

The cosmological argument.

a) What are the key ideas of the Cosmological argument for the creation of God?

There are three key ideas in the cosmological argument each view is written by a different philosopher and has a different view of the reasons for existence.

Lets have a look at the different views.

Thomas Aquinas was one of the greatest theologians the world had ever seen. He believed that Aristotle's philosophy was a better foundation of Christianity than Plato's theories were. Aquinas believed that to prove gods existence people only had to look at the world around them, the world couldn't exist, as it is if there wasn't an ultimate force behind it all; this force is called god. Aquinas had three main ways of proving divine existence.

The first way is the argument from the fact of change to a prime mover; everything in the world is in motion and so had to have been moved by something, nothing can move by itself without something else exerting a force on it. There must have been something which exerted the force in the first moving thing and which wasn't moved by anything else. This first mover was god.

The second way is the argument from causation to a first cause; everything has a cause, I am here because Mrs Matchett told me to do an essay, she told me to do the essay because that is what the course requires, the course is decided by the exam board and so on, This would in the end get right back to something which didn't have a cause, this series of causes must have a starting point, a first cause. This first cause was god.

The third way is the argument from contingent beings to a necessary being. Contingent beings could easily exist in a different way if things had happened differently. E.g. I am sitting at an Advent computer but if my parents had taken a different career path and become graphic designers I would probably be sitting at an apple Mac computer. Everything is contingent because if something in history had changed then it might exist in a different way. Therefore the first thing to exist must have been a contingent being: one that couldn't have been changed by anything else. If everything could have existed differently or not existed at all then at some point nothing must have existed. If that were true then nothing would exist now so there must be a necessary being which just existed and was not dependent on how another thing existed. This necessary being is god.

These three arguments all show that god is the initiator of all change and the mover of all moving things. Without him nothing would exist now, this is almost unimaginable.

The second key idea was from a German philosopher called Gottfried Leibniz. He argues that everything in the universe has an explanation for its existence. Everything must have a reason for being as it is. For example my phone is missing the 8 button because after I lost it I never stuck it back on. I didn't stick it back on because I don't have any glue, I don't have any glue because I don't have any in the house. This could go on forever but there must be an ultimate cause for everything, an underlying cause for everything's existence. This explanation is god. This must exist outside the universe itself otherwise the reason itself would be part of the cycle of reasons which needs explaining.

The third argument is known as the Kalam argument as was put forward by two Muslim philosophers called al-Kindi and al-Ghazali. The argument has three steps to it. The first is that everything that exists has a cause; the second is that the universe began to exist; therefore the third is that the universe has a cause. This chain is a chain that cannot carry on forever. The end statement is that the universe has a cause and that cause is god.

b) Identify the main strengths of this argument.

The strengths of the argument are that there are three ideas; they come in different forms so if one of them fails then the other two ideas might be able to fill in the gaps.

Another strength is that everyone at some point has asked the question of why or how everything is as it is. The cosmological arguments give you explanations of how this happened and gives you a choice of what to believe. It is universally acknowledged that everything must have a cause so the start of the argument is definitely correct.

c) How far do the strengths outweigh the weaknesses?

Before we answer this question we must look at the weaknesses of the argument. One of the weaknesses which occurs in the first theory from Aquinas is that some things do not need anything else to make it move. For example the movement of a body in space does not need a force from a previous mover. It is moved by itself. This asks the question of how many other things are there in the universe that we don't know about that can also move lie this on their own. Did there need to be a first mover? Leibniz also offers an argument against the third theory of Aquinas, it says above that we are contingent beings and god being the only necessary being. Does this have to be true? How does Aquinas know that if we hadn't have existed we might have existed differently? The universe may be running to a plan where we were always meant to exist as we are and nothing would ever have changed that. Does that not make us think that maybe we are necessary beings as too?

The role of god in the cosmological argument can also be replaced with the big bang. Many theologians may say that god caused the big bang but before the big bang there was nothing, not even time. God could not have existed in a place where there is no time or space. There is more evidence for the big bang than there is for any of the cosmological argument. If the big bang had happened then there would still be radiation from it that would be detectable, Scientists called Penzias and Wilson detected this noise in 1965. They heard some background noise through their antennas and after a bit on investigation they found out that what they were hearing was actually cosmic background radiation from the big bang. With the big bang theory proved the cosmological theory would be blown out the window.

Looking at these weaknesses I actually think that the weaknesses outweigh the strengths due to the evidence for each side. My main reason for this is the evidence for the big bang and the proof that scientists have for the event. If this event happened then none of the other cosmological arguments can be true.