

## Chapter 12, Religion

### Arguments for the existence of God

#### 1. The **Ontological Argument** – a necessary argument

God = the most perfect being conceivable  
therefore he must exist  
because without existence he wouldn't be the most perfect being

- a) **Kant** – it's not self-contradictory if we reject existence of God  
**existence is not a predicate of God**
- b) Existence **merely applies the concept of God to the real world**
- c) It is **grammatically a predicate** but not logically (Russell)

#### 2. **Contingent arguments**

- a) **Cosmological arguments** – First cause/mover (Aquinas)  
– everything has a cause therefore there must either be an infinite regress or a first cause

But (i) **rejects infinite regress** of causes (or explanations)  
(ii) if everything has a cause then **so too does God**  
(iii) if he is the ultimate cause requiring no explanation then he is a **non-spatio-temporal being** – but this denies time and physical causation = necessary for him to cause anything  
(iv) modern theories of causality re. Hume and **constant causation**

- b) The **Argument from Contingency** (Aquinas)  
– nothing is the source of its own existence  
– everything is contingent therefore there must be something that is not contingent

But (i) difficult to imagine – **self-contradictory** = it might have been the case that nothing was the case  
(ii) rejects the possibility of **infinite series** of finite contingent events overlapping in time sequence  
(iii) therefore Thomists change their position – logical connection between contingent world and its non-contingent ground – only a self-existent reality = ground for existence of anything i.e. a necessary being – God  
But still – **either there is a necessary being or the universe = unintelligible – fails to rule out the latter** as does the first cause argmt  
(iv) **independent test implications** – without this it = circular  
– explains everything and therefore explains nothing

- c) **The Teleological Argument** – design

But (i) Hume – **analogy between the world and a human artifact = weak**  
(ii) Hume – **can only infer sufficient cause** to produce an observed effect therefore cannot infer from apparent design one infinitely wise, good and powerful God  
(iii) Hume – **any universe is bound to have the appearance of design**  
– there could not be a universe at all if parts were not adapted to one another re. Darwin and evolution thro natural selection  
(iv) Design argmt assumes there was a time prior to which there was no time – but there are **always temporal precedents**  
(v) **Argument = circular**: order in the universe = evidence that God exists  
and that God exists = explanation for the order and beginning of the universe

## Chapter 12, Religion continued

### d) Argument from miracles and revelations

- But (i) Hume/miracles: argument against miracles = as entire as can be imagined – otherwise it would not be called a 'miracle' = breach of laws of nature = have the strongest evidential support
- (ii) Hume/miracles: must provide independent criterion to show that it was God that caused it
- (iii) Revelations – person must be prepared and receptive therefore claim = handicapped by its inability to provide readily observable, objective evidence