

Philosophy 101: Introduction to Philosophy, Queens College, Fall 2004

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## I. Berkeley on inference

A criticism of Berkeley's idealism: Since we don't perceive our minds (that is our selves), it would seem that our own existence is an illegitimate inference, too!

Berkeley embraces the notion that we have no idea of ourselves, §27, and §139.

He also deflects this criticism by arguing that some inference is legitimate.

We can infer our selves, §140.

But only in a loose sense, §138.

We can infer other minds, §145, and §148-9.

And we can infer God, §29, §146, 148-9.

This argument for God's existence is reminiscent of arguments from Aquinas.

## II. Aquinas on God's existence

For similar arguments for God's existence, see Aquinas

<http://www.newadvent.org/summa/100203.htm>

Aquinas' 5 ways: *Summa Theologica*, Question 2, Article 3

God as unchanged changer.

God as first cause.

God as necessarily existent being, since creation out of nothingness is impossible.

God as the greatest thing.

The arrow (i.e. the world) must be directed by an archer.

Anselm's ontological argument is an a priori argument.

Berkeley and Aquinas argue a posteriori, or empirically.

Empirical arguments start with observation.

Consider the argument from design, that a watch found in the desert leads you to infer that a person had been there.

Notice that God is not the foundation of Berkeley's work, but a conclusion.

The *Principles* is philosophy, not theology.

Still, there are theological components to the work.

He argues, for example, that both uniformity in nature and blemishes in nature support God's existence, §146 and §152.