**Aesthetic Argument**

Aesthetics= appreciation of beauty

Modern scholars like **FR Tennant** (1866-1957) and **R Swinburne** (1934- ) advance the design argument by moving away from the use of analogy

*Analogy suggests a similarity between God and human designers– how far do we take this comparison? What do we transform God into?*

For Tennant (Book: Philosophical Theology 1930), “*God is the best explanation for the beauty, regularity and order in the world.”*

**The Argument according to FR Tennant** – Humans appreciate aesthetic activities such as art, music and literature: which are not necessary for mere survival so cannot have come about through natural selection or evolution so must be the product of a designing creator

*“Our scientific knowledge brings us no nearer to understanding the beauty of music…beauty seems to be superfluous and to have little survival value.”*

*“Nature is meaningless and valueless, without God behind it and man in front.”* **(F. R. Tennant)**

**Likewise Swinburne states-**

“In consequence, if the world is beautiful, that fact would be evidence for God's existence.”

“Few, however, would deny that our universe has beauty. Poets and painters and ordinary men down the centuries have long admired the beauty of the orderly procession of the heavenly bodies, the scattering of the galaxies through the heavens (in some ways random, in some ways orderly), and the rocks, sea, and wind interacting on earth, 'The spacious firmament on high, and all the blue ethereal sky', the water lapping against 'the old eternal rocks', and the plants of the jungle and of temperate climates, contrasting with the desert and the Arctic wastes. Who in his senses would deny that here is beauty in abundance? If we confine ourselves to the argument from the beauty of the inanimate and plant worlds, the argument surely works.”

**Anthropic Argument or ‘Finely Tuned Argument’** (*Anthropos = greek for Man)*

1. Argues that the world had to be as it is in order for us to be here. There must have been some built in factor which made the development of human life inevitable.
2. The chances of conditions on earth being so perfect to allow human life to develop by chance are unfathomable.
3. The fact we are here demonstrates ‘fine tuning’ for the purpose of human existence.
4. Implies a designer!

**Support from scientists!**

* ***Arthur Brown***states the Ozone layer is an exact depth to prevent humans from being killed by dangerous rays, and therefore is evidence of a *“designing mind behind the universe.”*
* ***Paul Davies*** in his book *The Mind of God* goes so far as to argue that “*the accuracy required at the earliest moment of the Big Bang is equivalent to mankind hitting a one inch target from a distance of twenty billion light years!”*
* ***John Polkinghorne***(1930-) a Physicist and Anglican Priest, argues God is the *“total explanation for the universe...and the continuing act of creation as seen through the unfolding process of evolution.”*

**Richard Swinburne’s argument**

**Two factors-**

**(1) Regularity of Co- Presence**: The order in the universe is a product of what he calls *regularity of co-presence,* implying that everything works together in an orderly manner following an orderly arrangement of its parts. E.g. Parts of a human body, parts of a plant...

**(2) Regularity of Succession:** The order in the universe is also a product of *regularity of succession* (basically same as design qua regularity), whereby things follow a set pattern or instruction in order to function. These instructions are external to our own intelligence. E.g. The vein/artery system

**Goes on to use an analogy of a mad kidnapper with an explosive card shuffling machine**

*“Suppose that a madman kidnaps a victim and shuts him a room with a card-shuffling machine. The machine shuffles ten decks of cards simultaneously and then draws a card from each deck and exhibits simultaneously the ten cards. The kidnapper tells the victim that he will shortly set the machine to work and it will exhibit its first draw, but that unless the draw consists of an ace of hearts from each deck, the machine will simultaneously set off an explosion which will kill the victim, in consequence of which he will not see which cards the machine draws. The machine is then set to work, and to the amazement and relief of the victim the machine exhibits an ace of hearts drawn from each deck. The victim thinks that this extraordinary fact needs an explanation in terms of the machine having been rigged in some way. But the kidnapper, who now reappears, casts doubt on this suggestion. ‘It is hardly surprising,’ he says, ‘that the machine draws only aces of hearts. You could not possibly see anything else. For you would not be here to see anything at all, if any other cards had been drawn.’ But of course the victim is right and the kidnapper is wrong... The fact that this peculiar order is a necessary condition of the draw being perceived at all makes what is perceived no less extraordinary and in need of explanation. The teleologist’s starting-point is not that we perceive order rather than disorder, but that order rather than disorder is there. Maybe only if order is there can we know what is there, but that makes what is there no less extraordinary and in need of explanation.”*

**So we should not take the odds of conditions for life lightly- we should indeed wonder at the chances! This is a comeback to the criticism of only ‘apparent design’. Just because design is apparent doesn’t mean it is not authentic!**

Swinburne concludes- arguing from **probability**

He asks the simple question-

*which explanation for the apparent design is more likely?*

*Random chance or a conscious designer?*

He concludes

*“To postulate a trillion trillion other universes, rather than one God in order to explain the orderliness of our universe, seems the height of irrationality.” (Challenging Epicurean Hypothesis)*