

Is it rational to believe in God?

- Is it rational to believe in God?
 - The belief in God is rationally justified because
 - a contingent, ordered world like ours, with us in it,
 - needs a necessary personal cause.

- contingent *versus* necessary
 - a contingent object/being depends for its/his/her existence on a necessary cause/being
 - a necessary cause/being is self-sufficient, infinite and eternal

- the cosmological and the teleological arguments
 - there is an universe
 - this universe is ordered and intelligent

the cosmological argument

- the universe exists and that
- something outside the universe is required to explain its existence

- that is, it is contingent, depending on something outside of itself for its existence
- that “something else” is logically before the universe
- it constitutes the reason for the existence of the universe
- such a being is God

- *1. everything in the universe has a cause*
 - for everything that exists (E), there is some other thing (C), which existed before E existed, and C produced E—that is, without C, E would not have existed
 - C itself was caused by a prior cause, C1, and C1 by still another cause before it, C2, and so on

- *2. an infinite regress is impossible*
- the series of causes and effects cannot go on indefinitely but must have a beginning

- *3. so there must be a first cause outside of the universe capable of producing everything besides itself*
- (which is not produced but a necessary being)

- *4. such a being must be an infinite, necessary being, that is, God*

- anthropic principle
 - if the universe were in fact different in any significant way from the way it is, we wouldn't be here to wonder why it is

objections

- the premise asserting the impossibility of an infinite series is false
- even if the argument were sound, it would not prove the existence of a single first cause because a plurality of causes cannot be ruled out

the teleological argument

- the teleological argument for the existence of God begins with the premise that
 - the world exhibits intelligent purpose or order and
 - proceeds to the conclusion that there must be or probably is a divine intelligence, a supreme designer to account for the observed or perceived intelligent purpose or order

- 1. Human artifacts are products of intelligent design (purpose).
- 2. The universe resembles these human artifacts.
- 3. Therefore, the universe is (probably) a product of intelligent design (purpose).
- 4. But the universe is vastly more complex and gigantic than a human artifact.
- 5. Therefore, there probably is a powerful and vastly intelligent designer who designed the universe.

- fine tuned for life
 - a delicate balance of forces and parameters
 - it resonates with the Christian way of thinking

- an ordered cosmos
 - regularity and intelligibility
 - God gives meaning to the whole universe
 - he explains why there is anything at all and what it means

objections

- the universe is not sufficiently like the productions of human design to support the argument
- the analogy from artifact to divine designer fails because we have no other universe with which to compare this one, which would be necessary to decide if it were the kind of universe designed or simply the kind that developed on its own
- the argument is weak because the world exhibits not merely order but much disorder

psalm 19.1-6

- The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
- Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.
- There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.
- Their voice goes though all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.
- In them he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
- and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.
- Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them,
- and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

Romans 1.19-20

- For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.
- For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.

Psalm 139.13-14

- For you formed my inward parts;
- you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
- I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
- Wonderful are your works;
- my soul knows it very well.