How valid do you think the teleological argument

Religion, God

The design argument, sometimes called the teleological argument suggests that the world has a certain order or purpose in its appearance and so its specific structure points to a designer such as God.

First of all the most important form of the design argument was put forward by a man called William Paley in his book 'Natural Theology'. Paley put this argument forward in the form of a simple analogy. He said if we were to come across a watch, we would conclude that all the parts fitted together for a purpose, and had not come together by chance. Therefore an intelligent person would conclude that there was a designer for this watch. In the same way he believed, if we look at the world we can also conclude that there must be a designer because of the way that things fit together for a purpose.

Against this argument is a challenge from David Hume. Hume's main reason for opposing the design argument was that 'the analogy of design was a poor one'. He believed that moving from a machine to the universe is wrong because the universe is nothing like a machine. He said that 'you cannot move from something that is material to something which is organic, the universe is something that grows of its own accord, rather than something made by hand'. Also Hume argued that if God is all transcendent then the use of an analogy of manufactured objects would imply that it is more usual for a machine to be designed and made by many hands. This would suggest that there were many Gods.

However, there are also arguments for the design argument. So we know that the design argument is a posteriori argument - it uses evidence of the world to create theories. Therefore the evidence provided is obvious to

humankind because we can understand it and relate to it. This is a very strong point as we know that the world does exist and we know that it is complex for example: the way in which the planets in the solar system rotate, how they obey the same universal laws and hold their orbits due to gravity, surely this is something which is so intricate it had to be designed. So I think that the argument is strong in the way it uses straightforward analogies to join basic ideas. The argument follows an order, it is thorough and it makes clear points. Even science cannot disprove this argument because there is nothing to say that evolution wasn't the way in which God intended it to be.

In contrast another argument against is from John Stewart Mill. He argued that because there is evil and suffering in the world then the designer could not have been all powerful, all knowing and all loving. If the designer was all loving then suffering wouldn't have been included in the design. But some may argue that suffering and evil is due to the free will that humans have. If it wasn't for this free will, everyone would operate like robots and of course the world would be more or less perfect. But we do have free will and therefore we make mistakes in the world and some believe that these mistakes are what make us appreciate life itself.

The weight of evidence from for and against arguments seems to be quite equal. There are good arguments for each side but in my opinion I think that the design argument tips the boat. I like the simple ness of the argument, it is easy to understand, makes perfect sense and it proves sufficient enough as an argument as it cannot be disproved by science.