

Revision Outline For The Ontological Argument

AO1	a) Examine the ontological argument for the existence of God.
AO1	➤ A priori: it does not rely on the evidence of the senses for it's premises or conclusion. It moves through logical stages to reach a conclusion, which is self-evidently true or logically necessary. ➤ Deductive: it's premises contain it's conclusion which makes the conclusion the only possible one that could be deduced from it's premises. ➤ Analytic: True by definition alone. ➤ Anselm, Proslogion, 1078: Ontolgical argument is based on his definition of God That Than Which Nothing Greater Can Be Conceived (TTWNGCBC) ➤ Anselm uses Reductio ad absurdum to prove the existence of God. This method of reasoning aims to demonstrate the truth of something by reducing to absurdity the very opposite of what you are aiming to prove. Anselm uses several different concepts to demonstrate that God is logically necessary. • Perfection P1: God is TTWNGCBC (even atheists can accept this definition) P2: TTWNGCBC possesses all perfections P3: Existence is perfection (Developed by Descartes) C: God exists • In re and in intellectu P1: God is TTWNGCBCC P2: The concept of God exists in the mind in intellectu P3: If God id TTWNGCBC he must exist in reality in re C: God exists in intellecu and in re • Necessary existence P1: God is TTWNGCBC P2: God possesses necessary existence P3: God is non-contingent C: God exists ➤ The Fool, Psalm 53 "The fool has said in his heart there is no God" Anselm claims the atheist fails to recognise the full implications of their concept of God. ➤ Descartes (rationalist philosopher), 1598-1650, fifth meditation reformulated parts of this argument to support necessary existence. ➤ Necessary existence • "I think therefore I am" means he conceives his own existence and therefore he can conceive the existence of a perfect being. P1: The idea of God is the idea of a supremely perfect being P2: A supremely perfect being has all perfections P3: Existence is a perfection P4: A supremely perfect being has the perfection of existence P5: It is impossible to think of God as not existing C: God exists • Predicate For Descartes existence is a predicate just as 3 angles are a predicate of a triangle. ➤ Also supported by more modern philosophers referred to later Norman Malcolm, 1911-1990 and Alvin Plantinga, 1932-present

AO1/2	b) How successful is this argument in proving the existence of God
AO1/2	➤ Strengths • Nature of argument, a priori, deductive and analytical • Reductio ad absurdum • Descartes, Norman Malcolm and Alvin Plantinga ➤ Weakness • Reductio ad absurdum • Gaunilo of Marmoutier; If the logic of Anselm's argument was applied to things other than God it leads to invalid conclusions. He replaced the word God with greatest island. P1: I can conceive of an island than which no greater island can be thought P2: Such an island must possess all perfections P3: Existence is a perfection C: Therefore the island exists This is an invalid conclusion as just because you can conceive of a perfect island this does not mean it exists. Perfection does not necessarily mean existence. ➤ Counterargument • Anselm; refuted his criticism as Gaunilo is using an example of like things (islands) whereas Anselm is talking about God. • Alvin Plantinga, 1932-present; Islands have no maximal greatness. He developed the argument using the idea of possible worlds. God is maximally great and maximally excellent and must be the same in all worlds. ➤ Weakness • Existence is not a predicate • Immanuel Kant, 1724-1804; Strong opposition to Anselm and Descartes. Kant states that existence is not a predicate of something due to the fact that it does not add anything to our understanding of it. Saying "X exists" tells us nothing whereas "X is big" tells us something about X. • Gottlob Fregge, 1848-1925; Distinguishes between first and second order predicates. First order predicates = nature of something, Second order predicates = concepts. Anselm and Descartes make the mistake of using existence as a first order predicate. • Bertrand Russell; existence is not a predicate otherwise the following would be true P1: Men exist P2: Santa Claus is a man C: Santa exists This calls into question the validity of the argument • David Hume; existence is contingent. All things, which could be said to exist, could just as easily not exist. ➤ Counterarguments • Leibniz; he must exist since to possess all perfections but not to exist would be meaningless • Norman Malcolm, 1911-1990; agrees that the use of existence can be problematic but maintains support for the ontological argument through necessary existence. God is either necessary or impossible. ➤ Weakness • Definition of God • St Thomas Aquinas; All don't accept Anselm's definition of God therefore the argument only works subjectively and requires a posteriori argument as well

AO2	➤ Conclusion ➤ Cannot alone constitute an objective argument for the existence of God ➤ Other things to consider • Kierkegaard Faith and reason • Verification • Wittgenstein • Would it work if married with another argument? • Your own opinion
-----	---

B Inglis