7.1 The Design Argument: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8062 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Explain two contrasting views about whether the design argument succeeds in proving God's existence. Refer to a philosopher of religion in your answer.

(Total for Question 1 is 5 marks)

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2 This question is about the design argument for the existence of God. It is the AQA-style 24-mark, five-part question.

(a) State what is meant by the 'watchmaker analogy'. **(1)**

(b) Give two ways Aquinas's design qua regularity differs from Paley's design qua purpose. **(2)**

(c) Explain two challenges posed by David Hume to the design argument. Refer to a philosopher of religion in your answer. **(4)**

(d) Explain two contrasting views about whether Charles Darwin's theory of evolution undermines the design argument. Refer to a philosopher of religion in your answer. **(5)**

(e) Evaluate this statement: 'The design argument proves that God exists.' In your answer you should: refer to philosophical teaching, refer to different points of view, reach a justified conclusion. **(12)**

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(Total for Question 2 is 24 marks)

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Mark scheme · 7.1 The Design Argument: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

view 1: the appearance of order and purpose in nature is powerful evidence for a designer, since design implies a designer, oe **B1**

development: supporters such as Paley and Aquinas argue this designer is most reasonably understood as God, the most powerful and rational explanation available for the complexity and regularity observed in the universe, oe **B1**

view 2: Hume argued the analogy between the universe and a human-made object such as a watch is too weak to support the conclusion, oe **B1**

development: Hume argued that we know watches are designed only because we have repeatedly observed humans making them, but we have no comparable experience of universes being made, so the same confident inference cannot be drawn, oe **B1**

reference to a philosopher of religion made accurately, oe **B1**

Answer: Contrast: order/purpose as evidence for a designer (Paley, Aquinas) vs Hume's weak-analogy criticism.

Question 2

(a) Paley's argument that, just as finding a complex watch implies a watchmaker, the complexity and apparent purpose of the natural world implies a designer, oe **B1**

(a) Answer: Paley's argument that the complexity and purpose of nature, like that of a watch, implies a designer.

(b) Aquinas focused on the regularity/order of natural laws directing unintelligent things to their end, while Paley focused on the complexity of individual purposeful objects, oe **B1**

(b) Aquinas's Fifth Way forms part of his Five Ways in the Summa Theologica (13th century), while Paley developed his watch analogy independently, over 500 years later, oe **B1**

(b) Answer: Aquinas: regularity/order of natural laws (13th century, Five Ways). Paley: complexity of purposeful objects, e.g. watches (early 19th century).

(c) point 1: the analogy between the universe and a human-made machine, such as a watch, is too weak to draw a confident inference from, oe **B1**

(c) development: Hume argued we know watches are designed only because we have repeatedly experienced humans making them, but we have no equivalent experience of universes being made, so the comparison cannot support the same strength of conclusion, oe **B1**

(c) point 2: even if the design argument succeeds, it cannot prove the God of classical theism specifically, oe **B1**

(c) development: Hume pointed out that human artefacts are often made by several designers working together and are often imperfect, so, by the same analogy, the universe's designer(s) could be plural, finite or imperfect, rather than a single, infinite, perfect God, oe **B1**

(c) Answer: E.g. the weak-analogy objection; the argument at most proves a finite/plural/imperfect designer.

(d) view 1: evolution by natural selection undermines the design argument, since it offers a naturalistic explanation for the appearance of design (e.g. complex adaptations like the eye) without requiring an intelligent designer, oe **B1**

(d) development: Hume, writing before Darwin, had already suggested in his 'Epicurean hypothesis' that ordered matter might arise through chance recombination over long periods without a designer, an idea evolution later gave a scientific mechanism for, oe **B1**

(d) view 2: evolution and design are compatible, since evolution could simply describe the process God chose to use to bring about a designed and purposeful universe (theistic evolution), oe **B1**

(d) development: on this view, evolution explains how complexity arose, but does not answer why there are natural laws capable of producing life at all, which some still take to require a designer, oe **B1**

(d) reference to a philosopher of religion made accurately, oe **B1**

(d) Answer: Contrast: evolution replaces the need for a designer vs evolution describes the mechanism God chose to use (theistic evolution).

(e) **L4** A well-argued, balanced answer that considers more than one point of view in a developed way, using accurate and detailed references to philosophical teaching to support each point, and reaches a clear, justified conclusion. **10-12**

(e) **L3** A clear and reasoned answer that considers more than one point of view, supported by relevant references to philosophical teaching, though the justification of the conclusion may be less developed. **7-9**

(e) **L2** A reasoned answer that considers at least one point of view, with some relevant supporting evidence, but with limited or no consideration of an alternative view. **4-6**

(e) **L1** One or more relevant points are made, but with little or no supporting evidence and no reasoned conclusion. **1-3**

(e) **L0** No relevant content. **0**

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(e) Indicative content:

- Agree: Paley's watchmaker analogy argues that the complexity and purposeful arrangement of natural objects (e.g. the intricate structure of the eye) is best explained by an intelligent designer, just as a watch's complexity implies a watchmaker.
- Agree: Aquinas's Fifth Way argues that the observed regularity and order in nature, unintelligent objects consistently acting towards beneficial ends, cannot be due to chance, and so must be directed by an intelligent being, which is God.
- Agree: some design theorists point to the fine-tuning of the physical constants needed for life (e.g. the strength of gravity) as evidence that the fundamental conditions of the universe were deliberately set for life to be possible, rather than arising by chance.
- Disagree: Hume argued the analogy between the universe and human-made objects like a watch is too weak to support the inference to a designer, since we have direct experience of watches being made by humans but no experience of universes being made.
- Disagree: Hume also argued that, even if successful, the argument could at most prove a finite, plural or imperfect designer, far short of the infinite, perfect, singular God of classical theism believers actually worship.
- Disagree: Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection offers a naturalistic explanation for the appearance of design in living things without requiring an intelligent designer, since complex adaptations can arise gradually through variation and differential survival.
- Disagree: Hume's own 'Epicurean hypothesis' suggested that, given enough time, chance recombination of matter could eventually settle into stable, ordered patterns, offering an alternative to design as an explanation of order.
- A balanced answer might conclude that whether the argument 'proves' God's existence depends on how much weight is placed on analogy and inference to the best explanation versus a demand for certainty, and that most philosophers on both sides agree the argument, even if suggestive, falls short of a deductive proof.

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