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God

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What is *Metaphysics*?

This is a metaphysics course... but what is metaphysics??
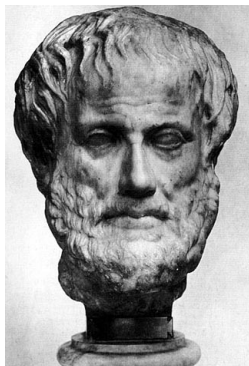
- Greek words $\mu\varepsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}$ (*meta*) (meaning 'after') and $\varphi\upsilon\sigma\iota\kappa\acute{\alpha}$ (*physika*) (meaning 'physics'), 'physics' referring to those works on matter by Aristotle (C5 BCE) and *meta-* ('after') meaning those chapters in Aristotle after his physics. Aristotle called them 'first philosophy'.

- Later, *meta-* took the sense of 'beyond' or 'transcending' physics or the physical world

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Hence, metaphysics is sometimes identified with a field of inquiry that investigates principles of reality transcending any particular science. However, there are really two very different views on the subject...

1. Metaphysics is continuous with science, asking the same kinds of questions and tackling them with the same resources, etc. The main difference is that metaphysics pursues more abstract questions than science does and the answers lie further from experiment than in what we call science.

2. Metaphysics is a distinct type of inquiry using distinct methods and drawing upon distinct resources. If experiment could in principle decide an issue then the question isn't metaphysical.

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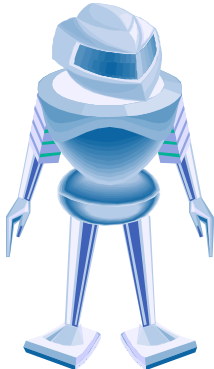The Problem of Evil

Fortunately, we needn't decide this meta-metaphysical issue, for all sides ask the questions we will, and everyone agrees these fascinating questions are in some sense metaphysical. For the purposes of an introductory class, we needn't answer this question. Here are some questions we will try to answer:

- Does God exist?

- Does time flow?

- Are there laws of nature?

- What is causation?

- What gives a person identity over time?

- Are minds identical with some type of matter?

- Do we have free will?

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Philosophical Arguments

Philosophy is primarily the rigorous and exacting study of fundamental questions about the world and the way we interact with it. As such, philosophers are concerned with finding good, convincing reasons to hold various beliefs about the world. We're consequently very interested in good arguments. But what makes an argument a good one, and are there different types of argument? Answering this question is our first order of priority. Before examining any philosophical question in depth, we must develop certain logical and philosophical techniques. To this end, we will spend some time thinking about arguments.

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Asimov Sci-Fi Story

Based on Isaac Asimov, *I, Robot* (1950).

1. My super-intelligence and super strength are vastly superior to ordinary (= human) intelligence and strength.

2. It is impossible for any being to create something vastly superior to itself.

3. I possess super-intelligence and super-strength.

4. By 1,2,3, therefore, I could not have been created by human beings.

5. But every temporally finite being must have been created.

6. Hence, there exists a creature superior to human beings who created me.

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Deductive Arguments

- A deductive proof is one whose conclusion is meant to follow with certainty.

- Two properties of deductive arguments particularly concern us, namely, validity and soundness.

- Validity, in philosophical parlance, is a feature of deductive arguments and not simple statements. Deductively valid arguments are such that their conclusion is guaranteed to be true *if* their premises are true. These inferences are, in other words, truth-preserving.

- An argument is valid if and only if (iff) its premises cannot all be true and its conclusion false.

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- This simply codifies what was said just above. Notice that an argument may be valid even if its premises are false and conclusion true, if its premises are false and its conclusions false, and of course, if its premises are true and its conclusion true. Validity is a feature of the argument structure—its logical form—and not a feature of the 'content' of the premises and conclusion. Although we're not going to study logic and learn the correct logical inferences, the idea is easy enough to see.

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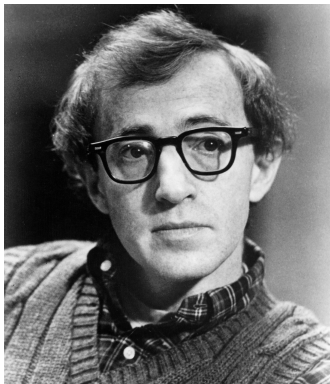| {true}	{true}	{false}	{false}
False	True	False	True

Validity rules out only the first set. The logical structure of a valid argument makes it such that it cannot be (not just is not) the case that the premises are true and conclusion false.

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Woody Allen Syllogism

(from the movie *Love and Death* (1975))

1. All men are mortal.

2. Socrates is a man.

---

3. Therefore, all men are Socrates.

(Again, premises 1 and 2 are both obviously true.)

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Is this argument valid?

1. All Californians are surfers.
2. President Putin is a Californian.
3. Therefore President Putin is a surfer.

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Examples: valid or invalid?

1 If I can fly, I can get to UCSD from home in 5 minutes.

2 I can fly.

3 I can get to UCSD in 5 minutes.

1 If I can fly, I can get to UCSD from home in 5 minutes.

2 I can't get to UCSD from home in 5 minutes.

3 I can't fly.

1 If I can fly, I can get to UCSD from home in 5 minutes.

2 I can't fly.

3 I can't get to UCSD in 5 minutes.

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Soundness

- Soundness is easy.
- An argument is sound iff the argument is valid and the premises are true.
- From the definition of validity, therefore, we know that a sound argument must have a true conclusion.
- Returning to the robot's argument, we can evaluate it for validity and soundness...
- An examination of (2) leads us to another philosophical distinction. (2) is an example of an *a priori* proposition (and thus one can say the robot's argument is partly an a priori one). An a priori proposition, roughly, is a statement about the world drawn independently of observation and experiment.

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- Logical truths, mathematical statements, and so-called 'analytic' statements such as 'All bachelors are unmarried men' are allegedly *a priori*. Statements that are not a priori are called a posteriori. Some *a priori* propositions need to be carefully scrutinized.

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Deductive Arguments for the Existence of God

1. If God exists, then God exists.

2. God exists.

3. Therefore, God exists.

1. Everything the Bible says is true.

2. The Bible says that God exists.

3. Therefore, God exists.

Question-begging!

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The Existence of God

- Throughout human history, people have believed in various super-human creatures, who are typically understood as more powerful and knowing than we are and sometimes viewed as morally superior. Sometimes this creature or these creatures are thought to have created the world.

- There are literally thousands of posited deities.
  http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_deities

- But what are the arguments for their existence? Theology generally assumes the existence of the deity of interest, but philosophy doesn't. Should we be atheists, agnostics, or theists? This question is of great interest to metaphysics.

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Avicenna (c. 980-1037)

- influential Muslim thinker of Persian origin

- polymath: music, philosophy, theology, logic, mathematics, medicine, astronomy...

- came up with what he thought was an incontrovertible proof for the existence of God

- tried to establish God's existence by reason and logic alone

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Avicennian metaphysics: modality

(cf. also Peter Adamson's interview for *Philosophy Bites* on the course website)

- modality: possibility, necessity, impossibility
- distinction between essence and existence
- $\Rightarrow$ contingent being: essence is neutral with respect to its existence ($\Rightarrow$ possibility)
- $\Rightarrow$ impossible being: essence guarantees that it doesn't exist, e.g. 'round square' ($\Rightarrow$ impossibility)
- $\Rightarrow$ necessary being (e.g. God): essence is such that it guarantees that the thing exists ($\Rightarrow$ necessity)

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Avicenna's Proof for the Existence of God

- We need to explain why some particular contingent being exists, i.e. we need a cause outside of the being

⇒ chain of (contingent) causes

- Question: could there be worlds such that everything in them is caused by something else and all these causes are merely possible?

- Avicenna: no, there cannot be an infinite regress of contingent causes (think of fathers all the way down).

- Avicenna: entire chain of causes is itself contingent, i.e. needs a cause to explain its existence. (Objection: fallacy of composition, see below)

- This cause cannot itself be contingent, it must be external to the chain, it must be a necessary existent, i.e. God. □

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Early Criticisms in the Muslim Tradition

- Proof doesn't tell us anything about the qualities God has. Avicenna is aware of this and tries to derive all the usual divine attributes from the notion of necessity (e.g. get omnipotence from fact that there is no other causal influence that's brought to bear on God)

- Distinction between the 'necessary in itself' vs the 'necessary through another': God is the only thing necessary in itself, everything else is necessary because of God. But this sounds very deterministic: world must always exist, and the only things that could exist are those that do exist (there are no genuine non-actual possibilities).

- If God's existence and character all defined by necessity, God doesn't choose to do anything, has no free will. Response: you seem to be asking for a God who is merely possible, but in this case we would need a cause for God $\Rightarrow$ back to regress

- Causation could be circular, in which case we would not need to postulate a first cause.

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St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

St Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* contains five famous proofs of the existence of God—sometimes called the 'five ways'. What follows is the first.

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The Argument from Motion

"The first and most manifest way is the argument from motion. It is certain, and evident to our senses, that in the world some things are in motion. Now whatever is moved is moved by another [object]... If that by which it is moved be itself moved, then this also needs be moved by another, and that by another again. But this cannot go on to infinity, because then there would be no first mover, and consequently, no other mover, seeing that subsequent movers move only inasmuch as they are moved by the first mover; as the staff moves only because it is moved by the hand. Therefore it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, moved by no other; and this everyone understands to be God."

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Reformulated Argument from Motion

1. Some of the objects in the world are in motion.

2. Whatever moves was set in motion by something else.

3. Therefore, by (1) and (2), either there is a First Mover (who is self-moving) or there are an infinite regress of movers.

4. But there cannot be an infinite regress of movers since there would then be no time at which the objects would ever be set in motion.

5. Therefore, there exists a First Mover.

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First Cause

1. Every effect has a cause.

2. An infinite regress of causes and effects is impossible.

3. Therefore, there must be a first cause.

4. If there is a first cause, then it is God.

5. God exists.

(2): why can't a series of causes and effects be infinite? Think of the number line: ...-2, -1, 0, 1, 2...

(4): why is first cause God? If God = omnipotent being, then it seems question-begging; if 'God' just name for the first cause, then the Big Bang might have just earned the denomination 'God'.

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Contingency of the Universe (Aquinas' 'Third Way')

cf. also Avicenna's proof above

1. A contingent being (something which can come into or out of existence) exists, e.g., a tuna sandwich.

2. This contingent being depends on something else for its existence, e.g., the sandwich maker.

3. That which causes the existence of any contingent being must be either another contingent being or a non-contingent being.

4. By (1), (2), (3), the cause of the existence of any contingent being must be either an infinite series of contingent beings or a non-contingent being.

5. An infinite series of contingent beings is incapable of providing a sufficient reason for the existence of any being.

6. Therefore, a non-contingent (necessary) being exists.

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David Hume (1711-1776): Criticisms

Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (1779)

- No a priori reason to believe everything has a cause or an explanation—and no a posteriori reason either.
- Fallacy of composition (fallacious inference that something is true of the whole from the fact that it is true of some part(s) of the whole)
- Who caused God?
- Why believe things are ultimately intelligible to human beings?
- Doesn't prove that God is omnipotent, omni-benevolent, omniscient.

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Why is there something rather than nothing?

Read: Conee and Sider, Ch. 5

- *ex nihilo nihil fit* ('out of nothing nothing can come')
- Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR): there is an explanation for everything
- Hierarchical causation: *x* causes *y* to exist in such a way that *y* cannot continue to exist without *x*'s continued causal activity.
- ⇒ Why is there something rather than nothing?

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Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury (1033-1109)

The medieval philosopher Anselm devised one of the first so-called ontological arguments for the existence of God in his *Proslogion*. These arguments are characterized as being deductive, a priori arguments (as explained in lecture).

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"And indeed, we believe that thou art a being than which nothing greater can be conceived. Or is there no such nature, since the fool has said in his heart , there is no God? But at any rate, this very fool, when he hears of this being of which I speak—a being than which nothing greater can be conceived—understands what he hears, and what he understands is in his understanding; although he does not understand it to exist.

"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 he does not yet understand it to be, because he has not yet performed it. But after he has made the painting, he both has it in his understanding, and he understands that it exists, because he has made it.

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"Hence, even the fool is convinced that in the understanding, at least, than which nothing greater can be conceived. For, when he hears of this, he understands it. And whatever is understood exists in the understanding. And assuredly that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, cannot exist in the understanding alone. For, suppose it exists in the understanding alone: then it can be conceived to exist in reality, which is greater.

"Therefore, if that than which nothing greater can be conceived exists in the understanding alone, the very being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, is one, than which a greater can be conceived. But obviously this is impossible. Hence there is no doubt that there exists a being than which nothing greater can be conceived and that it exists both in the understanding and in reality."

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Reformulated... (Plantinga)

1. God exists in the understanding but not in reality. (Assumption)

2. Existence in reality is greater than existence in the understanding alone. (Premise)

3. A being having all of God's properties plus existence in reality can be conceived. (Premise)

4. A being having all of God's properties plus existence in reality is greater than God (From (1) and (2).)

5. A being greater than God can be conceived. (From (3) and (4).)

6. It is false that a being greater than God can be conceived. (From definition of 'God'.)

7. Hence, it is false that God exists in the understanding but not in reality. (From (1), (5), (6).)

8. God exists in the understanding. (Premise, to which even the Fool agrees.)

9. Hence God exists in reality. (From (7), (8).) □

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The Fool: Gaunilon's Perfect Island

Another philosopher, Gaunilon, famously replied to this argument in his 'On Behalf of the Fool'. He said the same reasoning would allow for an existential proof of anything, e.g., a perfect island. Thus, imagine an island than which no greater can exist. Isn't it greater if it exists than if it doesn't? To this Anselm claimed that Gaunilon didn't understand the argument. He insisted that it is part of the very concept of God that he necessarily exist, whereas it is not the case for the concept of a perfect island.

⇒ Reply to Gaunilon: Anselm means the best object conceivable, island or not. There are 'better' objects than perfect islands; 'God' is whatever is the best one.

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Existence

- Many famous philosophers assert that existence is not a 'real predicate', e.g., Immanuel Kant, Bertrand Russell, Norman Malcolm, John Hick.

- Kant: a 'real predicate' determines a thing, enlarges our concept of the subject. "A hundred real thalers do not contain the least coin more than a hundred possible thalers." (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A599, B628)

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William Rowe, 'The ontological argument'

- (1) The concept of God is such that he/she is existent.

- (2) Therefore, God exists.

  Invalid (because that concept need not be exemplified)

- (1′) The concept 'God' is defined such that 'he/she is existent and perfect'.

- (2′) Therefore, 'God' only applies to existing entities.

  Valid, but uninteresting. But it does follow that 'No nonexisting thing is God'. So if we add to (1′) and (2′)

- (3) Some possible object is God.

  then it follows that God actually exists. (Why?) So assuming 3 in addition to the odd definition from (1′) is in effect to beg the question.

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- Define 'unicornex' as 'an actually existing unicorn'. Now note, since there aren't any actual unicorns, unicornexes aren't possible—despite the coherence of the concept. And the only way to know that unicornexes are possible is to know they exist.

- Rowe: same goes with God as defined by Anselm. We can't know that he isn't impossible until we know that he actually exists, given the definition.

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Descartes-Leibniz Argument

1. A Most Perfect Being's (MPB) existential status is non-contingent.

2. If non-contingent, the MPB must be either necessarily existent or necessarily non-existent.

3. But if a MPB is possible, it is not necessarily non-existent.

4. If an object is conceivable, then it is possible.

5. A MPB (with non-contingent existential state) is conceivable.

6. Therefore, (voilà!) a MPB exists.

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Parody

1. It is possible that God does not exist.

2. God is not a contingent being, i.e., either it is not possible that God exists, or it is necessary that God exists.

3. But if, by (1), it is possible that God does not exist, then it is not necessary that God exists. (from (1) and (2))

4. Hence it is not possible that God exists. (from (2) and (3))

5. Hence God does not exist. (from (4))

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Inductive Arguments

- The conclusions of inductive arguments only follow probably, not certainly, from the premises.

- Types of inductive arguments (not exhaustive):
    - Analogy
    - Probable/statistical inference
    - Inference to the best explanation

- There is no (uncontroversial) notion of validity for inductive arguments

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An Example of an Inductive Argument

1. Aspirin 1 relieved headache 1
2. Aspirin 2 relieved headache 2
3. Aspirin 3 relieved headache 3
4. :
5. :

∴ Therefore, aspirins relieve headaches.

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1. Aspirin 1 relieved headache 1
2. Aspirin 2 relieved headache 2
3. Aspirin 3 relieved headache 3
4. ⋮
5. ⋮

   Aspirin 171 didn't relieve headache 171

∴ Therefore, aspirins probably relieve headaches.

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Another Example

1. This swan is white

2. That one is too...

3. And that one...

4. And that one...

5. ⋮

6. ⋮

∴ Therefore, all swans are white.

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An Inference to the Best Explanation

2007 NFL Divisional Playoff (AFC Semifinals): Chargers @ Colts 28-24

1. In the final seconds of the first half, Manning throws an interception that appeared to be returned for a score by San Diego cornerback Warren Cromartie; however, a flag negated that opportunity as a holding call against the Chargers's Eric Weddle wiped out the touchdown.

2. Explanations for this call include: Weddle did in fact hold; the ref had something in his eye; the ref hates San Diego ever since getting sand in his eyes here as a child; the ref works for the mafia and needed the Colts to beat the spread.

3. The best explanation is that the ref works for the mafia.

4. Therefore, the ref works for the mafia.

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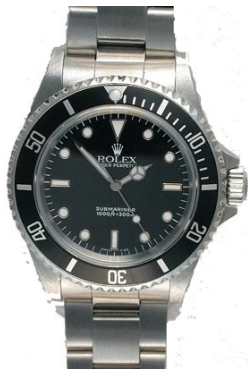The Design Argument

The Design Argument

- Can trace this argument's roots back through the Middle Ages; it still has adherents today.

- It is a posteriori and inductive.

- It comes in many forms...

    - analogy
    - probabilistic
    - explanatory

- And has stemmed from many different features of the world

    - intricacy of human organs, e.g., eye
    - correlations among these organs, e.g., feet and eye
    - cosmological coincidences

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(a) By analogy

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- Analogy argument
- Paley (1802), *Natural Theology*

1. Watches are produced by intelligent design.

2. Organisms are relevantly similar to watches.

∴ Therefore, organisms are produced by intelligent design.

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Hume on Design

(cf. also Stuart Sutherland's interview for *Philosophy Bites* on the course website)

- The argument is either too strong or too weak...
- Consider the following argument:

  1. Blood circulates in human beings.
  2. Human being are like trees.
  ∴ Therefore, sap circulates in trees. (wrong!)

- If too weak, conclusion doesn't follow. If too strong, God not very God-like (but more like a feeble, finite human being.

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"This cautious proceeding of the astronomers implicitly condemns your argument, Cleanthes; or, rather, it points to the fact that the subject on which you are engaged exceeds all human reason and enquiry. Can you claim to show any such similarity between the structure of a house and the generation of a universe? Have you ever seen nature in a situation that resembles the first arrangement of the elements at the beginning of the universe? Have worlds ever been formed under your eye; and have you had leisure to observe the whole progress of world-making, from the first appearance of order to its final consummation? If you have, then cite your experience, and deliver your theory." (*Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, end of part 2)

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Hume's Further Criticisms of the Design Argument

- If you were reasonable and if you were to base your argument on empirical experience (which was his starting point), you had to follow the argument wherever it went. Hume thought that the traditional arguments from design didn't take you to belief in God.
- Argument produces infinite regress of designers; but how far back do you go?
- Argument leads to polymorphism: in any building, there is not one, but many designers (architect, engineers, stonemasons, carpenters, etc). The world is even more complicated than a house, so presumably requires more designers.
- Creation might have taken place over many generations, and the designer might have subsequently died.
- World could be the work of a feeble God, given that there are certain imperfections of the world (eye is prone to shortsightedness, cataracts, etc).

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(b) The Probabilistic Design Argument

O_1. Watch has features X,Y,Z

W_1. Watch was created by intelligent designer

W_2. Watch was created by chance process

$\Rightarrow P(O_1/W_1) > P(O_1/W_2)$

O_2. Eye has features A,B,C

E_1. Eye was created by intelligent designer

E_2. Eye was created by chance

$\Rightarrow$ Paley claims: $P(O_2/E_1) > P(O_2/E_2)$

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Likelihood or Confirmation Principle

Principle

Observation O supports hypothesis H_1 more than it supports hypothesis H_2 if and only if $P(O/H_1) > P(O/H_2)$.

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But...

Compare with:

- O_3. You hear a noise in the attic
- G_1. Noise occurred due to gremlins living in attic
- G_2. Noise occurred due to chance

  $\Rightarrow P(O_3/G_1) > P(O_3/G_2)$

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- What we really need is a comparative assessment of $P(H_i/O)$; but:

Math Fact

$P(H_1/O) > P(H_2/O)$ iff $P(O/H_1)P(H_1) > P(O/H_2)P(H_2)$

$\Rightarrow$ so the 'prior' probabilities $P(H_i)$ matter!

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(c) Explanatory: modern design argument (fine-tuning)

"If the strong nuclear force were to have been as little as 2% stronger (relative to the other forces), all hydrogen would have been converted into helium. If it were 5% weaker, no helium at all would have formed and there would be nothing but hydrogen. If the weak nuclear force were a little stronger, supernovas could not occur, and heavy elements could not have formed. If it were slightly weaker, only helium might have formed. If the electromagnetic forces were stronger, all stars would be red dwarfs, and there would be no planets. If it were a little weaker, all stars would be very hot and short-lived. If the electron charge were ever so slightly different, there would be no chemistry as we know it. Carbon (^{12}C) only just managed to form in the primal nucleosynthesis."

Ernan McMullin (1993, 378)

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Can also be cast probabilistically:

Let AC stand for so-called anthropic coincidences such as that there are 3 dimensions not 2 or 4, neutrino mass is 5×10^{-34} kg instead of 5×10^{-35} kg, gravity not 1 part in 1040 stronger, omega so close to 1...

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Fine-tuning (continued)

- $P(\text{AC/God}) > P(\text{AC/Chance})$
- Therefore, the hypothesis that God exists is better confirmed.

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Criticism

1. But use the Principle of Total Evidence; when we do,
   P(AC/God and we exist) $= P$(AC/Chance and we exist) $= 1$
   P(catching fish larger than 10 inches/pond and hungry fish and
   10 inch net)$= 1$

2. Good definition of fine-tuned? The argument seems to assume
   an a priori probability metric; but why that one? (See Philo quote
   again.)

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Firing Squad Example

Hugh Mellor (2002) cites the example of John Leslie wherein a firing squad of fifty aims at you and shoots—but luckily for you they all miss. Notoriously, Leslie insists that you would rightly demand some further reason for your luck.

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Response

Mellor responds:

"Well, maybe you would; but only because you thought the ability of the firing squad, the accuracy of their weapons, and their intention to kill you made their firing together a mechanism that gave your death a very high physical probability. So now suppose there is no such mechanism. Imagine, as Russell (1927) did, that our universe... started five minutes ago, with these fifty bullets coming past you, but with no prior mechanism to give their trajectories any physical probability, high or low. Suppose in other words that these trajectories really were among the initial conditions of our universe. If you thought that, should you really be baffled and seek some further reason for your luck?" (227)

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Evil

- Natural Evil

    - E.g., Pompeii
    - E.g., floods in Bangladesh

- Human Evil

    - E.g. Holocaust
    - E.g. 'Piking' of babies
    - E.g. Medieval Italian torture dungeons

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Human Evil: Torture

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Natural Evil: Earthquakes

- 1906 San Francisco (Magn 7.8, Fatalities 30,000)

- 2003 Bam, Iran (M 6.6, F 31,000)

- 2004 off Sumatra, Indonesia (M 9.3, F 300,000)

- 2008 Sichuan, Gansu and Shaanxi, China (M 8.0, F 65,000)

- 526 Antioch, Syria (F 230,000)

- 1755 Lisbon, Portugal (M 8.7, F 80,000)

- 1201 Eastern Mediterranean (M IX, F 1.1M)

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Argument from Evil

1. If God exists, then God is omnipotent, omniscient, and morally perfect.
2. If God is omnipotent, then God has the power to eliminate all evil.
3. If God is omniscient, then God knows when evil exists.
4. If God is morally perfect, then God has the desire to eliminate all evil.
5. Evil exists.
6. If evil exists and God exists, then either God doesn't have the power to eliminate all evil, or doesn't know when evil exists, or doesn't have the desire to eliminate all evil.
7. Therefore, God doesn't exist.

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Argument from Evil

1. If God exists, God is omnibenevolent and omnipotent. (By definition)

2. An omnibenevolent being would prevent any unnecessary natural evil if he/she could.

3. An omnipotent being could prevent all unnecessary natural evil.

4. Therefore, if there were a God, there would be no unnecessary natural evil. (From 1, 2, and 3)

5. There is unnecessary natural evil.

6. Therefore, there is no God. (From 4 and 5)

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What Does 'Could' Mean?

Could?

- Anything... even the logically impossible
- Anything logically possible
- Anything physically possible

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Responses

- Need evil for there to be good
- The universe is better overall with some evil in it than none.
- Evil is due to free will, but the good of free will trumps the evil done.
- Allows for soul-building
- Unknown purpose
- Question: Logical argument or inference to the best explanation?

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Best of All Possible Worlds?

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716)

- German polymath (math, natural philosopher, legal scholar, theologian, political advisor, historian)

- Rationalism: reason as ultimate arbiter of justification of knowledge

- Optimism: God created the best of all possible worlds

- *Philosopher's Confession* (written at age 26 in 1672)

- *Theodicy* (written in 1709, seven years before his death)

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Voltaire (1694-1778): *Candide*

- The French philosopher Voltaire hated this idea. In 1755 an earthquake struck Lisbon, on All Saints Day (when the churches were full). In just six minutes 15,000 people were killed (modern estimate 80,000) and another 15,000 severely wounded. Voltaire could not accept that this was somehow the outworking of the plans of a good God and wrote *Poem on the Disaster of Lisbon*.

- In the satirical novel titled *Candide*, he tells the story of a young man Candide, and his teacher, Dr Pangloss. Whatever disaster befalls them Dr Pangloss glibly asserts that "this is the best of all possible worlds." They are shipwrecked near Lisbon just as the earthquake strikes. Candide is almost killed and Pangloss ends up hanged by the Inquisition. This forces Candide to question. "Candide" writes Voltaire, "terrified, speechless, bleeding, palpitating, said to himself: 'If this is the best of all possible worlds, what can the rest be?' "

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Free Will?

Basic idea: because free will is so great a good, it's better for God to make a world with free will in it than without it—even if that free will is occasionally used badly.

- Free will is good, but that good? Everyone knows we shouldn't let a murder happen just so the would-be murderer can exercise his free will.

- Does free will imply that the power to inflict great harm is good?

- Natural evil?

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Mackie (1955, 209):

"If God has made men such that in their free choices they sometimes prefer what is good and sometimes what is evil, why could he not have made men such that they always freely choose the good? If there is no logical impossibility in a man's choosing the good on one, or on several occasions, there cannot be a logical impossibility in his freely choosing the good on every occasion. God was not, then, faced with a choice between making innocent automata and making beings who, in acting freely, would sometimes go wrong: there was open to him the obviously better possibility of making beings who would act freely but always go right. Clearly, his failure to avail himself of this possibility is inconsistent with his being both omnipotent and perfectly good."

John L Mackie. Evil and omnipotence. *Mind* **64** (1955): 200-212.

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From the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:

W_3:

- (a) God creates persons with morally significant free will;
- (b) God causally determines people in every situation to choose what is right and to avoid what is wrong;
- (c) There is no evil or suffering in W_3.

W_4:

- (a) God creates persons with morally significant free will;
- (b) God does not causally determine people in every situation to choose what is right and to avoid what is wrong;
- (c) There is no evil or suffering in W_4.

$\Rightarrow$ Alvin Plantinga: people in W_3 aren't really free.

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John Hick's 'Soul-making'?
'Irenaeic theodicy'

Idea: Spiritual growth (mastering temptations, etc) is important because it brings you closer to God; being close to God is a GREAT good. This excuses the evil since the evil helps one grow.

- Do bad things happen to those spiritually worse off than to those spiritually better off?

- Children?

- Super-miserable; super-well-off?

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Tough Love?

- Idea: for better character, we need challenges...
    - Same kind of challenges as above...
- What is said about natural evils?
    - Plantinga: fallen creatures are responsible for these...

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The Problem's Future

- Formulating it as a deductive argument means the theist only has to come up with one counter-example where evil is overall good to knock the argument down

- "Since this defense [Plantinga's] is formally [that is, logically] possible, and its principle involves no real abandonment of our ordinary view of the opposition between good and evil, we can concede that the problem of evil does not, after all, show that the central doctrines of theism are logically inconsistent with one another. But whether this offers a real solution of the problem is another question." (Mackie 1982, 154)

- Modern discussions instead use inductive/probabilistic arguments—greater amounts of evil make God less likely.

- Evil in general v. some particular evils

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Another Challenge: The Problem of Good

- So is there an all-powerful, all-evil God? This hypothesis is just as well supported as many of the standard arguments for existence of God as the corresponding good-god-hypothesis: perhaps there an evil designer, or an evil first cause.

- Why does nobody take this seriously? Look out the window and see sunshine, laughter, children happily playing, ice cream

- Symmetry between problems of evil and good. So more reasonably, one ought to believe in some sort of intelligence that is neither all good or all evil. If one looks at the Old Testament, then that seems to be the way in which God is portrayed.

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The Logical v. Evidential Problem of Evil

1. Logical: existence of God is logically incompatible with the existence of any suffering or evil whatsoever (that one is solved for the theist)

2. Evidential: if there exists an omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent God, why is there quite so much suffering and evil? (still open)

Further comments:

- Perhaps we should be thinking about it in terms of reasonableness or plausibility: given that there exists so much gratuitous and unnecessary suffering, how reasonable is it to believe in the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent being?