**A Philosophical Argument For The Existence of Angels**
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Much has been discussed about angels with regards to special revelation (i.e. the Bible, Tradition, etc.). However, not much has been discussed about angels concerning natural theology. Some would say that's because establishing the existence of angels- utilizing general revelation/natural theology- is heretical. Others would say it's not something that could be known by reason.

These two concerns are somewhat related. I don't claim that my upcoming argument shows that you can *know* that angels exist (based on the argument). Rather, the argument gives one ‘grounds’ or epistemic justification for believing that angels exist. These grounds don't exclude special revelation. If God exists, one would expect creatures to know that angels exist in a special revelatory way. Secondly, my argument doesn't show that angels exist, if what you mean by 'show' or 'demonstrate' is metaphysical or moral certainty. For these reasons, I don't think my (upcoming) argument is heretical. I'm not saying that I've demonstrated conclusively/deductively that angels exist by way of natural theology/reason. And neither am I claiming that one can *know* that angels exist based on natural theology/general revelation.

But even if we assumed my argument was heretical, I don't think that means we can't examine it or critique it; we might be curious to examine where the argument goes (if anywhere). So for the time being and for simplicity’s sake, let's assume that isn't heretical. After all, after examining the argument, you might be more convinced or newly convinced that a doctrine of angels can't be known or even hinted at by reason--whether or not such a suggestion is heretical. So, without further ado, let’s get to the argument.

**The Argument for The Existence of Angels**

1. If God exists, God is a pure infinite spirit
2. Plausibly, if God is a pure infinite spirit, then God would create pure finite spirits

3. Therefore, plausibly, if God exists, then God would create pure finite spirits (from 1 and 2)
4. God exists (Assumption)
5. Therefore, plausibly, God would create pure finite spirits (from 3 and 4)
6. If God would create pure finite spirits, then pure finite spirits exist
7. Therefore, plausibly, pure finite spirits exist (from 5 and 6)

8. If pure finite spirits exist, then angels exist
9. Therefore, plausibly, angels exist (from 7 and 8)

1. If a>b (Premise)
2. If b>c (Premise)
3. Therefore, if a>c (1,2)
4. a (Premise)
5. Therefore, c (3,4)
6. If c>d (Premise)
7. Therefore, d (5,6)
8. If d>e (Premise)
9. Therefore, e (7,8)

As hinted at earlier, the argument doesn’t conclusively demonstrate that angels exist. While it’s true that if the premises in the argument are true, then the (final) conclusion follows, that conclusion can only be accepted in terms of plausibility. So, while it’s a deductive argument in the sense that adding new premises wouldn’t undermine the conclusion, it’s an inductive argument in the sense that the main premise (and thus the conclusion) can only be believed in a probabilistic manner.

By ‘pure spirit’, I mean a being that is very good, very powerful, and immaterial. God would be

an infinite spirit because God is uncreated. Created spirits would be finite spirits (i.e. angels). Angels, then, are immaterial personal beings with intellects. Angels aren’t abstract objects, so they would be able to enter into causal relations. One might wonder how angels could interact with the material world. The specifics are, of course, mysterious, but the idea is that angels exist at a higher level of reality, which means that angels can affect lower levels of reality (so this doesn’t seem to be the same problem that Descartes’ dualism has, where I somehow have a soul attached/united to this particular body). Although, even if we granted that we can’t explain exactly how angels interact with the material world, it doesn’t follow that angels can’t interact with the material world. And even if angels can’t interact with the material world, it doesn’t follow that they don’t exist.

So, angels are *not* cute babies with wings, entities that live in the clouds, beings with halos, or anything of the sort! They would be very powerful. They wouldn’t be omnipotent, and we have to make that clear. However, we also have to make clear that we can’t underestimate the power of angels either, which seems to be a common mistake.

**Support**

Premise 2 is the main premise of the argument, and it is bound to be the *most* controversial premise of the argument. With regards to support for premise 2, we would expect God to create a lot of things because God is all-creative. Given that God would create a lot of things, including different kinds of things, then the existence of pure finite spirits seems plausible. This seems to be the thought of (or inspired by) Augustine. The second support comes from Aquinas who argues that it would be implausible for God to create things like rocks and humans but leave nothing between humans and God. Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor, also talks about how humans have pure intellect, which is capable of existing without a material body. Given this, it doesn’t seem implausible to think that angels exist. In the context of Aquinas’ philosophy, angels make sense. That’s because Aquinas thinks that things are composed of matter and form. This creates a chain of being: rocks>plants>animals>humans>angels>God. On the lower end of the spectrum, you have things that are composed of matter and form, but angels wouldn’t be composed of ‘matter’: angels are ‘composed’ of only form. Angels are very unique in this regard, and we would expect a unique God to create such unique creatures.

Now, let’s get into my support for premise 2. The other support for premise 2 comes from the fact that we would expect God to make creatures that are as close to God as possible. Why? Because God is all-loving and desires to share in a relationship, and the best way to share in a relationship is in a relationship where the other party is similar to you. For example, even though I love my pets, the relationship with my wife is more meaningful because my wife is similar to me. Many don’t think that God can create other all-powerful/all-good beings. Given that, the next best is finite spirits that are very powerful and very good. God is very powerful and very good, but God is also all-powerful and all-good. Thus, what would be surprising is if God didn’t create finite spirits: we would expect God to create finite spirits. But even if we grant that God could create other Gods—other entities that are all-powerful and all-good—that doesn’t rule out the possibility that God would also create other beings, including angels. Nevertheless, it seems impossible for God to create other Gods, especially if God is simple (i.e. not composed of metaphysical parts). That’s because, on the doctrine of divine simplicity, God just *is* God’s omnipotence, omnibenevolence, etc. In other words, when it comes to the nature of God, God just is all-powerful, all-good, and all-knowing.

The upshot is that theism already starts with an exclusively immaterial mind. Thus, the existence of other exclusively immaterial minds is to be expected. If theism is true, why would there only be one such mind (i.e. God)?

Premise 4 is beyond the scope of this post. The point is that if God exists, then angels exist; the argument as a whole is *not* meant to convince atheists, agnostics, etc. For arguments on the existence of God, one can look to Aquinas’ Five Ways or Edward Feser’s arguments for the existence of God in *Five Proofs of The Existence of God*. There are dozens of more arguments beyond that (e.g. see Plantinga, Swinburne, etc.).

Premise 8 is making clear that pure finite spirits just are angels. But even if it didn’t, the premise would still be overwhelmingly plausible. Premise 6 is also making clear that for God to create pure finite spirits is just what it means for pure finite spirits to exist.[[1]](#footnote-0)

**Objection***You’re just working backward from your conclusion. One needs to already believe in angels (based on the Bible), so your argument is just a post hoc rationalization.*

I don’t think that’s what’s going on here. I’m saying that one can start with the concept of God and see what follows from such a concept. Secondly, the objection seems to confuse ‘post hoc rationalization’ with ‘retrodiction’. Thirdly, the objection doesn’t show that anything is wrong with any of the premises (ie.. whether a premise is false or unjustified).[[2]](#footnote-1)

**Bibliography**

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1. One might wonder if one can also argue for the existence of demons. If one can argue that God would likely give free creatures- including spirits-free will, then one can argue that it’s likely that there are angels that chose against the existence of God (i.e. demons). [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. I don’t mean to suggest that there might not be other arguments for the existence of angels that have yet to be discovered.

 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)