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David Hume and Arguments for Design

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HUME & DESIGN

“order, arrangement, or the adjustment of final causes, is not of itself any proof of design; but only so far as it has been experienced to proceed from that principle”

–DAVID HUME, *DIALOGUES CONCERNING NATURAL RELIGION*

“an analogy reflects merely a contingent truth to do with behavior of our world, then there is no expectation that the same relation will obtain between things in the world and some further reality”

–MARK WYNN, “A PRIORI JUDGEMENTS AND THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN”

A *PRIORI* DESIGN ARGUMENT

(I) If a number of things have causes of *different* kinds, or in one more cases no cause at all, then there is no reason to expect them to resemble one another closely by kind, in the absence of further information regarding their character.

(II) If a number of things derive from the same cause or same kind of cause, then there is some reason to expect them to resemble one another closely by kind, in the absence of further information regarding their character.

(III) If two possibilities have the same general character, then they have the same probability *a priori*

(IV) The more precisely defined a hypothesis, the lower its probability *a priori*.

(V) The good is of its nature is *attractive*.

“A large number of cosmic ‘coincidences’ have in fact occurred in our universe, and it is precisely these “coincidences” that have enabled life to evolve on this planet. In other words, it isn't the reality of these ‘coincidences’ that is at issue here; it is how we are to interpret their underlying meaning that constitutes the issue. The question thus boils down to the following: are these “coincidences” so numerous and so compelling that we are virtually forced into acknowledging Divine Origin to them?”

M.A. COREY, *GOD AND THE NEW COSMOLOGY*