

R.E Essay - Cosmological Argument - Sophie Allinson
Assess the view that the success or failure of the cosmological argument has
little relevance for faith

The cosmological argument has many strengths and weaknesses. These are typically seen by those with no faith or lack of faith because often those who commit themselves to faith feel that it answers all that needs answering and that they dare not question it.

The big bang theory is often seen as strength for most as, this could possibly strengthen a believer's faith by insisting on the idea that something had to have started the universe, and something was put into motion for the universe to have begun. The only evidence there is for the Big Bang is that scientific observation has confirmed that there was a beginning to the universe, and has provided further evidence that the universe developed a structure very early in its history. The big bang theory has provided scientific support for the argument as it demonstrates that the universe has a beginning and therefore the universe is not infinite. This could help a believer as it cannot be proven wrong and that scientists have proved that the universe began somehow, the word of God confirms this to a follower and as it cannot be proved to be wrong, it must take the reader beyond reasonable doubt for them to believe it. However, the big bang theory can also be seen as a weakness because this could weaken faith as there are many obvious faults and holes in its reasoning however, it could weaken a believers faith by insisting on the big bang theory having a beginning however there is no reason to believe this was God and there is no reason to believe it wasn't an accident. This could affect a believers faith as it could make them question there own religion as an accurate answer has never been proved to be correct and reliable.

An 'a posteriori' argument is based on experience. We have all experienced causes and effects then they themselves can understand the idea of the universe as having a first cause for itself. This could strengthen faith because it allows us to try understand a beginning. It allows us to experience the start of creation through our own experiences and understanding. This could strengthen a believers faith because they feel they can relate to God in their own personal ways, allowing a believer to understand God, would possibly make them feel closer to God.

Richard Swinburne suggests that it is the simplest explanation of there is something rather than nothing. Many believe this could strengthen faith as the answers to the questions we all so eagerly ask can often be resolved by simply saying "It was God" This is a strength for believers because they believe that the answer is sufficient and that because God is an efficient cause, everything can be resolved and not tried and tried. The cosmological argument satisfies the need to find a cause of the universe and the origins of everything within the universe.

People can see for themselves that the universe exists and this is further support for the argument that things exist are caused to exist and this cause is God. This could possibly strengthen a believer's faith as we know that we exist as we are leading our present lives, if this was not correct, we would not exist thus meaning we wouldn't be questioning anything. Why question something we are a part of?

The universe all began with something however by saying 'God is superior' is a complete cop-out. By saying 'God is superior' it leaves so many questions unanswered, this would possibly weaken a believers faith because there are many questions and many obvious faults however there isn't a reason for why God did so. There is no reason for God being superior to us all, and if he was Omni benevolent, kind and loving, why wouldn't he want to us to understand his nature?

The rejection of the infinite and allowing God to be an exception could be seen as weakness, maybe not to those who are committed to religion however. They may believe God is better than us for a reason; this reason is not sufficient and is also unreliable. It is a weakness because, St. Thomas Aquinas and William Lane Craig reject the idea of the infinite yet both argues that God himself is infinite, therefore makes their whole hypothesis unstable because of the hypocrisy. This idea would not make a non-believer believe in faith, because of its lack of evidence, and that it wouldn't take you beyond reasonable doubt as it is such a cover up.

There is a very valid weakness which is Fallacy of Composition this is important to the cosmological argument because the idea that the World was contingent however this was based on a minor few experiments, therefore an assumption that the whole universe, was contingent, was very risky and unreliable. This therefore creates the question as to whether or not the universe is contingent at all, or if it was just a coincidence, this would affect faith and would definitely be seen as a weakness, because it goes against the idea of us all needing God.

In conclusion to this, there seems to be a lack of evidence and scientific support to back the weaknesses. There are more weaknesses than strengths, however, I can't see this affecting a believers faith to any dangerous extent as they must have believed that religion to be correct when they committed themselves to it, therefore those who are already believers would not be majorly affecting by these weaknesses and in comparison, to the creation of the universe and the creation of life, a few weaknesses in the cosmological argument seem to be negligible. However the strengths of the argument are incontrovertible. They are more substantial than the weaknesses. I do think that possibly a believers faith could be easily strengthened but harder to weaken, this is because they must have already established a certain limit of belief of God and creation, and the strengths back what they believe.