

Rereading Hume's Objections to the Argument from Order

Maryam Yusefi *

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Abstract

Hume is widely considered the greatest critic of the argument from design. In most interpretations, his objections to the argument from design are generally understood as ultimately aiming to question, scrutinize, and cast doubt on the existence of God. Some scholars even infer from his objections that he explicitly denies God's existence while rejecting this argument. In this article, I have carefully examined this common conclusion drawn from Hume's critiques of the argument from design. To this end, I first thoroughly analyzed the prevailing paradigm of the argument from design in Hume's time, considering both theological and scientific perspectives. Then, drawing extensively on his Dialogues for the first time, I focused on the broader context, premises, and consequences surrounding his objections to the argument from design. Ultimately, I have concluded that his skepticism regarding theological matters primarily signifies agnosticism from a philosophical and epistemological standpoint, rather than outright denial from a position of antagonism or atheism.

Keywords: Hume, critique, argument from design, teleological argument.

* PhD student in Modern Philosophy, Faculty of Philosophy, Mofid University, Qom, Iran.
Email: myousefi.mail@gmail.com



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