Philosophy of Religion

3. Design Arguments

How strong is the traditional Design Argument for the existence of God? Is the contemporary "Fine Tuning Argument" any more promising?

Introductory Overview

T. J. Mawson, *Belief in God: An introduction to the philosophy of religion* (OUP, 2005), chapter 8, "The Argument to Design", pp. 133-52.

Essential Sources on the Standard Design Argument

David Hume, *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, available in many editions, including online at https://davidhume.org/texts/d/ (where the individual parts can also be seen as manuscript images). Also potentially of interest is Section 11 of Hume's first *Enquiry*, at https://davidhume.org/texts/e/11.

Richard Swinburne, *Is There a God?* (OUP, 1996), chapters 3-4, pp. 38-68 – this is condensed from Swinburne's influential book *The Existence of God* (OUP, 1979 and 1991).

Critical Discussions of the Standard Design Argument

J. L. Mackie, *The Miracle of Theism* (OUP, 1982), chapter 8, "Arguments for Design", pp. 133-49 – supports Hume and criticises Swinburne.

Elliott Sober, "The Design Argument", chapter 1 of Neil Manson (ed.), *God and Design* (Routledge, 2003), pp. 1-54. Sober also discusses the probabilistic background of the argument at greater length in his recent short book *The Design Argument* (Cambridge, 2019).

The Fine Tuning Argument

Richard Swinburne, "The Argument to God from Fine-Tuning Reassessed", chapter 5 of Neil Manson (ed.), *God and Design* (Routledge, 2003), pp. 105-23. This improves on his previous discussion of the argument, in Appendix B of the second edition of *The Existence of God* (OUP, 1991).

Robin Collins, "Evidence for Fine-Tuning", chapter 9 of Neil Manson (ed.), *God and Design* (Routledge, 2003), pp. 178-199. This focuses on presenting physical evidence of alleged fine-tuning, rather than philosophical discussion. Collins also discusses the argument extensively in "The Teleological Argument: An exploration of the fine-tuning of the universe", chapter 4 of William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland (eds), *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology* (Blackwell, 2009), pp. 202-81.

Timothy McGrew, Lydia McGrew, and Eric Vestrup, "Probabilities and the Fine-Tuning Argument: A skeptical view", chapter 10 of Neil Manson (ed.), *God and Design* (Routledge, 2003), pp. 200-8.

Victor J. Stenger, "Natural Explanations for the Anthropic Coincidences", *Philo* 3 (2000), pp. 50-67. Stenger has written a number of pieces arguing that the alleged fine-tuning can be given a natural explanation, of which this is the most accessible. For more detail, see his book *The Fallacy of Fine-Tuning: Why the universe is not designed for us* (Prometheus, 2011).

William Lane Craig and Sean Carroll, debate transcript: "God and Cosmology: The existence of God in light of contemporary cosmology", at https://www.reasonablefaith.org/media/debates/god-and-cosmology-the-existence-of-god-in-light-of-contemporary-cosmol/ (from March 2014).