

2. The cosmological argument, coming from the Greek word 'cosmos', has been used by eminent philosophers throughout the centuries to attempt to prove the existence of God. It was first presented in its most basic form by St Thomas Aquinas in his 1284 book 'Summa Theologica' and runs as follows. Everything which exists has a cause for its existence, and 'nothing can be the cause of itself'. There is a chain of causes, but this cannot go on to infinity because then the universe would lack all rational character. Therefore there must be a First Cause to terminate this infinite regress, which is itself uncaused, and the only possible being which fits this criterion is God, hence God exists. Ever since this argument was proposed in various forms in Aquinas's 5 Ways, it has incurred a great deal of criticism, as the argument mainly relies on the idea that the

universe is not infinite, has a beginning and hence must have a cause. Three of the most successful criticisms are David Hume's arguments to a necessary universe, Bertrand Russell's observations of the argument's logical flaw, and the criticisms from modern science.

The Scottish empiricist David Hume argued in his 1739 work 'Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion' that the cosmological argument fails, mostly due to the assumption of a necessary God. Hume argues that ~~it is~~, if it is possible for God to be assumed to be necessary (i.e. have no cause and having always existed with no possibility of not existing), it is just as logical to assume the non-existence of such a being, hence the argument cannot prove the existence of a necessary

God. Secondly, he argues that there is no reason why the world actually needs to have a cause, and hence argues that it exists without a God as a First Cause. However, his strongest objection is that, if we must assume that there is a being without a cause, which is necessary, we may as well presume that is the universe rather than God, since at least the universe is observable and testable, and there is no logical reason why we should prefer God as a necessary being. Therefore he sees that the cosmological argument fails.

Hume's first two criticisms are not very successful, as he entirely misses the point of a necessary being as being something that had to exist, and so it is not just as logical to propose the non-existence of such a

being as to propose its existence. His second criticism also seems to be purely an assumption, since, as Aquinas argued, it is easily observed that everything needs a cause in the known universe, Hume cannot state that the universe is uncaused without any evidence, particularly as the Big Bang seems to suggest that the universe had a beginning and hence ought to have a cause. However his third criticism is extremely successful. It is true that theists simply assert that God is necessary, and, as Russell would agree, it is far more logical to base any assumption on something that actually exists, if we have to make an exception to the idea that 'everything has a cause'. Therefore this first criticism is highly successful.

Bertrand Russell, in his 1957 essay, 'Why I Am

Not A Christian' : successfully developed Hume's criticism. Firstly, he observed the Fallacy of Composition ; just because everything in the universe has a cause, it doesn't mean that the universe as a whole does. He wrote that it is only due to the poverty of our human imaginations that we see everything as having to have a cause, building on the idea of Immanuel Kant that humans are conditioned to impose causal patterns on everything they observe, which is why Russell writes 'there is no reason why the world could not have come into being without a cause'. Lastly, he observes the evident circularity of the argument, which is a serious flaw - if everything has a cause, it is impossible for there to be an Uncaused Cause, and if there is one, it may as well be the universe as God; hence building on

Hume's original idea. Russell argued that the universe therefore has necessary existence and we must accept its existence as a 'brute fact'.

Generally Russell's criticisms are highly successful. It is very logical to note the obvious circularity of the argument, and he skillfully resolves this with a naturalistic explanation.

The argument from the Fallacy of Composition also seems highly reasonable, and Hume would agree that our human powers to understand the universe are so limited that we cannot truly understand the question. Frederick Copleston, however, a Jesuit philosopher, argued that since everything in the universe could cease to exist, the universe as a whole could cease to exist, and therefore it cannot be necessary, which would disprove

Russell's argument from the necessary universe. However this is a very weak defence because it also exhibits the Fallacy of Composition, and the universe is essentially a vacuum so all physical objects could cease to exist, yet the universe would continue to exist. Perhaps Copernicus's strongest objection is that Russell's is not an intellectually acceptable attitude to have since it shuts down debate. Whilst true to a certain extent that Russell asserts that 'the universe is just there and that's all there is to say', Russell does provide logical reasoning for this view so it is merely intellectually honest. Therefore Russell's criticisms of the cosmological argument are successful.

Lastly, modern cosmology has presented some

serious challenges to this argument. Firstly, it relies absolutely on the idea that everything which exists is caused to exist. If this is not true, then the universe could exist without a cause in which case a God as a First Cause is entirely redundant. However, the Principle of Indeterminacy states that some sub-atomic particles can come into existence without a cause, and hence this premise is categorically disproved, leaving the rest of the argument on very shaky ground. This is an especially successful criticism because the conditions at the origin of the universe were all sub-atomic, so it is even more likely that the Principle has influenced the development of the universe. The scientist Richard Swinburne argues that such laws could ultimately have a personal explanation in the form of God because they

are ultimately just regularities in the way the universe works, yet it remains that the essential premise of the cosmological argument is absolutely not true so Swinburne's defence fails and the Principle of Indeterminacy succeeds.

In his book 'A Brief History of Time', the cosmologist Stephen Hawking argues against another fundamental premise of the argument - that there cannot be an infinite universe, which there must ^{not} be if a God is to be invoked to cause the beginning of it. Hawking writes that 'there is no physical necessity for a beginning', because modern science shows the universe to be expanding and evolving, a system in which there is a limited role for a God. He writes that if the universe is 'without boundary or edge', 'it would simply be', hence taking

a somewhat similar line to Hume and Russell. Even if such a God existed, Hawking argues that there is no reason why it should have any of the attributes of the God of deist theism, so he does not believe that the conclusion of such a God can be drawn from this argument.

Hawking's arguments are also very successful because he uses modern science to support his views, making them objective and highly reasonable. He also very rationally notes that many people misinterpret the deist conclusion of the cosmological argument, yet a slight weakness is that this does not mean that such a God cannot exist, so perhaps his argument is a little assertive. The Christian theologian William Lane Craig has attempted to show

that an infinite universe is impossible using mathematical proofs - for example, infinity cannot be traversed or reached by successive addition, and it is logically impossible to have a full hotel with an infinite number of rooms and an infinite number of rooms for extra guests. However as JL Mackie argues, these fail to understand the true nature of infinity which is so far beyond the human experience that we cannot encompass it through human logic which seems perfectly reasonable and with which Hume would agree. Therefore Hume's criticisms from an infinite universe remain successful.

In conclusion, criticisms of the cosmological argument are highly successful. Although Hume's criticism occasionally appears a

little illogical, it is highly plausible that the universe has necessary existence instead of God. Russell's criticisms also succeed, despite Copleston's weak defence, due to their logic and the Fallacy of Composition. Lastly, modern science, especially, the Principle of Indeterminacy, shows the first premise of the argument to be false, and Hawking's argument from infinity also shows that even Craig's objections are spurious and that there is no reason why the universe should have to have a cause. Thus the criticisms of the cosmological argument are very successful.

5. Palliative care, or the pain-relief and care given to the dying to allow them to die comfortably and with dignity, is often seen to replace the need for voluntary euthanasia by improving people's quality of life to the extent

that they no longer want to die. Indeed, in 1999 Age Concern London stated that access to palliative and hospice care was a major factor in having a 'good death', which is also what euthanasia aims to provide. In the UK, the 1961 Suicide Act prohibits voluntary euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide, leaving palliative care the only option for end-of-life care. However, in countries such as the Netherlands, where euthanasia is permitted under the Termination of Life on Request and Assisted Suicide Act 2002, people can make a persistent request to be euthanised. However, pain-killing drugs are also available free to ensure that no-one chooses euthanasia due to the costs of palliative care. There exists a wide range of views on this issue, from John Wyatt's support of palliative care to Paul Badham's

view that it doesn't go far enough and Peter Singer's view that it infringes on personal autonomy.

Firstly, John Wyatt, the Anglican Professor of Ethics and Palliatology at UCL, argues in his book 'Matters of Life and Death' that palliative care replaces the need for euthanasia. He argues that there are three factors that might drive someone to request euthanasia; the fear of pain (a concept he calls 'total pain', encompassing physical, psychological, spiritual, emotional and relational pain), fear of indignity, and fear of dependence, all of which can be treated through palliative care. Pain can be adequately alleviated in 95% of cases, he argues, and hospice care can also alleviate other forms of pain in a spirit of Christian compassion. For the 5% whose pain

* (as dignity is derived from being made in the image of God, according to Genesis 1:26, and hence is an intrinsic quality).

can't be treated, he still doesn't view euthanasia as acceptable because their lives are sacred and bear the *Imago Dei*, so to destroy them is 'a desecration of God's image, God's masterpiece'. He argues that suffering is never meaningless and so should be accepted from the hand of a loving God, since 'dying is an opportunity for personal growth' and so pain, like indignity and dependence, is viewed as something that has to be accepted as part of God's creation order. However he doesn't believe that there is currently enough attention ^{or funding} given to palliative care and sees that medical staff must be better educated about it if it is to replace the need for euthanasia.

Wyatt's argument is highly consistent with other Christian teachings about the sanctity

of life which is a strength, and it does attempt to provide a practical solution to the problems he comprehensively identifies. His use of statistics is also good, as it gives a factual basis to his argument. However, ultimately it fails; as Badham points out, palliative care can't alleviate other sources of pain, such as spiritual pain, and hence does not remove the wish to die. ~~the~~ If someone's wish to die is deeply intrinsic and personal to them, no change in external factors is going to affect that. Furthermore, Wyatt's argument is uncompassionate, since he appears to tell Christians that they must simply put up with pain, indignity and ^{and many couldn't maintain} this level of ^{with white suffering} deperence which is a very harsh view. Therefore Wyatt's view is unappealing.

Paul Badham, the Anglican Reverend Professor,

argues in his book 'Is there A Christian Case for Assisted Dying' that palliative care does not go far enough as to remove the need for euthanasia. He states that there is not enough attention of other aspects of care, particularly spiritual and mental aspects, and that the dependence or indignity of hospice care may be contributing factors to people's wish to die. He argues that it would be more compassionate to allow these people to die; Mark 12:31 teaches 'love thy neighbour as thyself', and since Jesus also promises compassion over the absolutism of the law, Badham rejects Wyatt's strong "screed of life argument. Instead he argues that 'the believer may rightly wish to surrender (life) back to God when it is no longer possible to live life in a creative way', so believes that

if someone has poor quality of life, they ought to be able to die rather than dvaluing their life by prolonging it in palliative care, which he calls 'resisting the divine summons to be with God for eternity'. Therefore, for those with the Christian hope of life after death, he sees that palliative care does not replace the need for assisted dying or euthanasia.

The evident compassion of Beethem's argument is a significant strength; it is the greatest gift that Christianity has brought to the world as a fundamental teaching, and makes his argument compatible with an ethically pluralist society. It is also true that palliative care cannot attend to all the problems of a patient who wants to die, and that prolonging life unnecessarily is

un-Christian and uncompassionate, which Wyatt would agree with to a certain extent. However Wyatt argues that Badtorn's views are not consistent with Christian belief, as there can be no compromise between secular individual autonomy and quality of life, and traditional Christian theology, which seems reasonable.

Furthermore, the argument seems rather too keen on dying as early as possible to be with God, which is concerning. However, it remains that palliative care cannot cater to all the needs of the dying, hence there is still a need for euthanasia.

The preference utilitarian Peter Singer makes a strong case for euthanasia in his 1979 book 'Practical Ethics.' He argues that, as rational moral agents, we have a right to determine the course of our own life and

death, and that even if, as Wyatt argues, we do have a right to life, 'it is an essential feature of a right that one can waive one's rights if one so chooses'. Therefore, if someone decides that their quality of life is so poor that life is no longer worth living, 'respect for autonomy will lead us to assist them to do as they choose'. Therefore Singer opposes palliative care as the sole solution because he argues that it limits people's autonomy. He, like Badham, agrees that it is not widespread enough and can't remove the issue of poor quality of life wherein lies the need for euthanasia. He also argues that it is 'highly paternalistic' to suggest that patients are now so well cared for that they do not need euthanasia, as this reduces the choices available to them at the end of

their life. Since we cannot experience the suffering they are going through, we cannot impose our own ideas about euthanasia onto them as they should have sole control over the end of their lives. Furthermore, in the Netherlands where both options exist, in 2003 over 1% of Dutch deaths occurred through euthanasia. Therefore some people still choose euthanasia ~~but~~ ^{although} palliative care is available, so that choice still needs to exist. Therefore palliative care does not replace ~~therefore~~ the need for euthanasia.

This is also a very strong argument - it respects the autonomy of rational adults, which is very important in all other areas of medical decision-making, and it is compassionate because it recognises that only the person suffering can assess the

extent of their own suffering. The use of the Dutch example also shows that the public went to exercise their autonomy in this way. However, Singer is out of step with the medical authorities as the British Medical Association state that 'the ongoing improvements in palliative care allow patients to die with dignity', although Badham has already shown this view to be false. It also seems rather shocking due to his blatant disregard for any of life's intrinsic value. However Singer would respond by saying that science shows human life to have no special value, and hence it is irrational of Wyatt to believe as though it does. Therefore, it remains that there is a need for both palliative care and euthanasia.

In conclusion, palliative care does not

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	<p>replace the need for euthanasia, with the need arising from poor quality of life. Although Wyatt's view is theologically accurate, it is too uncompassionate and has far too high expectations of what palliative care is able to provide. Badham's view that sometimes pain can only be removed by euthanasia is much more compassionate and realistic, whereas Singer's argument that it reduces autonomy is very logical and compatible with an ethically pluralist society. Therefore, while palliative care may be the answer for some, it will not go far enough for others and hence the need for euthanasia still exists.</p>	