No argument from design is persuasive essay sample

An argument from design is an argument that is close to the Teleological approach, which are arguments for the existence of God because of a general pattern and order in the universe, as opposed to arguments from providence, which are arguments from the provision of needs; of conscious beings.

The teleological argument attempts to prove the existence of God by explaining that the world, in its seemingly perfect and ordered state could not have come about without the existence of a designer. The argument attempts to demonstrate that complexity, order and purpose are not attributes that can occur randomly, but must be implemented by a designer. By analogy, a form of induction, the argument compares the way the universe works, with its complex phenomena and intricacy, to that of an object, and in the case of William Paley, a watch. A watch has many different parts and shows all the marks of contrivance and design. Just as the existence of a watch implies a watchmaker, the existence of the world implies an even greater designer: God. We also do not need to know the purpose of the watch to infer a designer, simply that design implies a designer.

The first thing to consider is the nature of the argument. The design argument is an empirical argument from analogy; a type of induction. Therefore, the argument will never be conclusive, but can only be more or less probable. There are certain doubts raised when analysing the analogy between the universe and products of human design. When we experience a watch, we know that it has been designed, as we experience items such as watches, engines, houses being designed and made all the time, but what

experience do we have of the universe? A sound analogical argument is one where shared characteristics given, really are shared characteristics. It is a huge assumption that the universe shows order and purpose: we have no experience of this. This point was looked at further by Mark Wynn: " We have no experience of the origin of worlds, and therefore no experiential basis for the thought that worlds like ours are more likely than not to derive from design." The analogy only works if one is to accept the assumption that the universe has order and purpose to be true. This assumption can be refused; perhaps humans like to see order in places where there is none and it is part of their nature. The fact that the analogy has faults makes the teleological argument dissuasive, as better reasoning is needed.

One of the biggest opponents of the design argument is the theory of evolution. This theory undermines the fact that nature has been designed, but been through processes of random trial and error for millions of years. Animal adaptation falls under evolution, and goes against design, as, if living organisms didn't adapt to their environment, then they would die out. This surely wouldn't need to happen if a God had created animals as they would fulfil their function perfectly without the need to adapt. However, it can be difficult to explain why extra organs are present, such as eyes and ears, when one would suffice for survival. This can also be answered by Darwin's theories, as the theory of natural selection now provides a mechanism which would explain two eyes and two ears as being better suited for survival than one. They increase the field of hearing and vision and provide perspective which some animals, especially predators, for hunting. Overall, evolution provides a good explanation of the apparent order and purpose in nature,

and saying that there is a designer as well, is a contradiction to the theory, as the most successful way for nature to function is, as said, trial and error over millions of years. There would be no need for this if there were a God. There is increasingly strong evidence for the theory of evolution, which is almost indubitable, such as fossils showing what animals used to be like, but have changed for the good.

If we are trying to conclude as to weather the argument provides sufficient grounds for Gods existence, and therefore, persuasive, it is vital that we first consider just what God is. The design argument implies, as an outcome of complexity, order and purpose, the God of classical theism: a God which is omnipotent, omnibenevolent and omniscient. When looking at imperfections and evil in the world, it can raise serious doubts about the kind of God that would exist, if any. For example, diseases such as cancer and heart disease kill millions of people every year which could show limitations of God. He may be all loving, but not be aware of this happening, lacking omniscience, or could be aware of it but not be all loving, which shows that God either logically cannot exist, or that he has limitations. Some evil in the world, such as rape and events such as genocide show that God can't be all loving.

However, believers can come back at this point, pointing out that God's creation of persons with morally significant free will is something of tremendous value. God could not eliminate evil and suffering without thereby eliminating the greater good of having created persons with free will who can make moral choices. Nevertheless, even if we eliminate problems such as genocide and murder, we are still left with natural phenomena, such as earthquakes, disease, and tsunamis, which cause mass devastation. If

God is omnibenevolent and allows free will, how could he let this happen? David Hume picked up on some of these criticisms, and noted the fact that if we saw a badly designed house (as the design argument compares the world to inanimate objects) we would have grave reservations about the architect. The same applies to the world, because of evil, and therefore, God. When considering the problems of evil, the design argument becomes either logically impossible of there being a God, or a God with limitations, showing that it isn't very convincing at all.

In light of this discussion, it can be clearly seen that arguments from design have serious faults which have been examined. The fact that even before looking at what the argument is trying to prove, one has to accept the fact that the world in fact, does possess order. Moreover, there are valued theories, such as Darwin's theory of evolution, with strong evidence, that give explanations of how nature is the way it is through trial and error, where a God is not needed, and actually counteracts natural selection. Before the theory of evolution came out, the argument from design would have been more persuasive. Finally, the problem of evil and imperfection pose questions about the kind of God the argument seeks to prove. A God, in the classical theist sense, that isn't omnibenevolent is a logical contradiction in itself. Although the universe does seem to have order and complexity, this could just be something that humans naturally assume, and not actually be the case in reality. Although the design argument does make some good comparisons between the universe and complex items, and may seem persuasive at first, the problems with it easily outweigh the way in which it succeeds.