

(2) Argument by Analogy

The second premise in step 1b is an argument by analogy. The reason why we say that order and regularity are a product of design is that we draw an analogy from artifacts to natural objects. In artifacts order is a product of design. A watch does what it does because it was designed to do so. Because it is this way in artifacts, we feel it must be so in natural objects. Some critics of this argument have challenged this procedure, arguing that we have no basis for transferring characteristics of artifacts to natural objects.

(3) Evolution as a Source of Order

(as stated by Bertrand Russell)

"You all know the argument from design: everything in the world is made just so that we can manage to live in the world, and if the world was ever so little different, we could not manage to live in it. That is the argument from design. It sometimes takes a rather curious form; for instance, it is argued that rabbits have white tails in order to be easy to shoot. I do not know how rabbits would view that application. It is an easy argument to parody. You all know Voltaire's remark, that obviously the nose was designed to be such as to fit spectacles. That sort of parody has turned out to be not nearly so wide of the mark as it might have seemed in the 18th century, because since the time of Darwin we understand much better why living creatures are adapted to their environment. It is not that their environment was made to be suitable to them; but that they grew to be suitable to it, and that is the basis of adaptation. There is no evidence of design about it."

Bertrand Russell, Why I Am Not a Xn
(Simon and Schuster, 1957), 9-10

(4) Statistical Probability and Chance

Step 1a argues against chance as an explanation of order and regularity in the world. One reason for the assertion that the world must be a product of design and not of chance is that the odds against the latter are so staggeringly great as to exclude the possibility. Critics of the argument point out that, if chance is admitted as a possibility (no matter how improbable), then chance cannot be simply ruled out as an explanation.

To illustrate this point, consider a lottery: Suppose the odds against a certain numbered ticket (say 6-785-131) are ten million to one: