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A Modern Presentation of the Moral Argument

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Introduction

Morality and the concepts of good and evil have been discussed for thousands of years, with traces all the way back to early Greek philosophers. In these discussions people have contemplated not only the origin of the concept of morality, but how to best live a moral life as well. Many theologians will contend that morality finds its basis in a personal, moral creator, and that a theistic worldview is the only one capable of explaining its existence. Challenges to this view have been presented for as long as morality has been discussed. If theologians could prove that God's morality is the only accurate way to account for the existence of the concept, then God is determined to be authoritative, supreme, and the ultimate being to be praised. Therefore, Christian moral proofs for the existence of God have been important to philosophers throughout all of Christian history.

Until recently, the moral argument was not directly addressed but by a few philosophers. Often a specific author's view on morality would appear among their many writings, without ever being full addressed as a formal argument for God's existence. Seen addressed in the first chapter of Anselm's Monologium, found as the fourth of Thomas Aquinas' five ways, and covered sporadically in the writings of Augustine and others, the moral argument was not fully developed as a classical argument for God's existence until C. S. Lewis presented a concise formal presentation of it in his book, *Mere Christianity*. Today Lewis' argument is the most widely known presentation of the moral argument and when offered in a modern light, is very convincing. This argument has been challenged by many, however when properly presented it will leave the atheist without an appropriate way to account for morality.

Historical Review

Aristotle

Student of Plato and renowned Greek philosopher, Aristotle wrote many books concerning science, the arts, politics, and philosophy. In one of his many treatises, *Nicomachean Ethics[1]*, Aristotle discusses the notion of becoming good, rather than understanding the concept of good of its own accord. Approaching the notion of ethics with the goal to answer the question of how men should best live, Aristotle was following Plato and Socrates' previous line of thinking. An appropriate understanding of the difference between practical and theoretical thinking is also necessary to understand Aristotle's approach.   Aristotle's aim was to create a good life, not just discuss the concept of what is good. Thus in regards to morality or goodness, he is concerned with practical thinking of how a human can make life as good as possible, not thinking theoretically about what is good.

To Aristotle, humans, unless acting with aimless behavior, always act towards an end. "Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim."[2] With this understanding, ethics according to Aristotle as an aspect of practical thinking, a means to make one's own life as good as possible. [3] No one would ever work for a good that they view as bad for themselves, that would not make any sense. Instead, when all humans aim at an end to be reached they are hoping to gain a good they desire. Aristotle states:

[1] This is one of two of Aristotle's most famous treatises' on ethics. *Nicomachean Ethics* is considered the revised and updated version of his *Eudemian Ethics*. Neither of these titles were assigned by Aristotle himself but are assumed to be named after their editors, the former by his son Nicomachus and the latter by his friend Eudemus. Kraut, Richard, "Aristotle's Ethics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2012 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2012/entries/aristotle-ethics/>.

[2] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by W. D. Ross. (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 1999), 3.

[3] Practical thinking according to Aristotle is therefore "thinking about ends and means… thinking that is necessary for purposeful action." However, no matter how useful practical thinking can be, it does not actually accomplish anything. Action only begins when practical thinking is put into practice.
Adler, Mortimer J. *Aristotle for Everybody*. (New York: Simon and Schuster Inc., 1978), 70.

"If, then there is some end of the things we do, which we desire for its own sake (everything else being desired for the sake of this), and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else (for at that rate the process would go on to infinity, so that our desire would be empty and vain), clearly this must be the good and the chief good. Will not the knowledge of it, then, have a great influence on life?"[4]

According to Aristotelian thought, this "chief good" is happiness and is the highest aim humanity can try to achieve. Likewise, this happiness which everyone wants to attain is found by living a good life. For these purposes, the good life is one of happiness. Although most will agree that there may be this ultimate end to strive for, not many agree on exactly what the end looks like. Because of the variety in people, it is understandable that different people will find pleasure and happiness in different areas. Although there are things that instantly appear good to us or appear to provide us with pleasure, there are also things that do not necessarily appear good at first, but really are good for us whether or not they appear to be so at the time.

People aim at happiness itself for its own sake and therefore aim at achieving those things that are good for themselves for a similar reason. According to Aristotle, in order to live a good life, one ought to pursue happiness. In addition, "a good life as a whole is one that involves having all the things that are really good for us, thus we ought to desire to live well - to achieve happiness or a good life".[5] Aristotle describes these good things that are necessary for happiness by placing them into three broad categories, bodily goods, external goods, and goods of the soul. These goods, when considered together, constitute happiness or a good life as a whole. Bodily

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[4] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* 12.
[5] Adler, Mortimer J. *Aristotle for Everybody*. (New York: Simon and Schuster Inc., 1978), 93.

goods include health, vitality, strength, and pleasure.[6] These beneficial aspects are essential to maintaining life and are considered goods because a life without them would hardly be worth living. In addition, a life without bodily goods would most likely prevent anyone from living a good life. The second category of positive things that add to a happy life are external goods. These goods are the means by which bodily goods are achieved. Without a certain amount of external goods such as food, clothing, and shelter, humans would not be able to enjoy health, pleasure, or vitality due to their poor quality of life. Finally, the goods of the soul would include those that are needed in order to act and live well. Virtue, knowledge, and wisdom, three of these goods, represent the need of human beings to achieve self-sufficiency. However, humans are also social people and thus the self-sufficiency realized with the goods of the soul would be that of someone with a family, friends, and community. Aristotle asserts that the accumulation of all of these goods is what contributes to living a good life as a whole.

Thus in order to achieve a good life as a practical application of morality, Aristotle would say it is a combination of the things that are in fact good and beneficial to humans.

"The happy man lives well and does well; for we have practically defined happiness as a sort of good life and good action. The characteristics that are looked for in happiness seem also, all of them, to belong to what we defined happiness as being…For all these properties belong to the best activities; and these, or one – the best – of these, we identify with happiness."[7]

Aristotle then explains that when happiness is identified with virtue, it becomes a practical way of living the good life. For such happiness is pleasant, good, and noble, and possesses each of

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[6] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by W. D. Ross. (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 1999), 11.
[7] Ibid. 12-13.

the categories of goods already determined to be necessary, thus fitting with Aristotle's definition of happiness as the means to live a good life.

St. Augustine of Hippo

His writings are considered a bridge between two historical eras - the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages, Augustine, the bishop of Hippo, was well known for his largest collection of writings, *The City of God.* Due to original sin, human nature fell to a rather dismal state leaving humanity with two opposing ways or cities by which to live their lives, the earthly city and the city of God. Throughout the twenty two books contained within *The City of God*, an apologetic tone is evident as Augustine addresses the problem of evil as well as supports a life in the city of God. Covering an aspect of the moral argument in the eleventh book, Augustine addresses the issue "of those who do not approve of certain things which are a part of this good creation of a good Creator, and who think that there is some natural evil."[8]

Augustine establishes that there cannot be a notion of natural evil[9], if one has a proper view of God[10]. God did not act and will never act in response to some great force as a means to control, restrain, or conqueror it, for this action would contradict His nature. If God truly is incorruptible as Augustine suggests, then evil must have an origin in something other than God himself. Augustine offers that the human soul, which due to the corruption of sin has been seen to alter itself, is to blame for evil by nature of it being "deprived of the light of eternal truth."[11] In addition, the soul is in no way God or a part of God, but was created by Him and is quite different from Him. "As that which gives life to the flesh is not derived from flesh, but is above

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[8] Augustine. *The City of God,* 328.
[9] Natural evil is the belief that evil exists independently of a creator.
[10] I am not arguing the specific attributes of a proper view of God, therefore here I will adopt Augustine's view of "the nature of God to be unchangeable and absolutely incorruptible."
Augustine, *The City of God,* 329.
[11] Ibid, 329.

it, so that which gives blessed life to man is not derived from man, but is something above him; and what I say of man is true of every celestial power and virtue whatsoever."[12] Therefore the only reason we can make any legitimate statements about evil is because God embodies a lack thereof. This means that God must be omnibenevolent in contrast to evil.

Although the modern presentation of the problem of evil was formulated after Augustine, he still formulated a respons to this argument against God's existence. Emphasizing the Genesis account of creation, Augustine holds to the idea that God created the world and it was good. He accounts for evil as a mere consequence of the fall of man. He makes a distinction between natural evil and moral evil in his response. Natural evil, the evil present in the natural world such as natural disasters, is said to be the result of fallen angles. Moral evil, the evil caused by the will of human beings, is a reflection of the relationship between God and man. When Adam deliberately chose to deviate from God's plan he estranged himself and humanity from God. Believing God is unchangeable and incorruptible, Augustine argued that God could not have created evil in the world, but that the notions of evil are simply a deviation of goodness. To go even farther, He asserts that evil is not a separate and unique substance. Augustine argues that God did not create evil, but that it resulted because man chose to stray from the path of perfect goodness. According to this reasoning, the argument from evil is invalid.

St. Anselm of Canterbury

Anselm, one of the first to offer an a priori[13] proof for God's existence, was the champion of the ontological argument. In contrast, the moral argument is largely a posteriori,[14] due to the fact that a sense of morality defines human interactions within society.

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[12] Ibid, 638.
[13] An a priori proof is one that operates independently of experience.
[14] An a posteriori argument refers to one where the premises are dependent upon experience.

Anselm presents a formal argument for the existence for God based on morality in the first and second chapters of Monologion. He says "Of all the things that exist, there is one nature that is supreme. It alone is self-sufficient in its eternal happiness, yet through its all-powerful goodness it creates and gives to all other things their very existence and their goodness."[15] This means that there is some entity that is self-sufficient and upon it the existence and goodness of all other things is based. Anselm believes this self-sufficient entity is God. He then asserts that through reason alone one can deduce that God exists based on the existence of good things. Given that all of humanity only desires what they think is good, it is not a stretch to "turn the mind's eye to look for the source of the things that are good".[16]

Given the sheer number of good things perceived by our rational minds today, Anselm asks whether there is one particular thing that connects all good things and upon which they are all based. In other words, Anselm is asking if there is a supreme good by which all things referred to as good rely or if different goods receive their existence through other means. In answer to this question Anselm provides an example using the existence of a descriptor, X. There exist some things that are all related to each other based on the fact that they are all described as being X. Although some of these real things may possess more X than others, they all can be described as being X.[17] It is because of X that these things are related and X is understood to be the same thing found in each of the multiple cases, just at varying intensity

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[15] Canterbury, Anselm of, *The Major Works*. Edited by Brian Davies and G. R. Evans. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 11.

[16] Ibid, 11.

[17] Consider this analogy with the X meaning big. There are many things that can be described as big, although some are bigger than others or possess more big than others. For example a household refrigerator can be considered a big appliance until compared to a full walk-in refrigerator found in many restaurants. Both refrigerators can accurately be described as big (X), although the restaurant refrigerator is bigger (possess more X). Anselm uses an example of justice saying, "Take, for example, some things that are said, relative to each other, to be, either equally, or more, or less just. They cannot be understood to be just except through justice, and justice is not something different in each of the various cases. "

Canterbury, Anselm of, *The Major Works*. Edited by Brian Davies and G. R. Evans. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 12.

levels. Therefore, this same concept applies to the descriptor, good. Since it is certain that all good things have some degree of goodness whether equal or not equal, necessarily all these good things are good because of something, and that something is understood to be the same in every instance that good is used as a descriptor.

Now, there are situations where it may appear that different good things are being called good based on different perspectives. "Thus a horse may appear to be called good through one thing, because it is strong, and through something else, because it is swift. For it seems to be called good through strength and good through speed, and yet strength and speed do not seem to be the same thing."[18] On the same note, how can a swift and strong thief be considered bad? Anselm explains that the swift and strong thief is considered bad because he is doing harm, however the swift and strong horse is good because it is beneficial. "Nothing is thought to be good except on the grounds either of what is beneficial, e.g. health and what makes for it – or of what is excellent, e.g. beauty and what contributes to it."[19] Therefore everything beneficial or excellent, if it is truly good, derives its goodness from the same thing through which all things are necessarily good, whatever this thing may be. Who will deny that the source of the goodness of all these things is a great good?

This good, that through which every good thing receives its goodness, must necessarily be good through itself. It follows that all the other things described as good are in fact good through something other than themselves, and this great good is in fact good through its own accord. It cannot be said that something deriving its goodness from something else can be equal to or greater than that which is good through itself. The one thing that is good through itself is in fact the supreme good. "That which is supremely good is also supremely great, and this is of all

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[18] Ibid, 12.
[19] Ibid, 12.

the things that exist, the supreme."[20] In the second chapter Anselm applies the same reasoning to

that of greatness, saying that which derives its greatness from itself is necessarily the best and the

greatest – i.e. of everything that exists, the supreme. This supreme entity is God.

Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas is most famously known for his five way proof for God's existence with

the first three being cosmological, the fourth moral, and the fifth teleological. His fourth way

presents the most concise presentation of the moral argument for his time. Contained in *Summa*

Theologica, the fourth way also marked one of the first times the moral argument was presented

via syllogism.

The Fourth Way[21]

1. *There is a threefold perfection in things: firstly, they are established in existence;*
   secondly, they possess in addition certain properties necessary to perfect their
   activity, and a third perfection comes when they attain some intrinsic goal.

2. In the world, there exist things fitting into these three categories of perfection.

3. Therefore, *there exists some first thing called God who is good [perfect] by nature*
   that is the standard for this goodness [perfection].

Aquinas presents this concept in a different way in another one of his writings.   The *Summa*

Contra Gentiles was written by Aquinas for disputed reasons, however the apologetic

information within remains powerful and effective. In the first book of four Aquinas studies

God's existence, nature, perfect actuality, etc. and readdresses his five ways in a different form.

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[20] Ibid, 12.

[21] Text in italics is directly from: Aquinas, St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*. Edited by Timothy McDermott. (Notre Dame: Christian Classics, 1991), 19-20

The fourth way in *Summa Contra Gentiles* is based heavily upon Aristotle's words in *Metaphysics II* and is as follows:[22]

1. *What is most true is also most a being.*

2. *The existence of something supremely true from the observed fact that two false things one is more false than the other, which means that one is more true than the other. This is based on the nearness to that which is absolutely and supremely true.*

3. Therefore, *one may infer that there is something that is supremely being. This we will call God.*

Both of these syllogisms draw upon the concept of the existence a most perfect or most true being that sets the standard for perfection or truth. The existence of this standard in turn cries out for the existence of a being that is supremely being or perfect, and that is fulfilled by God.

C. S. Lewis

The author of the most well-known presentation of the moral argument, C.S. Lewis was a novelist, academic, lay theologian as well as a Christian apologist. In his novel, *Mere Christianity*, Lewis details his argument for God's existence based on morality:

1. There must be a universal moral law or else:[23]

   a) Moral disagreements would make no sense

   b) All moral criticisms would be meaningless

   c) There is no need to keep promises or treaties

   d) We would not make excuses for breaking the "understood" moral law

2. A universal moral law requires a universal Moral Law Giver

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[22] Text in italics is directly from: Aquinas, St. Thomas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Translated by Anton Pegis. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 1. 95-96.

[23] Syllogism adapted from : Norman L. Giesler, Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000)

3. This universal Moral Law Giver must be absolutely good; it is the standard of all good

4. Therefore, there must be an absolutely good Moral Law Giver

According to Lewis, daily human actions reveal the existence of a universal moral law. Moral disagreements often occur and will range from an evaluation of who has the right to sit in a specific spot, to the sanctity of a promise, to an appeal to fairness. In all these situations, whether one is demanding to have their chair back, wondering why a promise was broken, or requesting a fair trade, each person is "appealing to some kind of standard of behavior which he expects the other man to know about". [24] And when this standard is referenced, the second party generally does not reject the speaker's standard, but instead attempts to explain how he or she did not actually break it or why in this instance they have a worthy excuse. Both persons had in mind an understanding that there is some universal law or rule by which everyone is judged. If they did not, then their disagreement would have never occurred because there would be no law to live up to. "Quarrelling means trying to show that the other man is in the wrong. And there would be no sense in trying to do that unless you had some sort of agreement as to what right and wrong are."[25]

To speak of a law is to speak of a law giver. Therefore, in speaking of a universal moral law that all humanity is bound by, one is in turn speaking of the giver of that law. With the existence of an ultimate standard of morality by which all make their judgments of morality, it would follow that the giver of this moral law would be necessarily all good, and would set the standard of good. In order for the moral law giver to be the basis for the universal moral law that exists, the giver must be the standard by which all morality is based, and therefore must be all good. This all good law giver, which will be the standard of all morality for the universe, is God.

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[24] C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity. (New York: HarperCollins, 1980), 3.
[25] Ibid, 4.

William Rowe

Most well-known for his formulation of the argument from evil, William Rowe is a self-identified "friendly atheist"[26]. A former evangelical Christian, Rowe presents the argument from evil as a means to "rationally justify someone in becoming an atheist".[27] His argument for atheism from the existence of evil is as follows:[28]

1. *There exist instances of intense suffering which an omnipotent, omniscient being could have prevented without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse.*

2. *An omniscient, wholly good being would prevent the occurrence of any intense suffering it could, unless it could not do so without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse.*

3. *There does not exist an omnipotent, omniscient, wholly good being.*

Rowe claims that his argument is valid and therefore provides rational grounds for accepting its premises and by extension rational grounds for accepting atheism. In his proof of the validity of his argument, Rowe describes a scenario where a young fawn is killed in a forest fire. In his scenario, lightning strikes a dead tree in a far off forest and starts a fire. Within this forest, a fawn is trapped, horribly burned, and then lies in terrible pain for several days before it dies. The fawn's suffering in this situation would by Rowe's definition be considered a clear example of evil. In addition, the fawn's suffering would be considered pointless because an omniscient, omnibenevolent God could have easily prevented the fawn from being burned by allowing it to out run the fire or He could have at least prevented the suffering by letting the fawn die

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[26] A friendly atheist is a person who accepts that some theists are justified in believing in God, even if it is the case that God doesn't exist

[27] William L. Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism," American Philosophical Quarterly, 16, no. 4 (1979): 335.

[28] Text in italics is directly from: Ibid, 336 .

immediately after being burned. Because of this, the fawn's suffering was preventable and

pointless. Rowe asserts that it would be an irrational stretch to make up some greater good or

worse evil surrounding the fawns death, because it seems unlikely that all the instances of intense

suffering (in addition to the fawn's) that occur every day in our world are all closely related to a

greater good or worse evil.[29] Therefore, an omnibenevolent, omnipotent God cannot exist.

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[29] Rowe considered there to be two ways that one could justify evil or suffering. In the first scenario, intense suffering "may sometimes be justified by virtue of being a part of or leading to, some good which is unattainable without it". In this instance someone might be morally justified in permitting the suffering to happen, because of the positive effects it produces. The second scenario when suffering might possibly be justified is in the instance where it prevents a worse evil from occurring. If the intense suffering of one person will prevent the intense suffering of many, then again Rowe feels that the suffering of the one initial person might be justified.

Thesis Proof

It is this author's contention that the Moral Argument is valid. The modern presentation of the

argument will be defended as follows:

1. One cannot conceive of anything that does not have a basis in reality.

2. Humans understand the concepts of good and evil.

3. Thus the concepts of good and evil must have a basis in reality.

4. The Naturalistic worldview cannot account for these concepts.

5. Therefore something not confined to the natural world must account for the basis of the

   concepts of good and evil. That we will call God.[30]

Rebuttals

1. One cannot conceive of anything that does not have a basis in reality.

Objection: Humans can conceive of things that do not exist. For example we can

conceive of a unicorn, even though we know it does not exist.

Response: Although the unicorn itself does not exist in reality, the key identifying

characteristics of a unicorn have a basis in reality.   A unicorn can be described as a white flying

horse with a horn on its forehead. By this description, it is easy to see that the notion of a

unicorn is based upon our understanding of the concept of the color white, horses, wings, and

horns. These three things do have a basis in reality and a unicorn is just a composite of these

things. C.S. Lewis explained this idea further by asking how a society without eyes could ever

debate or even discuss the concept of color. We would never discuss color, how well two colors

match each other or anything having to do with color if we didn't have eyes, because we would

have never experienced color. Anything relying on upon an understanding of color would never

come up in an eyeless society. The category of color would never be discussed because it would

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[30]In this thesis, God will reference an omnipotent and omniscient being.

have no foundation in a society that cannot experience color for themselves. The concepts of color in this scenario will never be talked about in human history because they would never be experienced. Similarly this applies to the concept of morality. Morality must first exist in order for it to be discussed.

2. Humans understand the concepts of good and evil.

Objection: Good and evil do not exist. Similarly some will say "I simply do not believe in good and evil."

Response: Unfortunately these objections are not valid objections at all. The fact that good and evil is being discussed as concepts proves its existence. Because we are discussing the existence of morality, it must exist as a concept. Even though intangible, our ability to debate about the concepts of morality, good and evil, right and wrong demonstrates that they exist. In addition, the statement that one does not believe in good and evil is in itself ignorant. In order to say "I do not believe" one must first have an understanding of the concept that they are choosing not to believe in.   One can only decide not to believe in something of which they have some understanding, no matter how vague that understanding may be.

Objection: Across different societies, morality is not agreed upon therefore humans must not have an actual understanding of the concepts.

Response: Although there may be different applications of the concepts of good and evil, there still exists a universal understanding of the concepts themselves. The purpose of this argument is not to discuss the application of morality throughout the world, but to establish that morality not only exists, but can only exist in according to theistic worldview. The existence of differing interpretations of what is good or bad does not disprove the fact that the concepts exist in the first place.

3. Thus the concepts of good and evil must have a basis in reality.

If our discussion of the concept of morality combined with the fact that this concept could not have exist without a basis in reality are in fact proved to be true, then one must concede that good and evil find their basis in reality.

4. The Naturalistic worldview cannot account for these concepts.

A purely atheistic worldview cannot account for the concept of morality.   According to the naturalist worldview there is no supernatural, therefore everything that exists must have come about by natural means. If one is to hold to the naturalistic worldview, then they must account for the origin of the concepts of good and evil.

Objection: The naturalist may claim that through evolution the concepts evolved over time into the notions of good and evil that we have today.

Response: Through the process of naturalistic evolution the notion of morality would never exist. The only concepts that could possibly evolve in a completely atheistic society would be survival and preference. These are the only two categories of thought that would ever be discussed, because all other notions and concepts would require some basis in reality and an atheistic society is self-centered and based solely on survival. Morality is impossible in a purely atheistic society because the process of naturalistic evolution suggests that something evolved from nothing. However if the concept of morality at some point did not exist, then it would still not exist because there is nothing in a selfish society to base it upon.

 Consider a group of five cavemen who have evolved through naturalistic evolution in an atheistic society. The only concept they are aware of is survival because they are all self-centered. Each of these five cavemen daily fend for themselves and fight to stay alive. One day, four of the cavemen witness the other caveman be killed by a dinosaur. Now the four remaining

cavemen selfishly decide to join together in order to combat the threatening world outside of their habitat. They make this decision because they know that together they have a greater chance to survive than they would alone. Eventually they learn how to ward off the dangers surrounding them, begin to form families, and a large society develops and progresses throughout time. In this scenario, no matter how developed the society becomes, what technology they discover and utilize, they will always operate under a sense of survival and self-preservation. They will never evolve any new concepts or idea other than the two that existed initially. In their society, there was nothing that would have allowed them to experience morality, therefore it would not exist.

In contrast, the theistic worldview can account for these concepts. According to the theist, God is responsible for the creation of the world. No matter His method of creation[31], God himself is moral and therefore the universe will show signs of morality based on the nature of its creator.

Objection 2: Even animals exhibit selfless acts, thus the concepts can evolve if even less intelligent beings have even a crude understanding of morality. For example there are times when a mother bird will act as a distraction and sacrifice herself in order to draw a predator away from her young.

Response: This situation only makes sense when paired with an understanding of a moral creator. As the theistic worldview claims, the morality of this world is a reflection of the moral entity that oversaw its creation. In addition, one must take into account that the observation of this bird was made from within a society where morality already exists, therefore it is understandable that even the animals would reflect characteristics of their creator.

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[31] It is not the intention of this author to discuss whether or not evolution is true. However, it is important to note that the theistic worldview can account for morality regardless.

Objection: The existence of different moralities worldwide is a result of morality having evolved. We see contradictory moralities everywhere, if this theistic God is understood to be consistent, a world with contradictory moralities would defy His existence.

Response: First one must remember that new concepts cannot evolve because by nature evolution suggests that it must have at some point not existed and therefore would still not exist However even the existence of different moralities is not a relevant question. In discussing morality, there is assumed to be an ultimate standard of that which is the point of absolute morality, the ultimate standard of good by which everything else is measured. That ultimate standard is God. So even though societies across the globe measure morality differently, each society understands there to be an absolute standard upon which base such judgments, which exists and is that which we call God.

5. Therefore there must be a basis for these concepts that transcends the natural world and that we attribute to a god.

In order to fulfill the criteria in points 1-4, the only logical conclusion is that there must exist a foundation for the concept of morality. This argument when presented in such a way is free from formal fallacy and contradiction. The conclusion of this argument leaves the atheist without a response to the existence of morality. The concept of morality is being discussed and debated today, however an atheistic society cannot account for such concepts. This renders the atheistic position useless to explain our modern understanding of good and evil. However it validates the theistic notion that a moral god necessarily created the world in order to account for the existence of morality in society.

Response to William Rowe's Argument from Evil: Rowe's specific and detailed syllogism is presented in the historical review, here it is presented in a more concise form.

1. If God is omnibenevolent then He would desire to eliminate evil.

2. If God is omnipotent then He would be capable of eliminating evil.

3. Evil exists.

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4. Therefore, an omnibenevolent and omnipotent God does not exist because evil exists.

Response: Although initially this rebuttal appears to completely refute the existence of the theistic God, one must ask how to define evil. The only definition an atheist can produce would be, evil is whatever society does not like, or something similar. If the syllogism is then reconstructed using this definition of evil, the rebuttal fails to make sense.

1. If God is omnibenevolent then He would desire to eliminate "whatever society does not like".

2. If God is omnipotent then He would be capable of eliminating "whatever society dis likes".

3. "Whatever society dislikes" exists.

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4. Therefore, an omnibenevolent and omnipotent God does not exist because "whatever society dislikes" exists.

When evil is replaced with the best definition the atheistic worldview can provide, the syllogism no longer makes sense. According to this argument God cannot exist because he does not or will not eliminate that which society does not like. Then one must ask on what issues do all of society agree upon what to like or not to like. There is not one scenario where everyone will like only one situation, idea, or feeling. Likewise there is not one scenario where everyone will all dislike a specific situation, idea, or feeling. Therefore this reasoning is not a valid argument against the existence of God.

Objection: The varying definitions of good and evil in different areas defy the theist's omnipotent and omnibenevolent God.

Response: The existence of varying moral standards does not in any way defy God's existence. In fact the notion of a moral standard in general demands the existence of God. Because all societies have some notion of morality, it implies an ultimate, invariant standard upon which all actions are judged. Every society makes judgments on whether an action or situation lives up to this understood higher standard. This supreme, unchanging standard of morality is God. C. S. Lewis phrases this idea similarly, "My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust?"[32] The objection that a consistent God could not create a world with varying views of morality displays a lack of understanding on the objector's part. The ultimate standard upon which all morality is judged is God.

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[32] C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1972), 38.

<u>Conclusion</u>

By presenting the moral argument in a modern light, a solid proof for God's existence can be presented to today's world. This argument leaves the naturalist worldview with no response as to how morality could be brought about in a completely atheistic society. In order to respond, the naturalist must redefine all terms based on the only available building block provided by their worldview, self-preservation. Because this is the only available concept from which to build, the naturalist worldview becomes inadequate to deal with the source of morality in the world, thus rendering it useless. In addition, the theistic worldview is now validated as the only worldview capable of accounting for the existence of morality. The modern form of the moral argument written with precise language and clearly presented can now be utilized as another tool for the theist to combat the naturalist worldview. The necessity of God's existence due to the existence of morality is now more explicit and can be fully understood and utilized by anyone within American culture.

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