# Existence of God: Motion

## St Thomas Aquinas’ argument from causation

### Overview

St Thomas Aquinas was a 13th Century theologian who incorporated many of Aristotle’s ideas regarding the Prime Mover into his arguments for God’s existence in his *Summa Theologica*.

Aquinas’ First Way to show God’s existence was his way from causation and it goes like this:

**Premise 1**: By observation we can see that all things are in motion.

**Premise 2**: Things in motion cannot put themselves in motion.

**Premise 3**: Things are put in motion by other things that are already in motion.

**Premise 4**: Motion cannot regress infinitely or there would have been no motion at all.

**Premise 5**: There must be an unmoved first mover.

**Conclusion**: The unmoved mover is that which we call God.

### Resources

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| **Key Terms** | **Motion**: *noun* The reduction of potentiality to actuality, i.e. things that are one thing but can be another changing to become that other thing, e.g. wood has the potential to be hot, so when heated it moves from being cold to hot.  **Infinite regression**: *noun* A series that has no fixed start but instead is a chain of events that goes back infinitely, e.g. numbers. |
| **Extracts** | **St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica Part 1, Question 2, Article 3***  *Motion is nothing else than the reduction of something from potentiality to actuality. But nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality, except by something in a state of actuality. Thus that which is actually hot, as fire, makes wood, which is potentially hot, to be actually hot, and thereby moves and changes it. … It is…impossible that in the same respect and in the same way a thing should be both mover and moved… Therefore, whatever is in motion must be put in motion by another… But this cannot go on to infinity, because then there would be no first mover, and, consequently, no other mover… Therefore it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, put in motion by no other; and this everyone understands to be God.* |
| **Videos** | Crash Course Philosophy – [Aquinas and the Cosmological Argument](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TgisehuGOyY) 1m 30s to 4m 10s |

### Knowledge of the argument

1. What is the argument from motion?
2. What is potentiality?
3. What does it mean to be in a state of actuality?
4. What does Aquinas’ example of the wood and the fire show?
5. Why does Aquinas think that infinite regression is impossible?
6. What is an unmoved first mover?
7. Why does Aquinas think that there must be an unmoved first mover?
8. What does Aquinas mean by: the unmoved first mover is “that which we call God”?

## David Hume’s response to the argument from Motion

### Overview

David Hume was an 18th Century empiricist and philosopher who wrote the influential Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion in which he presents a number of challenges against and fallacies within various arguments for God’s existence.

One of his challenges against the cosmological argument is the fallacy of composition. While this argument was not explicitly given in response to the argument from motion, it works as a response to it:

1. Each particle of a collection can be explained independently.
2. The collection of separate particles into one body is an arbitrary act of the mind.
3. There is no need to seek an explanation of the body of particles.
4. Conclusion: There is no need for a first mover.

### Resources

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| **Extracts** | David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Part IX [190]  *“The WHOLE, you say, wants a cause. I answer, that the uniting of these parts into a whole, like the uniting of several distinct counties into one kingdom, or several distinct members into one body, is performed merely by an arbitrary act of mind, and has no influence on the nature of things. Did I show you the particular cause of each individual in a collection of twenty particles of matter, I should think it very unreasonable, should you afterwards ask me, what was the cause of the whole twenty. This is sufficiently explained in explaining the cause of the parts.” – Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* |
| **Videos** | [Objections to St Thomas Aquinas’ Cosmological Argument](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RF6GVgZgiWA). |
| **Further Reading** | [Aristotle’s case for the Prime Mover](http://www.scandalon.co.uk/philosophy/aristotle_prime_mover.htm) |

### Evaluation of the argument

How successfully does Aquinas show that motion proves that there must be a God?

**Consider the following:**

* Is Aquinas’ argument logical (the conclusion follows from the premises) and sound (the premises are true)?
* To what extend is Aquinas’ argument *a posteriori* (based in experience)?
* How convincing is Aquinas’ argument?
* Who can you use to support Aquinas?
* What part of Aquinas’ argument is being challenged by Hume’s fallacy?
* How convincing is Hume’s challenge?
* Who can you use to support Hume?
* Can Aquinas’ argument respond to Hume’s challenge?

# Existence of God: Causation

## St Thomas Aquinas’ argument from causation

### Overview

St Thomas Aquinas was a 13th Century theologian who incorporated many of Aristotle’s ideas regarding the Prime Mover into his own arguments for God’s existence appearing as five “ways” in his *Summa Theologica*.

Aquinas’ second way was his way from causation and it goes like this:

**Premise 1**: Observation shows that all things are caused into existence.

**Premise 2**: Nothing can be its own cause.

**Premise 3**: Everything is caused by something else that already exists.

**Premise 4**:Causation cannot regress infinitely, otherwise there would be no initial causation and so no subsequent causation.

**Premise 5**:There must be a first uncaused cause.

**Conclusion**: The uncaused cause is that which we call God.

### Resources

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| **Key Terms** | **Cosmological**: *adj.* of or related to the universe.  **Causation**: *noun*. the action of causing something  **A posteriori**: *adj.* arguments or knowledge that comes after experience. |
| **Extracts** | **St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica Part 1, Question 2, Article 3***  *In the world of sense we find there is an order of efficient causes. There is no case known in which a thing is found to be the efficient cause of itself; for so it would be prior to itself, which is impossible. Now in efficient causes it is not possible to go on to infinity… to take away the cause is to take away the effect. Therefore, if there be no first cause among efficient causes, there will be no ultimate, nor any intermediate cause. But if in efficient causes it is possible to go on to infinity, there will be no first efficient cause, neither will there be an ultimate effect, nor any intermediate efficient causes; all of which is plainly false. Therefore it is necessary to admit a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name of God.* |
| **Videos** | Crash Course Philosophy – [Aquinas and the Cosmological Argument](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TgisehuGOyY) 3m 20s to 4m 10s  Peter Kreeft’s: [The Thomist Cosmological Argument](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wefohtJBnN8) up to 6m 20s. |

### Knowledge of the argument

1. What is the argument from causation?
2. Why is this argument *a posteriori*?
3. What is cause and effect?
4. What is infinite regress?
5. What does Aquinas mean when he says “to take away the cause is to take away the effect”?
6. What is an uncaused cause first cause?
7. Why does Aquinas think that there must be an uncaused first cause?
8. What does Aquinas mean by: the uncaused first cause is “that which we call God”?

## Immanuel Kant’s response to the argument from Causation

### Overview

One of the responses to the argument from causation came from Immanuel Kant, the 18th Century philosopher. Kant did a lot of work on ethics but also responded to various arguments for God’s existence, believing that you could not prove God’s existence from experience or from reason.

He argued that causation is a phenomenon of our world and cannot apply outside the world to account for the world itself.

### Resources

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| **Extracts** | Immanuel Kant, *Transcendental Dialectic, Book II, Chapter III*  *The transcendental principle whereby from the contingent we infer a cause. This principle is applicable only in the sensible world; outside that world it has no meaning whatsoever. For the mere intellectual concept of the contingent cannot give rise to any synthetic proposition, such as that of causality. The principle of causality has no meaning and no criterion for its application save only in the sensible world. But in the cosmological proof it is precisely in order to enable us to advance beyond the sensible world that it is employed.* |
| **Videos** | [Refuting the argument from causation](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21xaQcugUJU). |
| **Further Reading** | David Hume, [*An Enquire Concerning Human Understanding*](http://fitelson.org/confirmation/hume_enquiry.pdf), Section IV part 1 [24] on causation  [William of Ockham on the Cosmological Proof](https://www.iep.utm.edu/ockham/#SH6bii). |

### Evaluation of the argument

How does How successful is Immanuel Kant in showing that causation does not prove the existence of God?

**Consider the following:**

* Is Aquinas’ argument logical (the conclusion follows from the premises) and sound (the premises are true)?
* To what extend is Aquinas’ argument *a posteriori* (based in experience)?
* How convincing is Aquinas’ argument?
* Who can you use to support Aquinas?
* What part of Aquinas’ argument is being challenged by Kant?
* How convincing is Kant’s challenge?
* Who can you use to support Kant?
* Can Aquinas’ argument respond to Kant’s challenge?

# Existence of God: Necessity

## St Thomas Aquinas’ argument from necessity

### Overview

St Thomas Aquinas was a 13th Century theologian who incorporated many of Aristotle’s ideas regarding the Prime Mover into his own arguments for God’s existence appearing as five “ways” in his *Summa Theologica*.

Aquinas’ third way was his way from necessity and it goes like this:

**Premise 1**:Observation shows that all things come into and go out of existence, they are contingent.

**Premise 2**:Nothing that is contingent can explain itself, i.e. nothing can bring itself into existence.

**Premise 3**:At one time, all things that exist were not in existence, so something had to necessarily exist to bring something contingent into existence.

**Premise 4**:Necessity and contingency cannot regress infinitely or nothing would have come into existence at all.

**Premise 5**:There must be a necessary being that explains its own existence.

**Conclusion**: The necessary being is that which we call God.

### Resources

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| **Key Terms** | **Necessity**: *noun* The state of being required for initial or ongoing existenceof something, e.g. my parents are necessary for my birth and the air is necessary for my ongoing survival.  **Contingency**: *noun* A state of dependency on something else for initial or ongoing existence, e.g. I am contingent upon my parents for my birth and air for my ongoing survival.  **Eternity of the world**: The belief that the world was made eternal infinite time backwards as opposed to having a fixed point of creation in the past. |
| **Extracts** | **St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica Part 1, Question 2, Article 3***  *We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be… If everything is possible not to be, then at one time there could have been nothing in existence… If at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist… Therefore we cannot but postulate the existence of some being having of itself its own necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity. This all men speak of as God.* |
| **Videos** | Crash Course Philosophy – [Aquinas and the Cosmological Argument](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TgisehuGOyY) 4m 10s to 5m 10s.  Peter Kreeft’s: [The Thomist Cosmological Argument](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wefohtJBnN8) 6m 20s onwards. |

### Knowledge of the argument

1. What is the argument from necessity?
2. What is the relationship between necessity and contingency?
3. What is the difference between initial and ongoing necessity and contingency?
4. How does the argument from necessity work if the world is eternal?
5. How does the argument from necessity work if the world has a fixed point of creation?
6. What is a necessity being?
7. Why does Aquinas think that there must be a necessary being?
8. What does Aquinas mean by: the necessary being is “that which we call God”?

## David Hume’s responses to the argument from necessity

### Overview

David Hume was an 18th Century empiricist and philosopher who wrote the influential Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion in which he presents a number of challenges against and fallacies within various arguments for God’s existence.

One of his challenges against the cosmological argument is the problem with necessary existence. He argued that no existential proposition is logically necessary, meaning that no statement regarding the existence of something is necessary, that is, it has to be true. Instead, he argued that anything that can be thought to exist can also be thought of not to exist. So, when Aquinas states that there must be a God who is necessary, Hume rejects it and says that if we can think of it as existing then we can think of it as not existing.

### Resources

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| **Extracts** | David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Part IX [189]  *Nothing is demonstrable, unless the contrary implies a contradiction. Nothing, that is distinctly conceivable, implies a contradiction. Whatever we conceive as existent, we can also conceive as non-existent. There is no being, therefore, whose non- existence implies a contradiction. Consequently there is no being, whose existence is demonstrable. I propose this argument as entirely decisive, and am willing to rest the whole controversy upon it.* |
| **Videos** | [Hume’s objections to the cosmological argument](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RF6GVgZgiWA&t=18s).  [Leibniz’ contingency argument](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPCzEP0oD7I).  [Joshua Rasmussen on reasons to believe in a necessary being](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zEzQovw6Fr0). |
| **Further Reading** | [The Analytic and Synthetic Distinction](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/analytic-synthetic/).  [Reconsidering the necessary being of Aquinas’ third way](https://philarchive.org/archive/ROBRTN-5). |

### Evaluation of the argument

How successful is the claim that no existential proposition is logically necessary?

**Consider the following:**

* Is Aquinas’ argument logical (the conclusion follows from the premises) and sound (the premises are true)?
* To what extend is Aquinas’ argument *a posteriori* (based in experience)?
* How convincing is Aquinas’ argument?
* Who can you use to support Aquinas?
* What part of Aquinas’ argument is being challenged by Hume?
* How convincing is Hume’s challenge?
* Who can you use to support Hume?
* Can Aquinas’ argument respond to Hume’s challenge?

# Existence of God: Contingency

## Copleston’s argument from contingency

### Overview

In 1948, Fr Frederick Copleston, a Jesuit priest, and Bertrand Russell, a logician, participated in a debate on BBC radio on the existence of God. One of the topics being the Cosmological Argument. They presented their different perspectives, Copleston’s being a variation of the argument from contingency, and Russell’s being a critique of the process that would lead to the conclusion of God.

Copleston’s version of the argument was the argument from contingency which goes as follows:

**Premise 1**:Some things do not contain within themselves the reason for their existence.

**Premise 2**:The world is an aggregate of contingent things.

**Premise 3**:You need a sufficient reason to explain contingent things. If you find a reason that is the cause of its own existence well and good, if not look further.

**Premise 4**:If you go back infinitely you haven’t explained anything at all.

**Premise 5**:There must be a sufficient reason that holds within itself the reason for its existence.

**Conclusion**: This sufficient reason is God.

### Resources

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| **Key Terms** | **Sufficient reason**: *noun* A total explanation for the subject in question. |
| **Extracts** | **Frederick Copleston, BBC Radio Debate with Bertrand Russell, 1948**  *[W]e know that there are at least some beings in the world which do not contain in themselves the reason for their existence. For example, I depend on my parents, and now on the air, and on food, and so on. Now, secondly, the world is simply the real or imagined totality or aggregate of individual objects, none of which contain in themselves alone the reason of their existence. There isn't any world distinct from the objects which form it, any more than the human race is something apart from the members. Therefore, I should say, since objects or events exist, and since no object of experience contains within itself the reason of its existence, this reason, the totality of objects, must have a reason external to itself. And that reason must be an existent being. Well, this being is either itself the reason for its own existence, or it is not. If it is, well and good. If not, then we must proceed further. But if we proceed to infinity in that sense, then there's no explanation of existence at all. So, I should say, in order to explain existence, we must come to a Being which contains within itself the reason for its own existence, that is to say, which cannot not exist.* |
| **Videos** | [Russell-Copleston Debate on God](https://youtu.be/Kz2GjKPbQds?t=152) (1948) until 6m 41s. |

### Knowledge of the argument

1. What did Copleston mean by contingency?
2. What example does Copleston give for contingency?
3. What did Copleston mean by the world as the real or imagined totality of individual objects?
4. What is the human race, according to Copleston?
5. What does Copleston mean by the “reason for their existence”?
6. Why must the totality of objects have a reason external to itself?
7. Why does Copleston say we cannot proceed to infinity for a total reason?
8. What is God, according to Copleston’s argument?

## Russell’s response to Copleston’s argument from contingency

### Overview

In 1948, Fr Frederick Copleston, a Jesuit priest, and Bertrand Russell, a logician, participated in a debate on BBC radio on the existence of God. One of the topics being the Cosmological Argument. They presented their different perspectives, Copleston’s being a variation of the argument from contingency, and Russell’s being a critique of the process that would lead to the conclusion of God.

Russell’s response to Copleston was to attack his use of the word necessary:

* ‘Necessary’ only applies to analytic statements, not existential ones.
* A sufficient reason is unnecessary if you can explain what you are talking about, e.g. the reason for the flame is the striking of the match, that is it.
* The universe is a brute fact, there is no need to seek a total explanation for it.

### Resources

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| **Extracts** | Bertrand Russell, BBC Radio Debate with Bertrand Russell, 1948  *The word "necessary" I should maintain, can only be applied significantly to propositions. And, in fact, only to such as are analytic -- that is to say -- such as it is self-contradictory to deny. I could only admit a Necessary Being if there were a being whose existence it is self-contradictory to deny. I should like to know whether you would accept Leibniz's division of propositions into truths of reason and truths of fact. The former -- the truths of reason -- being necessary.*  *The difficulty of this argument is that I don't admit the idea of a Necessary Being and I don't admit that there is any particular meaning in calling other beings "contingent." These phrases don't for me have a significance except within a logic that I reject.* |
| **Videos** | [Russell-Copleston Debate on God](https://youtu.be/Kz2GjKPbQds?t=401) (1948) until end. |
| **Further Reading** | [Gottfied Leibniz’ Cosmological Argument](https://www3.nd.edu/~jspeaks/courses/2008-9/10100-spring/_LECTURES/5%20-%20Leibniz.pdf).  [Copleston and Russell’s arguments outlined](http://www.scandalon.co.uk/philosophy/cosmological_russell_copleston.htm). |

### Evaluation of the argument

Does the argument from contingency successfully show that there must necessarily be a God?

**Consider the following:**

* Is Copleston’s argument logical (the conclusion follows from the premises) and sound (the premises are true)?
* To what extend is Copleston’s argument *a posteriori* (based in experience)?
* How convincing is Copleston’s argument?
* Who can you use to support Copleston?
* What part of Copleston’s argument is being challenged by Russell?
* How convincing is Russell’s challenge?
* Who can you use to support Russell?
* Can Copleston’s argument respond to Russell’s challenge?

# Existence of God: Governance

## St Thomas Aquinas’ Fifth Way

### Overview

In the Fifth Way, Aquinas appeals to the governance of the world. He observes *a posteriori* that things move in accordance to a pre-existing law towards their purposes. In this way, the Fifth Way is a qua regularity teleological argument. Additionally, Aquinas argues that all things have a pre-existing purpose towards which they are directed. In this way, the Fifth Way is a qua purpose teleological argument.

Aquinas’ teleological argument goes as follows:

**Premise 1**:We observe that nature follows natural laws.

**Premise 2**:Things thrive as they obey natural laws.

**Premise 3**:Thinking things direct themselves towards their goals.

**Premise 4**:Non-thinking things must be directed towards their goals by an intelligence external to itself, e.g. the arrow is directed by that archer.

**Premise 5**:There must be a great intelligence external to the world that directs things to their goals.

**Conclusion**: That mind is what we all call God.

### Resources

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| **Key Terms** | **Qua regularity**: *adj.* Teleological arguments that appeal to regularity and laws that govern the world which themselves require establishing.  **Qua purpose**: *adj*. Teleological arguments that appeal to the apparent purpose within objects within the world which would require designing. |
| **Extracts** | **St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica Part 1, Question 2, Article 3***  *The fifth way is the governance of the world. We see that things which lack intelligence, 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 not fortuitously, but designedly, do they achieve their end.*  *Now whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end, unless it be directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence; as the arrow is shot to its mark by the archer.*  *Therefore, some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God.* |
| **Videos** | [Teleology](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uoPjFnqO7j4). |

### Knowledge of the argument

1. What is the argument from governance of the world?
2. What does Aquinas mean when he says things “thrive” when they obey natural laws?
3. What does Aquinas mean by natural laws?
4. What does the example of the archer and arrow show?
5. What does Aquinas by things lacking intelligence?
6. How is Aquinas’ argument qua regularity and qua purpose?
7. Why does Aquinas think that there must be an intelligent being?
8. What does Aquinas mean by: the intelligent being…we call God?

## David Hume’s response to the argument from governance

### Overview

David Hume was an 18th Century empiricist and philosopher who wrote the influential Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion in which he presents a number of challenges against and fallacies within various arguments for God’s existence.

One of his challenges against the teleological argument is the problem with induction:

* Our knowledge of causes and effects is based on our own experiences of the world.
* When we see a house, we know it was built by people because we have experienced construction of houses.
* We have no experience of worlds being made and so we have no experience of what makes worlds.
* Conclusion: No experiences of the world can induce the conclusion that there is a creator the world.

### Resources

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| **Extracts** | **David Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, Part II [144]**  *If we see a house, Cleanthes, we conclude, with the greatest certainty, that it had an architect or builder; because this is precisely that species of effect which we have experienced to proceed from that species of cause. But surely you will not affirm, that the universe bears such a resemblance to a house that we can with the same certainty infer a similar cause, or that the analogy is here entire and perfect. The dissimilitude is so striking, that the utmost you can here pretend to is a guess, a conjecture, a presumption concerning a similar cause; and how that pretension will be received in the world, I leave you to consider.* |
| **Videos** | [Hume’s objections to the teleological argument](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czDqAqAq0Jc). |
| **Further Reading** | [Teleological Argument Criticisms](https://courses.lumenlearning.com/sanjacinto-philosophy/chapter/teleological-argument-criticisms/).  Richard Swinburne, [Simplicity as Evidence of Truth](https://philarchive.org/archive/LANSOT-3). |

### Evaluation of the argument

“The governance of the world proves that there must be a God.” Discuss.

**Consider the following:**

* Is Aquinas’ argument logical (the conclusion follows from the premises) and sound (the premises are true)?
* To what extend is Aquinas’ argument *a posteriori* (based in experience)?
* How convincing is Aquinas’ argument?
* Who can you use to support Aquinas?
* What part of Aquinas’ argument is being challenged by Hume?
* How convincing is Hume’s challenge?
* Who can you use to support Hume?
* Can Aquinas’ argument respond to Hume’s challenge?

# Existence of God: Design

## William Paley’s Design Argument

### Overview

William Paley wrote Natural Theology in which he described his observations of the world and the order that appeared within it. Based on his observations he concluded that there must be a designer God.

Paley’s argument goes along these lines:

1. By observation we can see that many things are perfectly suited for the tasks they perform, e.g. the duck’s webbed feet, the swan’s long neck, the human eye etc.
2. These things thrive because they are fit for purpose.
3. These things could not happen randomly as they are too well fit for their purposes.
4. They must be designed for their purposes.
5. Where there is design there is a designer.
6. Conclusion: That designer is God.

### Resources

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| **Key Terms** | **Purpose**: *noun* Reason for which a thing has been made and intended.  **Design**: *noun* The form that something takes to fulfil a purpose. |
| **Extracts** | **William Paley, *Natural Theology*, The watch analogy**  *Suppose I pitched my foot against a stone and were asked how the stone came to be there, I might possibly answer that for anything I knew to the contrary it had lain there forever. But suppose I had found a watch upon the ground, and it should be inquired how the watch happened to be in that place, I should hardly think of the answer which I had before given, that for anything I knew the watch might have always been there.*  *This mechanism being observed the inference we think is inevitable, that the watch must have had a maker-that there must have existed, at some time and at some place or other, an artificer or artificers who formed it for the purpose which we find it actually to answer, who comprehended its construction and designed its use.*  *Suppose, in the next place, that the person who found the watch should after some time discover that it possessed the unexpected property of producing in the course of its movement another watch like itself. The first effect would be to increase his admiration of the contrivance, and his conviction of the consummate skill of the contriver.* |
| **Videos** | Crash Course Philosophy, [Intelligent Design](https://youtu.be/7e9v_fsZB6A?t=60) to 3m 20s. |

### Knowledge of the Argument

1. What does it mean to be fit for purpose?
2. What examples does Paley give of things that are fit for purpose? How are they?
3. What does it mean to say that something is designed?
4. What is the difference between the stone and the watch?
5. What comparison is Paley drawing between a watch and a human being?
6. What conclusion does Paley draw regarding the artificer or artificers?
7. What does Paley mean by the discovery that a watch could produce other watches?
8. Why must there be a God according to Paley?

## David Hume’s response to the design argument

### Overview

23 years before William Paley wrote *Natural Theology*, David Hume wrote *Dialogues Concerning* *Natural Religion* in which he presented a series of challenges against design arguments. Dialogues was not a response to Paley, but a response to arguments like the one Paley presented.

Two of Hume min challenges against the design argument are as follows:

* **Problem with analogy**: The teleological argument attempts to draw an analogy between the world and something that is evidently designed. But the universe is not a mechanical model, so there is no obvious sense in talking about the universe as being orderly as a machine.
* **The fallacy with inference**: We cannot infer order in the universe as the world is “red in tooth and claw” with no evidence of order. Apparent order does not infer actual intended order. Apparent order may have resulted from chaos.

### Resources

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| **Extracts** | **Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker*, chapter 1**  *Paley's argument is made with passionate sincerity and is informed by the best biological scholarship of his day, but it is wrong, gloriously and utterly wrong. The analogy between telescope and eye, between watch and living organism, is false. All appearances to the contrary, the only watchmaker in nature is the blind forces of physics, albeit deployed in a very special way. A true watchmaker has foresight: he designs his cogs and springs, and plans their interconnections, with a future purpose in his mind's eye. Natural selection, the blind, unconscious, automatic process which Darwin discovered, and which we now know is the explanation for the existence and apparently purposeful form of all life, has no purpose in mind. It has no mind and no mind's eye. It does not plan for the future. It has no vision, no foresight, no sight at all. If it can be said to play the role of watchmaker in nature, it is the blind watchmaker.* |
| **Videos** | Crash Course Philosophy, [Intelligent Design](https://youtu.be/7e9v_fsZB6A?t=200).  Hume’s rejection of the [teleological argument](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czDqAqAq0Jc). |
| **Further Reading** | [Hume’s Criticisms of the design argument](https://www3.nd.edu/~jspeaks/courses/mcgill/201/Hume-Dialogues.pdf).  John Stuart Mill, [*On Nature*](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mill-john-stuart/1874/nature.htm)*.* |

### Evaluate the Argument

“Hume successfully shows that apparent design cannot prove God’s existence.” Discuss.

**Consider the following:**

* Is William Paley’s argument logical (the conclusion follows from the premises) and sound (the premises are true)?
* To what extend is Paley’s argument *a posteriori* (based in experience)?
* How convincing is Paley’s argument?
* Who can you use to support Paley?
* What part of Paley’s argument is being challenged by Hume?
* How convincing is Hume’s challenge?
* Who can you use to support Hume?
* Can Paley’s argument respond to Hume’s challenge?

# Existence of God: Anselm’s Ontological argument

## Anselm’s Ontological Argument

### Overview

St Anselm was a Benedictine Monk who became the Archbishop of Canterbury. His philosophy was Faith, Seeking, Understanding. This means that it is through faith that we can start to understand anything. He wanted to prove the existence of God beyond any doubt. He sought to do this by showing that God’s existence was a logical certainty and self-contradictory to deny.

In chapter 1 of the Proslogion, Anselm reflects on the fool who says in his heart that there is no God. Anselm considers that the fool knows what God is and so is a fool for believing that God does not exist.

**Premise 1**: God is a being than which nothing greater can be conceived. Even the fool can understand this definition.

**Premise 2**: It is greater to exist in the mind and reality than in the mind alone. The idea of the actual painting is greater than the idea of the potential painting.

**Premise 3**: in order for God to be that than which nothing greater can be conceived, God must exist in mind and reality.

**Conclusion**: God exists.

### Resources

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| **Key Terms** | **Ontology**: *noun* The study of the existence of things.  **Analytic**: *Adj.* A statement that is self-contradictory to deny, e.g. bachelors are unmarried men, 2+2=4, triangles have three angles.  **Synthetic**: *Adj.* A statement that needs to be experienced to be proven true or false, e.g. This bachelor is named David, I have 4 cars, this triangle is blue. |
| **Extracts** | **St Anselm, *Proslogion*, chapter 2**  *For, it is one thing for an object to be in the understanding, and another to understand that the object exists. When a painter first conceives of what he will afterwards perform, he has it in his understanding, but be does not yet understand it to be, because he has not yet performed it. But after he has made the painting, be both has it in his understanding, and he understands that it exists, because he has made it.* |
| **Videos** | Crash Course Philosophy – [Ontological Argument](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmTsS5xFA6k) |

### Knowledge of the argument

1. How is the Ontological Argument *a priori*?
2. What does Anselm mean when he says that the fool says in his heart “there is no God”?
3. What is Anselm’s definition of God? Why does he postulate this definition?
4. What are the two “ideas” being compared in the example of the painter?
5. What does it mean to say: “it is greater to exist in the mind and reality that the mind alone”?
6. What kind of God exists in the mind alone? Give some examples.
7. Why must God exist in the mind and reality?
8. Anselm’s 2nd version stated God must be necessary. is necessity greater than contingency?

## Gaunilo’s Response to the Ontological Argument

### Overview

Gaunilo was a contemporary of St Anselm who responded to the Ontological Argument in his own work, *On Behalf of the Fool*, in which he presented a number of examples to show how Anselm was going from truth in word (**de dicto**) to truth in reality (**de re**), which was a logical fallacy. He argued that while we understand Anselm’s definitions we are not committed to accepting them in reality.

Gaunilo gave two examples to show that Anselm’s argument was illogical:

* **Example of the rumour**: Suppose I should be given the description of a man in all particulars. I would form the idea in my mind. Just because I can form the idea in my mind does not mean that I am committed to accepting this man’s existence in reality.
* **The Island**: Suppose one should describe to me the perfect island. Now suppose they were to say that because I can conceive of the perfect island I must commit myself to believing that this island exists in reality. To do this would be to define the island into existence.

### Resources

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| **Extracts** | **Gaunilo, *On Behalf of the Fool***  *This being is said to be in my understanding already, only because I understand what is said. …I have in my understanding all manner of unreal objects, having absolutely no existence in themselves, because I understand these things if one speaks of them, whatever they may be?*  *Suppose that I should hear something said of a man absolutely unknown to me, of whose very existence I was unaware. Through that special or general knowledge by which I know what man is, or what men are, I could conceive of him also, according to the reality itself, which man is.*  *It is said that somewhere in the ocean is an island … more excellent than all other countries… If a man should try to prove to me by such reasoning that this island truly exists, and that its existence should no longer be doubted…I know not which I ought to regard as the greater fool.* |
| **Videos** | [Gaunilo’s Perfect Island](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQQyascKcyA).  [Rethinking the Ontological Argument](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDVTaGEtNdM). |
| **Further Reading** | [Anselm’s Apologetic](https://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/ans/ans114.htm) Ch1.  [Anselm’s Ontological Argument](https://www.iep.utm.edu/ont-arg/).  Alvin Plantinga’s Reply, [God, Freedom and Evil](https://spot.colorado.edu/~heathwoo/phil3600,Fall06/3600handout07ontological.pdf), II Objections 4. |

### Evaluate of the argument

“The ontological argument proves logically that God must necessarily exist.” Discuss

**Consider the following:**

* Is St Anselm’s argument logical (the conclusion follows from the premises) and sound (the premises are true)?
* To what extend is Anselm’s argument *a priori* (based in reason)?
* How convincing is Anselm’s argument?
* Who can you use to support Anselm?
* What part of Anselm’s argument is being challenged by Gaunilo?
* How convincing is Gaunilo’s challenge?
* Who can you use to support Gaunilo?
* Can Anselm’s argument respond to Gaunilo’s challenge?

# Existence of God: Descartes’ Ontological

## Descartes’ Ontological Argument

### Overview

René Descartes was a 17th Century mathematician and philosopher, called the father or modern philosophy. He wrote his *Meditations* in which he conducted a process of hyperbolic doubt and drew the conclusion that the only thing that he could know with absolute certainty was “Cogito ergo sum” (I think therefore I am). He then went on a process of trying to prove the rest of the world analytically and in-so-doing he presented his own version of the ontological argument.

His argument considers the following:

* God is the sum of all perfections.
* Existence is a predicate of God’s perfection as three angles are a predicate of triangles.
* God must therefore possess existence.
* While we cannot prove God, we can discover God as God has stamped us with an understanding of him as a workman stamps his creation.

### Resources

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| **Key Terms** | **Predicate**: *noun* A feature of an object that makes it what it is; an incidental predicate does not change what it is, e.g. a blue fish or a red fish is still a fish, an essential predicate does, e.g. a creature without gills is not a fish. |
| **Extracts** | **René Descartes, Meditations V**  *As regards God, if I were not overwhelmed by philosophical prejudices, and if the images of things perceived by the senses did not besiege my thought on every side, I would certainly acknowledge him sooner and more easily than anything else. For what is more manifest than the fact that the supreme being exists, or that God, to whose essence alone existence belongs, exists?*  *[…]*  *Existence can no more be separated from the essence of God than can its having three angels equal to two right angles be separated from the essence of a triangle, or the idea of a mountain from the idea of a valley.* |
| **Videos** | [Descartes’ ontological argument](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGcu4TZmBhM). |

### Knowledge of the argument

1. What is the difference between essential and incidental predicates?
2. What are the essential predicates of a triangle? What are possible incidental predicates of a triangle?
3. What did René Descartes mean when he said that you can’t separate the idea of a valley from a mountain?
4. What does it mean to say that God is the sum of all perfections?
5. What does Descartes say about God’s existence?
6. What does Descartes mean when he says we are stamped with knowledge of God?
7. What is hyperbolic doubt? Why did Descartes say “I think therefore I am”?
8. How is Descartes’ version of the ontological argument *a priori*?

## Immanuel Kant’s response to Descartes

### Overview

Immanuel Kant rejected Descartes’ Ontological Argument on the basis that he argued that existence is not a predicate. He said that we cannot speak of existence in the same way as of other predicates.

He presented his response in the form of the S is P challenge:

* Whenever we describe a predicate of some subject we do so in the form S (subject) is P (predicate), e.g. grass (subject) is green (predicate).
* In deliberating whether or not S is in fact P, we must instantiate it, then observe it.
* Once we have instantiated S, there is no question of its existence.
* Therefore, stating “God exists” is not using the term “exists” as a predicate.
* So, existence does not operate as a predicate.

### Resources

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| **Extracts** | **Bertrand Russell, The Philosophy of Logical Atomism (1918-19) Lecture 5: General Propositions and Existence**  *Existence is essentially a property of a propositional function. It means that that propositional function is true in at least one instance. If you say “There are unicorns,” that will mean that “There is an x such that x is a unicorn.” That is written in phrasing which is unduly approximated to ordinary language; the proper way to put it would be “(x is a unicorn) is possible.”* |
| **Videos** | [Kant’s objection to the ontological argument](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqrRl-1UT70).  [Clockwork universe](https://sda.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/media/big-questions/harrison/clockwork-metaphor/). |
| **Further Reading** | Immanuel Kant, [Transcendental Dialectic Book II, Chapter III, Section 4](https://www.fortthomas.kyschools.us/userfiles/413/Classes/27675/Kants%20Refutation%20of%20the%20Ontological%20Argument.htm)  Immanuel Kant, [*Critique of Pure Reason*](http://strangebeautiful.com/other-texts/kant-first-critique-cambridge.pdf)*, 1781, Book 2, Chapter 3.*  Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, [Existence](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/existence/). |

### Evaluation of the argument

Does Immanuel Kant successfully show that God’s existence does not operate as a predicate?

**Consider the following:**

* Is René Descartes’ argument logical (the conclusion follows from the premises) and sound (the premises are true)?
* To what extend is Descartes’ argument *a priori* (based in reason)?
* How convincing is Descartes’ argument?
* Who can you use to support Descartes?
* What part of Descartes’ argument is being challenged by Kant?
* How convincing is Kant’s challenge?
* Who can you use to support Kant?
* Can Descartes’ argument respond to Kant’s challenge?