



Negative Apologetics



Atheism

Atheism is the Default Position

- Anthony Flew believed that Atheism is the default position and the burden of proof is on the theist.

1) We have no proof that faeries and leprechauns do not exist.

2) Nearly every person would not then assume that they exist.

3) Thus the default position, in absence of evidence is non-belief.

4) In the same way, belief in God's existence defaults into the non-belief category – laying the burden of proof upon the theist.

Argument from the Existence of Evil

- William L. Rowe follows Pierre Bayle's argument as follows.
 - 1) *God is omnibenevolent and would thus desire to eliminate evil.*
 - 2) *God is omnipotent and thus could eliminate evil.*
 - 3) *Evil exists*

 - 4) *Thus, God does not exist since evil exists.*

Implications of this Argument

- Seemingly, the only way out of this argument is to accept that God is either not omnibenevolent, or not omnipotent.
- The only other option is to accept that there is no God, according to this reasoning.

An Inference from the Nature of the Mind

- Naturalists hold that all human and animal activity can be explained simply by appealing to physical phenomena.

1) If God exists, He would be spiritual, by nature, and thus there would be causal spiritual influences (forces outside the physical) upon the physical mind.

2) The minds of humans and animals are either purely physical in nature or else are causally dependent on something physical in nature.

3) Therefore, since the mind is only physical, and/or only causally influenced by the physical, there is no spiritual, and thus, no God.

An Argument from the Apparent Hiddenness of God

- Some argue that because God cannot be readily “proved,” he must not exist.

1) God, if He exists, would be omnipotent and omnibenevolent.

2) If God exists, it would be a very important truth.

3) The world could be tailored by God so that His existence would be much more evident than it presently is.

4) Thus, if God exists, He is, to some extent, hiding from us, and thus, depriving many people of a very important truth.

5) Thus, God does not exist since an omnibenevolent God would not wish to deny people a very important truth, and an omnipotent God could fix the situation to where that did not happen.

The Omni Contradiction 1

- Imperfections in nature rule out God's design

1) If God (omnipotent and omnibenevolent) created the universe then imperfections would not exist.

2) Imperfections exist in the universe.

3) Therefore, God does not exist.

The Omni Contradiction 2

- Contradictory nature of “Omnipotence.”

1) God is defined as Omnipotent.

2) Nothing can be defined as Omnipotent because the concept is incoherent (Can God create a rock too heavy for himself to pick up? If he can, and/or if he can't, he is not Omnipotent).

3) Therefore, God does not exist.

Argument from Causality 1

- Bertrand Russell, in “Why I Am not a Christian” ask the question “Well, who created God?”

1) Everything needs a cause.

2) God is something.

3) Therefore, God does not exist since He must have a cause, but by definition (omnipotent creator of all) He cannot.

Argument from Causality 2

- Jean-Paul Sartre, in “Being and Nothingness” uses the following reasoning to disprove God’s existence.

1) God is a self-caused being.

2) A self-caused being would have to exist prior to its existence in order to cause itself.

3) But it is impossible for a being to exist before existing.

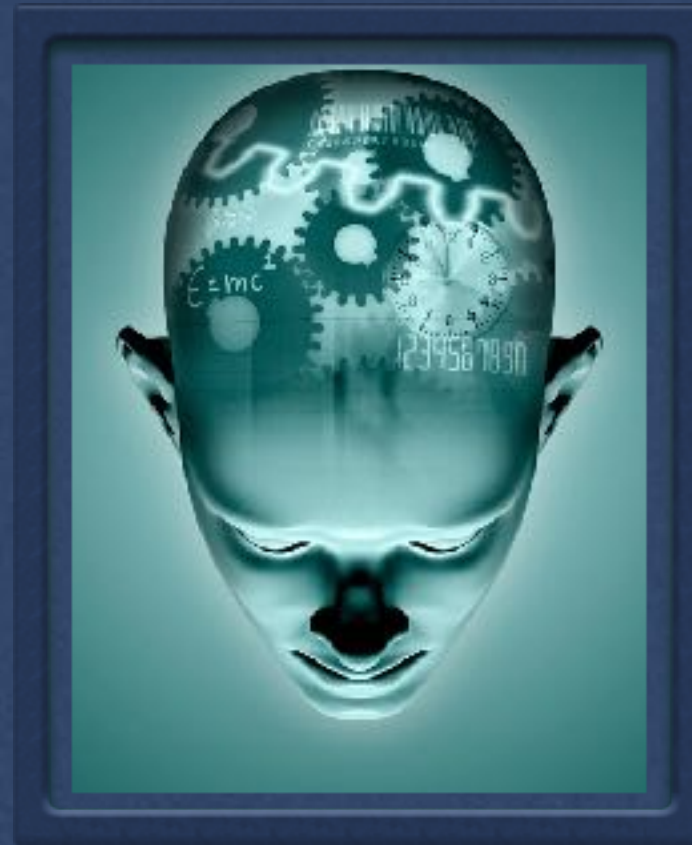
3) Therefore, God cannot exist.

Freud's Argument from Human Nature

- Sigmund Freud believed that humanity's belief in God is based upon wish fulfillment – seeking a Cosmic Comforter.

Hume's Possibility of Atheism

- David Hume asked the question, “Why could the universe not have been the product of happy accident?”
- He took this reasoning further, stating that given an infinite amount of time, the possibility must have occurred, and so here we are.



Deism

Deism Explained

- Deism rose to prominence in the 1500-1700's, but since that time, deism has splintered into a number of groups ranging from "Christian Deism" to "Skepticism."
- Deism actually began by so-called Christians who were attempting to elevate Christianity, after the Reformation, to a new level.
- Elevating human reason and natural religion over faith and special revelation, deists attempted to reform the reformation that had "lost its way." Enlighten Christianity to a higher form, and bring peace.

Common Tenants of Deism

- There is a God who created the world, and he alone is eternal.
- This God however, cannot, or will not act in creation, for he set natural laws into motion that control the universe. Thus, there are no miracles.
- Deists believe in a unitarian concept of God, denying the doctrines of Trinity, and deity of Christ.

Herbert of Cherbury

- Considered the father of English deism, he published a book (“De Veritate”) with five major principles of religion he believed were common to all men:
 - 1) There is one supreme God
 - 2) He ought to be worshipped
 - 3) Virtue and piety are the chief parts of Divine Worship
 - 4) We should be sorry of our sins and repent
 - 5) The Divine goodness rewards and punishes us in this life and the next

Matthew Tindal

- Deism reached its height of influence in Tindal's work.
- He reformulated Cherbury's principle of natural religion:
 - 1) There is a God
 - 2) He should be worshiped
 - 3) Do what will bring you the most good, or happiness
 - 4) Promote the common happiness of all
- He believed that "Miracles are for fools, reason is for wise men."

David Hume

- Hume represents deism during its beginning decline into more of a skepticism.
- He suggested that the wise man bases his belief upon whatever is most probable. And since natural explanation is always more probable than supernatural, for we see the natural always and most have never seen the supernatural, then employing the miraculous is never wise.

Immanuel Kant

- By reading Hume, Kant turned away from rational theism to philosophical skepticism.
- Kant rejected all miracles as well as rational and historical proofs for the existence of God, relying instead upon a moral postulate.
- He suggested that while miracles could conceivably happen, they cannot be known to us, and are not morally needed, for religion can be lived within the limits of reason alone, without appeal to the supernatural.

Kant's Proof Against Miracles

- 1) Either miracles occur *regularly* hidden under the guise of natural events...Or they occur *seldom*...Or they *never* occur.
- 2) If they occur regularly, then it is no miracle but a natural event.
- 3) If they occur seldom, then one must ask how seldom.
- 4) But we can never know how seldom since we can only use practical reason by objective principles, and miracles, by nature are not objective principles.

5) Therefore, miracles never take place since seldom is not an option able to be defended, and regularly implies that miracles are natural events, not miracles.

Assorted Arguments of Deists Today

- Many “deists” today are really more skeptics than deists.
- Usually though, their concept of God is thus: God created the world, and then left it alone, not caring any more about the creation or simply refusing to take part in any of it.
- Thus, life is perceived very much like an atheist.

Assorted Arguments of Deists Today

- An example argument.
- 1) The chance that everything began by accident, and developed by chance to its current state is absurd.
- 2) Thus there must be a God who created everything.
- 3) All creation follows set laws of nature, with those laws never being violated, even by this God.

4) Therefore, this God either no longer cares nor acts in the world, or does care and cannot act, or chooses not to.



Pantheism/Panentheism

Pantheistic Explanation

- A basic “intuitive epistemology” characterizes pantheistic approaches to God.
- One can only know and understand God by mystical intuition, not by observation or rational argument.

Pantheistic Explanation

- Creation is not out of nothing, for everything is rooted in his being.
- Creation springs out of God's being by emanation, manifestation, or some kind of "unfolding."

Pantheistic Explanation

- God is neither personal nor conscious, and can best be described as an It.
- There is only one reality – absolute monism.

Parmenides

- Parmenides postulated that there can only be one reality, or “being.”
- For if there were two, then they would have to differ in some way – either in being or in nonbeing, since there are no other ways to differ.
- If the difference is in non-being, then one being would not exist.
- If they both exist, then they cannot differ at all for that is the very thing they have in common.
- Thus, all reality is one – monism.

Zeno

- Zeno, Parmenides' disciple, tried to prove his master's case with logical absurdities based upon motion between two points.
- His basic point was that if you believe in multiplicity (many different beings exist), then irresolvable paradoxes will result.

Zeno

- For instance – If reality can have many points broken up, then motion can never happen. Between A-----B, there is an infinite amount of midpoints to be crossed. Thus, it would take an infinite amount of time to go from point A to B, or anywhere at all!
- Thus, monism must be true, for otherwise motion would be impossible.

Panentheism Explanation

- Panentheism is the belief that God is in the world the way a soul or mind is in a body.
- Known also as Process Theology, it holds that the finite, bipolar God is in a continual process of change. (*Bipolar here means he has an actual part, and a potential, eternal part*)

Panentheism Explained

- The world is God's body. God is not identical with the world, for there is more to God than just the world. God also transcends the world as the mind transcends the body.
- Since God did not create the world, but directs it, he is not sovereign over it, but cooperates with it.
- God and the world depend on each other's existence – the world depends upon God for its existence, and God depends upon the world for essence.

Panentheism Explained

- God is continually growing towards perfection due to the increase in value in the world (his body) resulting from human effort.
- God can never overcome all evil, but tries to do as much as possible with our help.