

William paley essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

William Paley (CE 1743-1805) believed that the universe must have a designer; he believed this designer was God. His first argument to support his theory was design qua purpose. Paley believed that it was evident that nature came together for a purpose and not by chance. He used the human eye as an example. He argued that the eye was designed to serve a purpose for seeing and its complexity proposes that it must have come from an intellectual designer.

Paley also uses the example of the watch and the stone. A stone has no purpose and no outstanding design. A watch however comprises of complex components that serve the purpose of telling the time and if one component were out of its order then the watch would fail to work. Therefore someone must have designed it with, intelligence, wisdom and thought. He also used the example of a garden it is evident there is a designer at work, the gardener. The designer has put the rows of flowers into order. Paley used this to conclude that the Earth's features serve a purpose therefore there must have been a designer with even greater wisdom, intelligence and thought.

Paley's second argument is design qua regularity. He believed that by observing the universe and Newton's laws of motion it was evident that there was a designer. Paley brought attention to the rotation of the planets in the universe and how they followed the universal laws. He argued that the way gravity held the planets in place was not by chance but by design. He debated that God was responsible for the magnificent order of the universe and if the effects of humans are alike to the effects of the universe then we it

is possible to see a similarity of intelligence, wisdom and thought in both designers only one being much superior.

David Hume was a philosopher during a time where there were very strong catholic beliefs. He criticised Paley's argument of God as a designer. He was urged by friends not to speak publicly about his beliefs, as this would cause great uproar, so he asked that his views were published after his death.

He criticised that “ this world, for all he knows, is very faulty and imperfect, compared to a superior standard.”(Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, 1779).” Hume believed that the world had its faults and questioned why such a superior being like God would leave it imperfect. This is a very strong criticism because although there are such beautiful things around us for example rainbows and trees yet there are also many aspects that cause hurt and suffering such as hurricanes, earthquakes and disease. Hume questioned whether God gave up on this world and continued to make another perfect world.

Hume also debated that if there was a designer behind the complexity of the universe then there could not have been just one. He argued that it was not possible for one person to create such magnificence. This is not a very strong argument as it is said that God is almighty and more powerful than any human.

Hume criticised Paley that the world was not like a machine but more like a vegetable something that grows over time and adapts to its surroundings. This criticism contradicts itself because for a vegetable to grow someone has to plant it. So if the universe is alike to a vegetable, who planted the seed?

Hume believed that it might be possible that the universe has not evolved from a blind, cosmic accident. A more modern response may be that evolution has been the main factor for the development of the universe. Darwin (CE 1809-1882) argued Paley's theory. He believed that the earth's features had over time evolved; his explanation did not include reference to creation by God.

Darwin's theory could well be accurate, as a giraffe has adapted to have a long neck in order to survive. A chameleon changes its colour to adapt to its surroundings. However this theory still does not include a designer and does not give explanation of the formation of complexity and design of things such as the human eye.

In conclusion to both sides of the argument, the argument for the belief that the universe has a designer at work appears to be stronger than its criticisms. Both aspects of Paley's argument have evidence behind to support what he says. It is also possible to relate what Paley says to the things around us, for example a bird has wings for the purpose of flight and the regularity of the solar system.

Hume gives good criticisms, but to say that the world has evolved with no designer does not give explanation for the beauty, regularity and purpose around us.