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Assessing the Teleological and Natural Versions of the Design Argument for God's Existence

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Abstract

Nowadays, most Christian theologians, in defending theism, put forward the design argument against the arguments of scientists who, by appealing to chance, seek to render God unnecessary in explanation. Over time, the argument from design has been presented under various rubrics and interpretations—sometimes intertwined—in support of theism. It appears that the design argument was initially employed to complement knowledge of God, but over time, it has shifted its focus toward biological and empirical aspects that indicate the order of nature. In the present era, the primary aim of this argument is to defend theism against atheistic theories in the empirical sciences rather than to establish the purposiveness of existence. However, this formulation of the argument from design has not achieved the necessary success in proving God's existence. Therefore, in this study, by elucidating the

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methodology of the empirical sciences and demonstrating the incompatibility of the design argument with this methodology, it becomes clear that one cannot rely solely on the design argument to counter atheism. In this way, it is shown that the intelligent design argument, in rejecting chance, lacks a demonstrative structure and not only fails to prove God but also falls short of establishing anything beyond what atheists themselves propose. Hence, one can draw upon the common ground between theology and science—namely, the metaphysical foundations of science—to advance empirical evidence in favor of theism. Accordingly, by employing a philosophical approach and enhancing the natural argument, this argument can be utilized as a strong proof for the existence of God.

Keywords

Argument from Design, Proving God's Existence, Teleology, Empirical Sciences, Atheists.

Introduction

Darwin's theory, by introducing "chance" into the evolutionary system of nature, created a new challenge in both empirical sciences and theology. On one hand, theologians considered this theory to contradict divine agency and creation, while on the other, some scientists viewed chance as evidence of nature's lack of purpose. For this reason, it has become common among scientists and theologians to invoke the theory of intelligent design in defense of theism, arguing that nature requires a transcendent designer. However, some scientists, in rejecting intelligent design, highlight the randomness and blind nature of nature's fine-tuned mechanisms, interpreting this as an absence of divine purpose in natural events. In reality, atheists neither deny natural causality and order nor reject natural purpose; rather, they perceive a contradiction between divine agency and chance in nature. In contrast, theists seek to affirm God's existence by invoking intelligent design and emphasizing the purposiveness of existence, while atheists, relying on chance and randomness, argue against divine purpose in the world. However, it is clear that proving the existence of an intelligent designer first requires establishing the existence of God. In other words, using the design argument to prove the existence of God or a designer is fundamentally flawed. The two aspects of the argument from design have been conflated without considering their distinct applications—teleology and designer represent two different approaches to the argument from design. Today, atheists employ the notions of chance and the blindness of natural processes to refute both interpretations.

In reality, what scientists today mean by "chance" does not imply the absence of an efficient cause. Even atheist scientists acknowledge natural efficient causes, and this form of natural order is universally accepted. The only point of contention is the attribution of

this natural order to a divine agent, which remains a theological challenge to be addressed. Thus, attempting to disprove chance by affirming the principle of causality or attributing these widely accepted efficient causes to an intelligent designer does not constitute a scientific or rational proof for the existence of God. In other words, theologians should seek to establish God's existence through efficient causality rather than final causality. The latter has been rendered obsolete in empirical sciences and does not accurately account for the phenomena of the world. Scientists employ the term "chance" within the methodological framework of empirical sciences, while theologians, in rejecting chance, seek to prove God's existence through the theory of intelligent design, by which they mean the purposiveness of nature. However, both sides misinterpret the underlying issue.

Overall, talk of chance raises the role of natural causes. Chance does not contradict final causality in a way that necessitates refuting chance or proving causality in nature, as final causality is not, in itself, a cause. Rather, teleology is a characteristic of natural beings—it refers to what the essence and distinct existence of each entity entail. Every being in nature has inherent attributes that actualize its potential. Therefore, when discussing teleology, the existence of God must first be established. Thus, there is no need to consider "chance" as a challenge to theism. Aristotelian natural philosophy explained nature through final causality, whereas in modern empirical sciences, "chance" is used as a concept opposing final causality—an application that is not entirely misplaced. Consequently, chance in empirical sciences is not the antithesis of intelligent design, nor does refuting chance prove the existence of a designer. A world that progresses through natural selection and chance can still operate under divine agency. For this reason, presenting

evidence of the fine-tuning of the universe is an ineffective means of proving God's existence. Even atheists acknowledge the fine-tuned aspects of the universe, as they themselves have discovered them. In reality, both scientists and theologians have deviated from their respective methodological frameworks. Scientists, adhering to their scientific methodology, cannot prove or disprove God, nor can the concept of "chance" be used to deny divine existence. Likewise, theologians, by employing empirical methods and citing fine-tuning—despite its implications of purposefulness in nature—cannot thereby prove God's existence. Therefore, these two versions of the design argument must be distinguished from one another to determine which, if any, has the capacity to establish the existence of God.

Among Muslim philosophers, Morteza Motahari sought to distinguish between these two perspectives on the argument from design. He argued that the argument from design pertains to nature and natural scientific relationships, while the argument from guidance, or final causality, implies the purposiveness of the world—one that points to a transcendent cause (Motahari, 1995, p. 104; 1971, vol. 5, p. 84). However, such explanations are insufficient for addressing the deeper challenges of the modern era. Existing articles and books have not adequately demonstrated that order or design is not an empirical matter, nor have they established that if one seeks to defend theism through an argument called the "argument from design," only a philosophical approach to this argument possesses the necessary strength. Thus, in this paper, we aim to examine these two approaches to the argument from design. As a distinguishing contribution from previous interpretations, we propose a philosophical framework that enhances the epistemological foundation of the argument from design in proving the existence of God.

Distinction between Final Cause and Purpose

Aristotelian physics, due to its focus on final causality, lacked the capacity to explain and predict natural phenomena or to account for the past of the universe. In fact, final causality cannot be considered a true explanatory cause in nature. While it may be a desirable concept, it does not necessarily lead to definitive conclusions (Mesbah, 2012, vol. 2, p. 100). Every natural entity functions according to its matter and form, and this operation follows causal relationships in which the efficient cause determines the outcome. Nature progresses in its evolutionary course and moves toward its ends based on causal connections (ibid., p. 106). However, there is no constant correlation between preparatory causes and their effects in the material world, as material causes do not adhere to the principle of cause-effect homogeneity or cognation (sinkhiyya). This is because a preparatory cause does not bestow existence upon its effect but merely provides the conditions for its emergence (Sadra, 1981, vol. 2, p. 210). Similarly, the concept of chance pertains to the role of the efficient cause in nature. Since, in the natural world, all causes merely actualize potentialities and do not possess intrinsic causality, chance does not contradict causation. In essence, true causality does not exist within the realm of nature. Regarding preparatory causes, since no philosophical proof establishes their homogeneity (or cognation) with their effects, and it is not logically impossible for multiple material and preparatory causes to produce the same type of effect, the number and determination of conditions cannot be proven through reason alone and remain dependent on empirical observation (Mesbah, 2012, vol. 2, p. 70). Thus, the theological rejection of chance is misplaced. Theology must align itself with the metaphysical foundations of empirical sciences in order to develop precise arguments in defense of theism.

In other words, purpose or finality is not necessarily aligned with final causality. This is because teleology contradicts causality: if the past determines the future, then the future cannot determine the past. For instance, an apple seed that is planted may fail to grow into an apple due to various external factors. In such a case, the anticipated future event never occurs, and something that never happens cannot determine what is presently occurring (Reichenbach, 2014, p. 230). Similarly, Darwin's theory of evolution demonstrated that nature is explained through causal determinism and natural selection rather than teleological reasoning (Reichenbach, 2014, p. 231). For this reason, we align with scientists who reject final causality, viewing this rejection as a pathway to the verifiability of God's existence and the compatibility of evolutionary theory with divine agency. Thus, without accusing Dawkins of holding an incorrect view regarding the explanation of the external world, we support his assertion of the role of chance in nature. By chance, Dawkins not mean an event without a cause, but rather the absence of a preordained plan governing nature (Dawkins, 2006, p. 91).

We also acknowledge that, given the metaphysical foundations of science, efficient causes determine the course of nature and do not lead to an infinite regress. This perspective aligns with the principles of contemporary essentialism, which initially emerged within the natural sciences and focuses on the existence of essences and essential properties by examining the essence and intrinsic characteristics of a natural kind. It is evident that, according to new essentialism, all transformations in living beings stem from their inherent forms. This approach asserts that the root of necessity and causality in objects, properties, events, processes, and relations in nature is found within the entities themselves, originating from their essence and intrinsic properties. If individuals of a particular kind possess identical

essences and essential properties—properties embedded in their very nature, inseparable from them, and constitutive of their reality—then these essences and essential properties will serve as the foundation of their necessity and causality (Ibid, sections 7-7).

For this reason, philosophers attribute a kind of causality and true agency to the "form" of each entity, considering all of its characteristics to arise from that form. In reality, the agency of natural agents derives from their forms, though conventionally, we attribute it to material agents. However, in a precise sense, the agency of each entity is specific to its form (Obudiyat, 2001, p. 322). Accordingly, causal determinism, as an efficient cause in natural selection, determines the multiple probabilities that are conventionally understood as chance—an idea emphasized by Darwin, who identified these probabilities as governed by natural selection.

Therefore, natural selection and chance are concomitant, with causal determinism or natural selection shaping the various probabilities in nature. As Darwin emphasizes, chance refers to our ignorance of the numerous underlying causes and factors, where only one possibility ultimately prevails in this competition.

Therefore, it is clear that chance does not imply the absence of order or planning; rather, it aligns perfectly with causal determinism in nature, which negates final causes. Likewise, we, as theists and proponents of evolution, also reject final causes in nature while defending purposiveness within it—a purposiveness shaped by natural selection and divine knowledge. In other words, although final causes do not operate in nature, this does not mean that efficient causality in nature proceeds blindly or without purpose.

However, most theists attempt to explain intelligence and purposiveness in nature by negating chance. Yet, disproving chance is

not necessary to establish an intelligent designer; rather, demonstrating intelligence and purposiveness in nature is a step that follows the proof of a designer. Therefore, it seems more appropriate to use the concept of "purpose" rather than "final cause" when explaining natural phenomena. The final cause has been defined as the ultimate perfection that an agent considers in its action or, in other words, as that which the agent primarily and essentially desires. For instance, in discussions on motion, it is said that motion is not inherently desirable for its own sake and is not intrinsic to an entity's nature—nothing seeks motion simply for the sake of moving, but rather for the result and purpose it serves. The first perfection in motion is the motion itself, while the second perfection is what is called the goal of motion (Ibn Sīnā, 1982, p. 328). Thus, the final cause and the purpose of natural phenomena may not always align. This is precisely why empirical sciences do not focus on final causes; instead, they seek to discover and explain phenomena based on actual events in the world. Consequently, deviations from final causes are not considered instances of disorder or irregularity in the framework of empirical science.

However, as evident in Darwin's theory, he not only emphasizes the deterministic order of nature—clarifying the significance of efficient causes and cause-and-effect relationships—but also acknowledges a purposive order in nature.

Thus, it becomes clear that all beings possess a purpose, yet this purpose is not determined by a final cause, nor does the final cause play an active role in the natural process as an external reality. Therefore, if the goal of this argument is to prove the existence of God, it is crucial to determine which concept of order or design should be employed in the minor premise of the argument.

Evaluating the Implications of Darwin's Theory for the Existence of an Intelligent Designer

After Darwin's theory, the teleological and theological design proposed by Aquinas lost its prominence, replaced by an empirical and biological understanding of design and order. It is evident that a teleological interpretation of the design argument easily conflicts with the theory of evolution, as theologians viewed evolution as contradicting the world's purposiveness. From their perspective, evolution resulted from natural selection rather than a final cause, leading them to believe that the design argument was undermined. Thus, if final causality and purposiveness are distinguished from one another, no formulation of the design argument necessarily contradicts scientific theories like Darwinian evolution. The rejection of Aristotelian final causes was indeed a justified transformation within empirical sciences, yet it does not stand in opposition to theism or divine purposiveness. The confusion between purpose and final cause led to theologians' resistance to the theory of evolution. In other words, just as final causes were eliminated from natural explanations after Aristotle, they should also be reconsidered in theological discourse. Only then can the natural arguments for God's existence be revised in alignment with the actual structure of the world, which is shaped by efficient and formal causes.

This explanation clarifies that Darwin’s theory empirically and objectively presents two aspects of design and order: first, the role of efficient causality and natural determinism, and second, the purposiveness of nature. Neither of these aspects contradicts the existence of God. Since theologians and atheists alike agree on the naturalistic order and the role of efficient causes in nature, God's existence can still be affirmed. Furthermore, the purposiveness of nature can be framed within a teleological design argument, which

serves as both a theological argument within religious discourse and an argument empirically supported by Darwin's theory. Additionally, by emphasizing the perspective of new essentialism in science, nature can be understood as comprising entities with independent essences, each actualizing itself within its own ontological domain. Through this lens, God's existence can also be demonstrated using the argument of the truthful (*Burhān al-Ṣiddīqīn*), which relies on the external existence of things as a foundation for proving the divine.

That said, Darwin's theory does not contradict the existence of God in a way that necessitates proving purposiveness to affirm divine existence. While Darwin's theory rejected final causes, this rejection does not undermine God's existence to the extent that one must challenge the methodological foundations of empirical sciences to prove God. There is no need to refute chance or establish final causality—rather, the argument from teleological order retains its validity. However, if theologians or scientists perceive Darwin's theory as conflicting with the existence of God, then God should be demonstrated through efficient causality. Theologians often overlook the fact that chance, as used in empirical sciences, does not imply the negation of efficient causality. The concept of chance is opposed to final causality in nature, not to efficient causality or causal determinism, so there is no need to disprove chance in order to argue for an intelligent designer. This misunderstanding arises because theologians regard the purposiveness of nature as evidence for God, while atheists, by rejecting the role of final causes, conclude that nature lacks purpose and is governed by chance—therefore, they argue, God does not exist.

Thus, it is clear that theologians' attempts to negate chance in order to prove God are futile—in fact, they are arguing for something

that is not in dispute. Therefore, if they seek to establish the purposiveness of nature, they must first prove the existence of God. To this day, theologians have not provided complete arguments for the existence of God or an intelligent designer. Their reasoning has either been based on empirical grounds, which are generally accepted by scientists, or they have relied on design arguments. However, the theory of intelligent design has two distinct aspects, just as Darwin's theory can be examined from two perspectives. Talk of a "designer" pertains to natural selection and efficient causality, which are necessary to prove the existence of God. Meanwhile, the discussion of "intelligence" relates to natural evolution, the adaptation of organisms, and their conformity to the evolutionary process, which appears to be goal-directed—an argument supported by teleological reasoning. Even Darwin's theory provides empirical evidence for this notion. Causal determinism and efficient causality in Darwin's theory demonstrate that "natural selection does not yield perfection—only improvements over what came before. It produces the fitter, not the fittest. And although selection gives the appearance of design, that design may often be imperfect" (Coyne, 2009, p. 14).

This aspect of evolution, being dependent on efficient causality in nature, has led some scientists to question the necessity of a creator. However, another issue arises regarding the purposiveness of evolution: do these causal relationships and natural selection occur under a guided and purposeful framework? This question becomes particularly relevant in the broader discussion of evolution, where the notion of intelligence in evolution is debated. As Coyne states, "Advocates of intelligent design argue that this kind of difference requires the direct intervention of a creator" (ibid, p. 36).

Therefore, if we attempt to address the purposiveness of evolution before proving the existence of God, we inevitably try to

establish God's existence by emphasizing purposiveness and rejecting chance. However, if we first prove God through the design argument based on the order in nature, which considers efficient causality, then even Darwin's empirical evidence can serve as a confirmation of the design argument within theology. Otherwise, it would be as if we assume the absence of causality and then try to prove that nature has a cause—by simply emphasizing its purposiveness! Thus, Darwin's theory encompasses two types of design arguments: efficient order and goal-directed order. Both are evident in various examples, yet scientists have generally interpreted the entire concept of intelligent design solely as an argument for the existence of God. More importantly, they have attempted to prove God's existence merely by negating chance. On the other hand, atheistic scientists, relying on empirical methods and the notion of chance, cannot disprove the existence of God, because chance is a feature of empirical sciences, not an inherent characteristic of nature itself. When nature is studied through the lens of efficient causality, how can chance be considered a real, external phenomenon while maintaining the validity of empirical sciences? Chance, in this context, is merely a concept opposed to final causality in nature, making it a theoretical construct rather than an ontological reality. Darwin himself used "chance" to signify ignorance of causes, yet theologians have mistakenly conflated this notion with the absence of efficient causality. Therefore, chance does not negate the intelligence behind natural evolution.

Thus, the theory of evolution presents us with two questions: Why does nature exist? And why does nature operate in this particular way? These two questions correspond to two design arguments—one concerning the proof of God's existence and the other regarding the purposiveness of nature.

Assessing Arguments from Design

When applying either of these two arguments individually, it is essential to define their epistemic scope to avoid using the concept of purposiveness in defending theism and proving God's existence. This prevents direct confrontation with atheistic claims based on "chance." In this regard, the design argument is not aimed at proving an intelligent designer, and the empirical argument from order, when not supplemented by ontological arguments such as the "argument of the truthful," falls short of proving God's existence. Furthermore, the natural order argument holds a higher epistemic priority than the design argument. As a result, if the design argument is employed to prove God's existence, it becomes an ineffective argument for that purpose. That is, it cannot be used to counter atheism arising from scientific theories, since the purposiveness of the world does not, in itself, serve as proof of God's existence or establish an intelligent designer.

William Lane Craig has consistently referred to fine-tuning as evidence of purposeful creation. In essence, theologians emphasize what scientists themselves do not deny, yet they extend these explanations to necessitate an intelligent designer—without providing the scientific community with a compelling argument for this theistic interpretation. When examining one of Craig's arguments regarding fine-tuning and the rejection of chance in the universe's initial conditions, it becomes clear that his reasoning lacks definitive proof:

1. The fine-tuning of the universe's initial conditions is either due to physical necessity, chance, or design and planning.
2. This fine-tuning is neither the result of physical necessity nor chance.
3. Therefore, it must be the result of design and planning. (Craig, 2003, p.165).

Similarly, Michael Behe, through his concept of "irreducible complexity," attempts to establish a creative and intelligent designer at the pinnacle of the cosmic order. He argues that some biochemical biological systems are irreducibly complex, meaning they cannot be simplified while maintaining their functional integrity. This is incompatible with Darwinian gradual evolution and natural selection (Behe, 2001, p. 189). Although Behe acknowledges Darwinian evolution as a theory that has successfully explained many ambiguities regarding the origin of life on Earth, he ultimately deems it insufficient and ineffective. Drawing upon scientific discoveries from the late twentieth century, he concludes that life is not the product of natural selection but rather the result of intelligent design (Ibid, p. 205).

Therefore, merely affirming the intricacies of creation or challenging scientific theories does not serve theology or theism. Instead, the primary obstacle—the dependence of matter on causality and laws—must be addressed to provide a definitive answer to fundamental questions such as: Why is there something rather than nothing? And why does nature operate in this particular way instead of another? Ultimately, intelligent design must be able to explain the cosmic order within causal relationships; otherwise, just as one can describe patterns of natural order in nature, one could equally argue for disorder. According to proponents of the anthropic principle, the universe is not only devoid of order and intelligent design but is, in fact, becoming increasingly chaotic over time. By establishing an intelligent creator, however, all natural relationships can be explained as both structured and purposeful. This approach eliminates the need for multiple, conflicting explanations, instead uniting the entire cosmos within a single coherent framework—where theism emerges as the only rational option for understanding a unified system. From this perspective, even the apparent disorder in nature is a product of

intelligent causal relationships. While science may classify such phenomena as disorderly, they are, in reality, manifestations of a higher order, as both causality and purposiveness together define a theistic view of nature.

For instance, Dembski and Behe offer a compelling argument in support of theism and the fine-tuning of the universe: Complex systems exist within the organs of living beings, making the likelihood of their emergence by mere chance exceedingly low. The existence of such ordered systems can only be explained through intelligent design, as natural causes are incapable of generating such intricate information (Dembski, 2001, pp. 553–573). However, even atheist scientists acknowledge these findings and evidence, though they attribute them to material nature rather than design. For instance, Richard Dawkins does not reject these arguments outright; instead, he provides scientific explanations for them. He views the theistic perspective as an attempt to fill gaps in scientific knowledge, arguing that as science progresses, these gaps continue to narrow (Dawkins, 2006, p. 121).

This account makes it clear that natural order can serve as a pathway both toward theism and toward atheism. Therefore, efforts to prove God's existence should focus on the philosophical implications of natural order rather than relying solely on empirical observations. Moreover, theology can establish God's existence through philosophical reasoning, not empirical methods. This is because the foundations of empirical sciences are already accepted by scientists, and what scientists themselves acknowledge cannot serve as a common ground for both theists and atheists in debating God's existence. Thus, a theologian asserting the existence of God must offer something beyond these foundational principles to substantiate their claim. Since atheists use the same scientific foundations to argue for the nonexistence of God, one cannot use the very same principles as

evidence for theism without additional reasoning to counter the atheistic interpretation. Since metaphysics is an open field of inquiry, it can be employed by both theists and atheists. Just as empirical sciences, when interpreted through a materialistic metaphysical lens, may deny the necessity of a divine cause, theology can offer metaphysical arguments in favor of God's existence. In this regard, theists align with scientists who reject final causality, seeing this rejection as an opportunity to establish a more comprehensive philosophical framework that integrates God's agency with the theory of evolution. Based on this perspective, a philosophical approach can be developed to foster meaningful interaction between science and theology—one that does not rely solely on empirical evidence but rather integrates scientific findings within a broader metaphysical and theological context.

Enhancing the Natural Design Argument for God's Existence

Since no common law exists externally, apart from the causal relationships inherent in nature, the concept of order or design can only be abstracted from these relationships. Thus, understanding the order of the world depends on human perception, which arises from one's knowledge of nature (Javadi Amoli, 1996, p. 239). However, the question remains: how can this deterministic order serve as proof for the existence of God? This brings us to the discussion of enhancing the design argument—how can this natural order be linked to a divine designer? For within the argument itself, any inquiry into the order inevitably leads back to the material and natural order, and unless we arrive at the existence of a Necessary Being, the existence of God remains unproven.

After outlining the challenges in enhancing the natural version of the design argument, some philosophers argue that a philosophical

approach to improving this argument must be linked to ontological proofs for the existence of God (Javadi Amoli, 1996, p. 241). In other words, if the goal of the desing argument is to prove the Necessary Being, its conclusion will not fully align with this objective unless it is supplemented by the argument of the truthful or the argument from contingency and necessity. However, if the purpose is to establish the attributes of knowledge and power in the Necessary Being after affirming its existence, the design argument may, to some extent, suffice (Javadi Amoli, 1996, p. 41).

Hospers also argues that even if the design argument succeeds, it does not prove the existence of a Necessary Being, a First Cause, or even the creation of the world from nothing. At most, it can suggest that the emergence of the world is the result of design and planning, requiring an intelligent and sufficiently powerful being. Therefore, attributing the title of "God" to this designer and organizer (assuming its existence) requires further contemplation (Hospers, 1992, p. 96). Similarly, Kant holds that the design argument can only demonstrate the possibility and occurrence of the world's form, not the existence of its matter. To prove the material existence of the world, it must be established that all things in the world are inherently incapable of creating order and harmony, or that they themselves are, in essence, the effects of a transcendent cause—an argument that requires reasoning beyond the design argument. At best, the argument from design can prove the existence of an architect of the universe, but not its creator (Kant, 1929, p. 529).

Swinburne also does not consider the design argument a definitive proof for the existence of God (Swinburne, 2004, p. 155). In this argument, he assumes the probabilities of God's existence and non-existence to be equal, arguing that any factor increasing one

probability consequently decreases the other. However, rather than relying on religiously internal factors such as miracles and religious experiences, as Swinburne does, a more rigorous approach to order and design should draw upon an inherent faculty of understanding and the principle of comprehension to establish certainty in proving God's existence through this argument. Thus, it is appropriate to say that at this stage, the probability of finding God through the design argument is strengthened—a stage in which human reflection leads to questioning the creator of the laws governing matter, which operate with precision and causality. Ultimately, the general conclusion that "nature requires a designer," when supplemented by the argument from contingency and necessity or the argument of the truthful, leads to the affirmation of a Necessary Being.

Thus, it becomes clear that if order and its cause do not stem from the faculty of understanding, then Hume's argument holds, and we would have no criterion for determining order. However, to establish the validity and credibility of the argument from design, it is necessary to redefine "order" in a way that minimizes ambiguity. If, instead of "order," we use "lawfulness" and take causality—an intrinsic principle of understanding—as the foundation for the lawfulness or causal nature of the world, the objections raised by atheism against this argument will be undermined. This is because the faculty of understanding perceives both order and causality, eliminating the need for prior experience of order to compare with the existing order in the world. In other words, to say that "the world is orderly" is to say that it is explainable and governed by laws. Thus, both premises of the design argument are rational and inherent to human understanding: (1) The natural world possesses order, (2) Every order requires an organizer. Therefore: The world has an organizer.

Even if what is meant is empirical order, it remains a rational concept rather than a conventional one. This is because preparatory causes and inductive reasoning are derived from sensory-rational inferences. Therefore, the empirical nature of the premises in the design argument does not undermine its rational foundation (Ghadardan Gharamaleki, 2004, p. 50). Moreover, if we define order merely as the opposite of chaos and disorder, this reasoning might be invalid, as the world could appear more chaotic than orderly. Thus, to establish a valid instance of order in the design argument, we require an order that is intrinsic to human understanding and not negated by the presence of evil or apparent disorder in the world. Swinburne, for instance, considers order to be more prevalent than disorder in the world (Swinburne, 2004, p. 154). However, his criterion is based solely on observing particulars without generalizing them or considering the role of an active cause in nature.

Thus, unless the faculty of understanding perceives causality, it will not seek numerical and empirical order or the study of nature. Consequently, the first part of the design argument, which demonstrates causal and natural order and falls within the methodological domain of empirical sciences, implies epistemological causality. The second part, which is completed by an ontological argument, draws upon ontological causality. Therefore, if the world were devoid of causality, the understanding would not grasp any causal order, and empirical sciences would neither be reliable nor develop into actual sciences. In reality, comprehending the existence of the world precedes understanding its nature. However, in empirical methodology, we sometimes proceed in reverse when proving God's existence, making the need for a sustaining cause more tangible.

This means that the very act of seeking causes and questioning the existence-giving cause—along with the principle that differentiates between various forms—is what disrupts the supposed equality between the probabilities of theism and atheism. In other words, when we generalize particular instances of empirical order, we naturally seek the cause of this order's existence. Since natural order, which operates under an active cause, does not terminate in an infinite regress, invoking an infinite regress of natural causes is one of the most flawed responses in proving God's existence. Thus, the necessity of an existence-giving cause is established in relation to the fundamental comprehension of being and the laws that distinguish objects and materials from one another. As Geisler suggests, the only possible way to validate the ontological argument is to accept that something exists, and once a person can reason that "something exists," it follows that God exists (Geisler, 2016, p. 225). Therefore, since causal relationships are widely accepted, this shared foundation allows for the proof of God's existence, demonstrating that natural order leads to God—not merely a teleological order. Furthermore, in the material world, only material agents exist, which themselves require a prior actualizing force. While evolutionary processes can be explained through these natural agents and their study falls within the scope of empirical sciences, the forms that act upon these efficient causes—serving as the principal drivers of evolution—require an immaterial cause. This is because an efficient cause needs a form to actualize itself in order to activate another potential agent. Ultimately, it becomes evident that the misalignment of theistic proofs with the metaphysical foundations of empirical sciences—and an overreliance on final causes—inflicts irreparable harm upon both science and theology.

Conclusion

The method of empirical science is specifically designed for understanding nature and is not in conflict with the existence of God. This is because theology cannot defend theism using empirical methods. In reality, the theory of intelligent design should not seek to interfere with scientific methodology or negate chance, as the scientific method operates within its own domain. Similarly, empirical science cannot use its own methods to prove the nonexistence of God. Chance is a concept relevant to scientific methodology, and theology does not need to refute it.

Therefore, purposeful evolution governs existence, and what determines this purpose is the essence of each material entity and its efficient cause. Even Darwin’s empirical evidence, in a way, affirms the purposiveness of evolution. In fact, theologians' opposition to chance has only intensified this debate. Atheists wrongly employ the concept of chance, while they, in fact, reject Aristotle’s final cause, which does not inherently negate theism. Theistic scientists, too, must acknowledge the role of chance in empirical sciences, as it is an integral part of the scientific method. Thus, it becomes clear that nature is explained through efficient causes, yet it is not devoid of purpose. The fine-tuning argument provides empirical support for the purposiveness of nature, but it does not establish a supernatural cause. In reality, empirical calculations, observations, and their astonishing implications depend on the essence and form of natural agents, which align with their potential and purpose. A portion of Darwin’s theory discusses the influence of natural agents and their competition. Therefore, in reconciling Darwin’s theory with theism, these efficient causes must be linked to a final agent to establish the existence of an intelligent designer. In this way, purpose is dependent on both efficient and formal causes, meaning that first, the creator of forms

must be proven. Atheists do not necessarily deny purposes; they simply attribute them to nature. However, theologians, rather than presenting a rational argument, merely emphasize divine purposiveness. As Forrest argues, the intelligent design theory fails to provide a valid argument for the existence of a designer. Ultimately, these two arguments can be aligned by recognizing that the purpose of the world is realized through its efficient and natural order. Thus, they do not contradict each other, and with theological effort using philosophical methods, such a conclusion can be reached. However, deriving this through empirical methods alone seems implausible, as the so-called final cause is not itself a determinant of purpose.

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