

Two Proofs of God's Existence

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My defense of theism will proceed by way of defending the classical arguments for the existence of God. I also said that my defense of the arguments would follow an earlier defense of them by Julian Hartt.

Hartt's defense of these ... arguments is extremely interesting and worthy of careful study. He mentions that: (a) there are several all-pervasive, broad characteristics of the world (universe)—or features of the world—which we experience; (b) each of the three *a posteriori* arguments focuses on one (or more) of these features; and (c) in each case, the feature(s) can only be explained by, and thus necessitate(s) the existence of, a being who is transcendent to the universe: God.

What are these features? And which of the three arguments focuses on which feature? We may put this in the form of a table:

<i>Argument</i>	<i>Feature (of universe)</i>
1. First-Cause (Cosmological)	finitude; contingency
2. Design (Teleological)	purposiveness; purposeful adaptation and arrangement

Again, in Hartt's view, these are objective features of the world (universe) which we experience, and each necessitates the existence of a (transcendent and infinite) God.

1. *The First-Cause (Cosmological) Argument.* The first-cause argument calls attention to and begins with the feature of *finitude and the related feature of contingency*. The argument also makes use of and rests on the notion of a *first cause* in connection with those features. Thus we find three variations. These different themes can give rise to several forms of the first-cause argument, or all of them can be included in a single argument. I propose to defend the cosmological argument by reformulating it as follows:

Everything in the universe is finite.

Whatever is finite is limited.

Hence, whatever is limited cannot be the cause of its own existence.

Everything in the universe is contingent.

Whatever is contingent is dependent on something else for its existence.

Hence, whatever is contingent cannot be the cause of its own existence.

The totality of things making up the universe is also finite and contingent.

Thus, the totality (universe) must also have a cause for its existence.

Since it cannot be the cause of its own existence, the cause must be something external to the universe.

That is, since the universe cannot contain the reason for its existence within itself, the reason for its existence must be something external to it.

Hence, there must exist an infinite and self-subsistent (non-contingent) being who is the cause of the universe.

Unlike that which is finite and contingent, such a being must exist necessarily.

Such a being is commonly called God.

Therefore, there exists an infinite, necessary, and uncaused cause—God.

Someone may object: But why does the universe as a totality need a cause or explanation? Why can it not have existed infinitely in time? I reply: let us suppose it did. Then what the cosmological argument seeks is to provide answers to some questions: (1) Why does anything exist at all? (2) Why does it exist as it does rather than some other way? Or (1) Why is there a world at all? (2) Why is there this kind of universe rather than some other one? The answer is: Because of the purpose of an unlimited, infinite, and necessary being—an ultimate first cause which is itself uncaused—God.

In summary: Why does the fact that the universe is finite and contingent necessitate God's existence? The answer is that whatever is finite is limited. Hence, it cannot cause itself. And whatever is contingent is dependent on something else for its existence. Hence, it cannot be the cause of its own existence. The universe—as well as everything in it—is finite and contingent. There is nothing about it to indicate that it could be the cause of its own existence. Since it cannot be the cause of its own existence, it must have been caused by something else—a being external to the universe. Therefore, such a being must exist: an unlimited, necessary, and uncaused cause—God.

2. *The Design (Teleological) Argument.* The design argument calls attention to another feature of the universe, that of *purposiveness*, or purposeful adaptation of means to ends.

The word *teleological* comes from the Greek word *telos*, meaning purpose or goal. Theism is a teleological metaphysics through and through. Hence, it is understandable and natural for there to be arguments which focus on the

notion of purpose. Among them is the teleological argument for the existence of God. This argument claims that the many features of design, purpose, and adaptation in the universe are indications of a Cosmic Intelligence or Mind—God—which designed, planned, and brought the universe into existence, I propose to defend the teleological argument by reformulating it as follows:

Suppose that while walking along an ocean beach, or a barren field, we come upon an object, such as a watch.

If we examine the watch, we find that it shows evidence of purpose and design.

We detect orderliness and intricacy.

We find an adaptation of means to ends (the parts are arranged to work together to enable the hands to move and to enable us to tell time).

All of this is evidence of rationality and design.

Hence, there exists a rational being who designed and brought the watch into being.

Similarly:

Look out at the universe and the things within it.

The universe also shows evidence of design and purpose.

We detect orderliness and intricacy.

Moreover, we find a marvelous adaptation of means to ends.

An example of such adaptation is the existence of two sexes for the end of procreation or the structure of the eye for the end of seeing.

All this is also evidence of rationality and design.

Hence, there must exist a rational being who designed and brought the universe into existence.

That is, there must exist a Cosmic Designer—God.

It may be objected: But could not the universe have resulted from chance? I reply: Although there may be chance *in* the universe, the universe *itself* is not the product of chance but of *intelligent purpose*. The environment in which we find ourselves is not a fortuitously functioning mechanism; nor is it an organism. It is imbued with purpose. Everyone admits that humans show evidence of mind and purposive behavior—as in designing and making a house. But we cannot suppose that purposeful activity is limited to humans and that everything else in nature is blind or the result of sheer chance. Why not? Because *our* minds, our intelligent planning, have not made the universe. Therefore, there must exist a being who designed the universe and brought it into existence.

In summary: Why does the fact that the universe is purposeful necessitate God's existence? The reason is that whatever is purposeful shows signs of intelligence—mind. Hence, what is purposive cannot have come about accidentally, or from something non-purposive. Hence, the only way to explain the purposiveness in the universe is: It got here because of the thought, design, and activity of a Cosmic Intelligence—God.

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