REVIEW OF LAST CLASS

What was the parable of the garden really about?
Questions of the Day

• Are the differences between a religious and non-religious person important? Is it important to test and verify religious beliefs to see if they are valid claims? Or is the difference between the religious and non-religious simply about "how one chooses to feels about reality (the garden)?"
Let's take a religious belief:

- “God/universe loves you.”
- “There is Divine order in the world.”
- “Everything has a purpose.”

Do these statements mean anything?
- How does Anthony Flew answer this question?
- How does R.M. Hare answer this question?
FRAMING THE PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSION

Religion as about Beliefs and Believers

• Flew:
  • Beliefs should be testable, otherwise they are meaningless because they continually change. Or worse, dangerous.
  • Believers are akin to stubborn explorers who won’t let any contrary evidence change their beliefs.
  • Believers are people who believe it’s not raining even if they open the door and see a downpour.

• Hare:
  • Certain beliefs are not testable, but still meaningful because they allow us to function in the world.
  • Believers are no different than the rest of us. We all have “bliks.”
  • Believers are people who have certain assumptions about what rain looks like so that they can make the judgment in the first place.
FRAMING THE PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSION

What’s Einstein’s View?

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed. This insight into the mystery of life, coupled though it be with fear, has also given rise to religion. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms— this knowledge, this feeling, is at the center of true religiousness. In this sense, and in this sense only, I belong in the ranks of devoutly religious men...
Framing the Philosophical Discussion

Religion as about a Way of Experiencing Reality

Einstein Reading:
Science and Religion as compatible when viewed beyond “a set of beliefs” and as the human capacity to experience mystery and awe.

The religious are akin to an explorer that has special appreciation for the Garden.
Can you see how we’re kind of back to the garden?

- Symposium papers:
  - Beliefs and Thoughts About Reality

- Einstein excerpt:
  - Meaning & Feeling About Reality

Western philosophy of religion has been dominated by the 1st approach, so we will begin the quarter. It is the first perspective of religion that we will deal with in the other in the second half of class.
PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

DAY 3 – ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD
ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

2 Ways of Acquiring Knowledge of God’s Existence

- **Revelation:**
  - God’s self-disclosure

- **Natural Theology:**
  - Reason/ordinary experiences

**A Priori Arguments**
Independent of experience: just based on ideas.

**A Posteriori Arguments**
Based on experience.
A PRIORI ARGUMENTS: THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

Greek:
• *ontos* (being) and *logos* (reason or rational account)

Ontological Argument?
• Arguments based on what it means to be God.

1st Popular version: Saint Anselm of Canterbury
BUT FIRST A SYLLOGISM

1. Apples, by definition, are fruits.
2. To be a fruit is to have seeds.
3. Therefore…
   
   apples have seeds.

No experience necessary ➔ a priori argument.
ANSELM’S ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT
“NONE GREATER CAN BE CONCEIVED”

Saint Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109)
Christian Philosopher & Monk

“None greater can be conceived argument.”
ANSELM’S ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT
“NONE GREATER CAN BE CONCEIVED”

1. The God I refer to is a being “than which none greater can be conceived.”

2. So, a being than which none greater can be conceived exists in the mind.

3. I can conceive of a being than which none greater can be conceived which exists both in the mind and in reality.

4. To exist in reality is better than to exist in the mind alone.

5. If, therefore, a being than which none greater can be conceived exists in the mind alone and not in reality, it is not a being than which none greater can be conceived.

6. Therefore, a being than which none greater can be conceived exists in reality.
“NONE GREATER CAN BE CONCEIVED”

How might Anselm respond to an atheist?

Atheist: But I don’t believe God exists?

Anselm:?
GUANILLO’S OBJECTION

Guanilo
11th Century Monk

- Believed in God, but...

- Uses a “reductio ad Absurdum” argument to criticize Anselm.
GUANILO’S OBJECTION

1. I define the *Perfect Island* as the greatest possible island (GPI).

2. So, a GPI exists in the mind

3. We can conceive of a GPI that exists in the mind and reality

4. Existence in reality is greater than existence in the mind alone

5. If a GPI exists in the mind alone, then it is not the GPI

6. Thus, a GPI (and EVERY perfect thing) exists in reality

7. *But since a GPI does not exist in reality, the argument structure (which Anselm also utilizes) must be flawed*
Rene Descartes (1596-1650)
French Philosopher & Mathematician

• Claims to not be familiar with Anselm.

• Doesn’t want to present argument. Describes intuition.
DESCARTES’ ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

The Reading

1. (P1/P2) Elegance of geometry. Knowing without experience.

2. (P2) Rule of “clear and distinct perceptions”.
   • What does this mean?

3. (P3) Same “perception” with God and existence?

4. (P4/P5) It is clear that existence cannot be taken away from “divine essence.” Does it make sense to think of a Supreme “be”-ing that does not exist?

Group Question:
1. How is this better and/or different than Anselm’s argument?
2. What sort of things do you know with “clear and distinct perceptions?” Do you perceive “God as a being that exists” in this way?
DESCARTES’ ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

The Difference Between Anselm & Descartes

Anselm: God is a being which “none greater can be conceived”

Descartes: Not about “none greater”, but about existence being a perfection of a perfect “being.”

1. By definition, God is the most perfect being.
2. Existence is a perfection. (How does he know this?)
3. Therefore, God exists.
KANT’S OBJECTION

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)
German Philosopher

• **Existence** is not a property of a thing (not a “predicate”).
  • Example: Black, existing cat.

• Unlike: All-knowing, all-powerful, all-loving. Why?
  • Because helps distinguish God from other types of beings.

• **So, existence is not a perfection.**
  • Examples: A perfect island. A perfect fairy.
ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

2 Ways of Acquiring Knowledge of God’s Existence

- **Revelation**: God’s self-disclosure
- **Natural Theology**: Reason/arguments

**A Priori Arguments**
Independent of experience: just based on ideas.

**A Posteriori Arguments**
Based on experience
A POSTERIORI ARGUMENT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

• Most commonly conceived argument: Cosmological Argument

• Derived from the Greek terms cosmos (world or universe) and logos (reason or rational account).
  • More appropriately: cosmos as “ordered system,” in contrast to chaos – a “disordered system”
COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

Most Common Forms

• Contingency & Causation (often called the cosmological argument)

• Design & Teleology – Intelligent design/purpose

• Moral argument
A POSTERIORI ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)
Priest, Philosopher

*Summa Theologica*: 5 proofs for God’s Existence.
- Argument from Motion
- Argument from Causation
- Argument from Contingency
- Argument from Excellence
- Argument from Harmony (Design)
1) There are objects that are in motion
2) If something is in motion, then it must be set into motion by something outside of itself
3) There can not be an infinite chain of movers.

4) So, there is a first, unmoved mover that sets the world into motion.
5) Hence God exist and is the first unmoved mover.
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS
ARGUMENT FROM CAUSATION

1) Some events cause other events.
2) If an event happens, then it must be caused by some prior event outside of itself.
3) There cannot be an infinite causal chain of cause an effect

______________________________________________________________________

4) So, there must be a first, efficient cause, uncaused cause.
5) Hence, God is this first cause and exist.