as God. Paley used an example of animal survival instincts to aid his point further, he stated that the designs for bird's wings for flight or the fins of a fish for swimming show evidence of a designer." This means that because there is so much evidence of specific designs that benefits different animal's survival, this could only be the result of one 'designing creator' which was believed to be God. I believe that Paley's arguments fail to be most convincing argument for design as there is no evidence stating that this complex 'design' could not have just existed or been the result of some random chance without the help from an intelligent design, therefore there is no genuine evidence that God was ever needed as a designer.

However, Hume disagreed with the teleological argument entirely as he believed that the universe cannot be compared to a man-made machine but rather an animal or vegetable since they grow on their own accord and are not reliant on a designer or creator. This means that the universe could not be compared to a simple hand-crafted watch as it is something that is made by humans whereas we do not know how the universe or if it needs to follow the same rules as the things within the universe. I believe that this point alone makes Paley's argument unconvincing as it is a weak analogy as it is inappropriate to compare the universe to a machine made by man whereas Hume's analogy is stronger as it is a more familiar concept and is more understandable in a way that could work. However, Hume's argument failed to be convincing as the analogy is stronger but the teleological argument would consider this as a positive analogy for design because you could claim that even animals and vegetables have a design as people can breed animals to get results, they want or provide certain fertiliser for their vegetables to change the outcome of the vegetable.

Further criticism of God being the intelligent designer comes from J.S. Mill' as he disagreed with the teleological argument stating that the designer is the God of Classical Theism. Mill stated that since

the world contains so much suffering and evil then the designer of the universe cannot be all powerful, all knowing and all loving. This means that since suffering exists in the world, the designer must not be what the argument claims it to be therefore the idea of the Classical Theism God being the designer would be a contradiction. I believe that Mill's point shows that Paley's teleological argument evidence for design is unconvincing because if God was so omnipotent, omniscient, and able to create such complex designs then why does suffering and evil exist in the world.

Overall, I conclude that Paley's teleological arguments are unconvincing because he claimed that the world must have been designed by an intelligent being known as God and there is evidence shown by complex designs throughout the universe such as eyeballs or animal instincts to help their survival however, the God he claimed to have done this was the God of Classical Theism which Mill provides criticism as the God of Classical Theism is all mighty and so powerful that there is no possibility that God could have made an imperfect world like the one we live in. Paley's teleological arguments are unconvincing as they were criticised by Hume's arguments as he provided an alternative analogy that was stronger being that God is more like in animal rather than the machine analogy that was created by Paley.

My final aim is to examine evolutionary theory as an argument against the design and purpose arguments. Darwin developed an alternative explanation for design in the world, without using God as the creator but evolution instead. Darwin stated that his theory shows that organic adaptation to environment is the result of a slow process of natural selection where distinct characteristics in a species from genetic mutations create a bigger chance of survival for the species allowing them to evolve and adapt to their surroundings over a prolonged period. This cuts the species to survive in their environment, resulting in major changes in appearance and behaviour in the species over time. Darwin argued that random variations in species development caused by a variety of conditions produced the best advantage to the species that was struggling for survival therefore resulting in the 'survival of the fittest member of that species. This means that different conditions can cause random variations of genetic mutation that leads to the best advantages for the species survival in their environment. Darwin's theory of natural selection is more convincing than the teleological arguments for God as the creator because Darwin shows how different species were able to progress and evolve into a better version of themselves without the help from God. Darwin is more convincing because the fact that certain species must evolve and better themselves in the first place is proof that God did not design the universe or the world because if it did have a design then there would be no need for evolution in the first place. Darwin continued his argument for natural selection and evolution with the help of a special species of bird he had encountered. Darwin had

travelled to the Galapagos Islands and upon arrival he had noticed that the beaks of the finches living there were different depending on what part of the islands they were living on. He stated that due to the distance between the islands the finches could not fly to the other parts of the islands and interbreed so they had to make do with the food and resources available on their islands, resulting in the finches evolving their beaks to adapt to the different food they eat to help them survive. This means that all the finches looked identical besides from their beaks that had to evolve to gain the best advantages for survival, thus proved that evolution and natural selection did exist in the world. I believe that this is a convincing piece of evidence provided by Darwin in proving that the teleological argument's evidence was not convincing as the argument stated that the world is designed to be the highest form but if this was the case why do animals and other species evolve to become better if they were not in already in their highest and superior form to begin with.

The argument for evolution contains inferential evidence in proving its existence, this means evidence that does not directly involve observation of evolution but from which we can infer that evolution has occurred. Homologies are similarities between species that are not functionally necessary or easily explained. These are the opposite of analogous similarities such as the wings of birds and bats and how these similarities are easily explained by the shared function both species have. Homology is the evidence of common ancestry pre-evolution due to completely different species such as frogs, lizards and birds having similarities that are not necessary. This means that the only way for them to share similarities despite being so different they must have evolved from the same ancestors in different environments for their best survival while keeping some shared similarities post-evolution. I believe that homology is a strong scientific response to the teleological argument making the design argument unconvincing as the link between shared ancestry and evolution proved that there could not have been a design to every single species like the teleological argument claimed due to many species being bred just from one common ancestor and the different environments. I believe that this shows that the teleological argument is unconvincing because using this evidence of common ancestors it shows that we do not have a designer or a purposeful creation because of species being able to evolve and become better which would not happen if we had a designer. On the other hand, the Anthropic Principle claimed that the universe is constructed for the development of intelligent life. Tenant created the Anthropic Principle and believed that there were three types of natural evidence in the universe in favour of a designer God: the fact the world can be analysed in a rational manner, the way in which the world provides necessities required to sustain life and finally the progress of evolution towards the emergence of intelligent human life. This means that we can see signs of a divine designer around us by what the world has given us in order to survive and how we can progress in life to become more intelligent shows that we were designed

to progress and adapt to the environment made for us. Tenant believed that while it is possible to imagine a chaotic universe in which has no rule applied however, the universe is clearly not chaotic and was designed in such a way that the evolutionary process would create an environment in which intelligent life could exist. Tenant stated that human life is the climax of God's plan,

"The forcibleness of Nature's suggestion that she is the outcome of intelligent design lies not in particular cases of adaptedness in the world, nor even the multiplicity of them... it consists rather in the conspiracy of innumerable causes to produce, by either united and reciprocal action, and to maintain, a general order of Nature." - F.R. Tenant This means that the world was designed by a divine being for humans to inhabit and progress into more intelligent beings and denies any chains of coincidences that could have led humans to evolve as everything was a part of God's designed plan. I believe that the Anthropic Principle failed to provide a convincing teleological argument because there is no evidence to why the only explanation for the planet containing resources for humans to survive is God because human beings could have just evolved to suit the world around us rather than the world suiting us.

Swinburne, Christian philosopher, supported Tenant's Anthropic Principle and his claims that the universe is law-governed. Swinburne noticed that the universe could have easily been chaotic yet the fact that it is not chaotic and contains order suggests design rather than mere chance. This is shown by Swinburne's statement, "The universe might so naturally have been chaotic, but it is not - it is very orderly." 11 Swinburne considered the argument to come down to most likely probabilities. This means that whatever sounds more probable to happen is the more likely answer to why the universe has so much order to it, therefore due to the complexity of the universe it makes it unlikely that the universe would just happen by 'chance.' Due to this Swinburne accepted that it is more probable that there is design to the universe and that God would be the simplest explanation to who designed it. I believe that Swinburne response to the teleological arguments evidence falls as underwhelming rather than convincing as he based his beliefs on probabilities and opinions, which could be seen as confirmation bias due to him being a Christian therefore he is more likely to be seeking arguments that align with his Christian faith in God.

Teilhard de Chardin response to evolution was to argue that evolution is compatible with the teleological argument design arguments. Chardin described evolution as a process leading from atoms to molecules to cells to simple life forms and finally to human life, he stated that the increased development of consciousness would result in the more complex in the organism the more conscious it became in character, emotion, and mind. This means that the more evolved humans became the more thought, emotion, and character they developed along the way making

them a special species this shows a link between Chardin and the teleological argument as it stated that they were given a meaningful purpose and special design. Chardin argued that evolution and religion could go hand in hand together instead of being separated as some parts of science can fill in what religion does not answer such as evolution, but religion can answer the question 'why' for science as it gives it a purpose and meaning. I believe that this is an unconvincing response to evolution's evidence and the teleological arguments of design because it is very difficult to combined both religion and science due to the differing evidence between the two such as the bible not being a reliable source of information in the eyes of science thus religion could not be used to answer the scientific questions that could be asked.

The theory of evolution is weakened by Tenant's Aesthetic argument in favour of the teleological argument of design. Tenant argued that humans possess the ability to appreciate the beauty of their surroundings and to enjoy things such as art, music, and literature despite the appreciation of beauty not being necessary for survival shows that there is evidence of a divine creator. This means that because of humans' ability to enjoy and appreciate beauty in which is not necessary for survival or for the development of life it is showing that it cannot be the result of evolution as there is no need for humans to be able to see the beauty in the universe. "Who made these beautiful changeable things, if not one who is beautiful and unchangeable." This means that to have a beautiful world the designer must have intended to make the universe not just inhabitable but beautiful as well. I believe that Tenant provides a convincing argument for the teleological argument as there is no reason why humans should be able to have deep appreciation for things such as art and music if we only progress with natural selection thus shows we are becoming intelligent beings. However, Dawkins argued that the Aesthetic Principle was "vacuous and wholly unconvincing" because he believed that the fact that humans can appreciate art and the beauty of the world does not mean that there must be a God behind it all. This means that humans can appreciate beauty in the world or experience unnecessary emotions without any need of a God to design them that way, we just simply appreciate joyous things in life. "Beethoven's late quartets are sublime. So are Shakespeare's sonnets. They are sublime if God is there, and they are sublime if he isn't. They do not prove the existence of God; they prove the existence of Beethoven and of Shakespeare." his means that regardless of a God's design, art will always be 'sublime' and we will always be able to appreciate sublime art. I think that Dawkins' argument does provide enough evidence to prove the teleological argument of design and made it unconvincing because it is true that do not know what the human mind can do because we may be able to appreciate beauty without any need of a God. We do not know if a God exists or not as there is no evidence in which states that humans cannot function without any use of God's help.

In conclusion, Aquinas's teleological argument is not convincing as I don't think there's purpose as I think our view of it is subjective as we create our own idea of purpose and we can interpret findings to see a purpose that isn't actually there. I do think there is order and regularity in the universe as there's less chaos and the universe wouldn't work as it does without regularity and order. However, I think order and regularity can exist without the control of a designer or God. I think Paley has used philosophically weak analogies and I don't think he can argue points convincingly when the analogy is relying on extremely weak. Overall, the teleological argument is not convincing as I don't think there is design in the universe because there are so many things that disprove it such as evolution in itself. The leap to the designer being the god of classical theism and that we humans are the 'most intelligent stage' is unconvincing as we weren't created at this most intelligent stage, there's proof that we have evolved.