

- a) What are the key ideas of the design argument? (7)
- b) What are the strengths and weaknesses? (7)
- c) To what extent are these strengths more convincing than the weaknesses? (6)

The design argument is a posterior, inductive argument which tries to prove the existence of G-d. There are many criticisms as well as strengths to the argument and the aim of this essay is to show that the weaknesses are more convincing than the strengths.

There are many key ideas to the design argument, but the most important thought is that there is 'order, purpose and regularity' in the world.

Paley said this to illustrate that there are complications in the world and for these complications to exist there must have been a designer, who Paley says, is G-d.

He takes this further by comparing the world to a pocket watch, which was a new invention at the time. A pocket watch is made of intricate parts which all fit together and the world is made up of complex elements which also fit together.

Hume, who is a critic of the design argument said,

'the world is nothing but one great machine, subdivided into an infinite number of lesser machines'.

Although his theory is similar to Paley's, Hume says that these parts need to be 'adjusted to one another with accuracy...' He also refers to 'thought, wisdom and intelligence.'

Paley backs up his argument from design by bringing in a natural example; the eye. He explains that the eye, like the watch, is complicated and intricate and it must have been planned by a designer, who is G-d.

The eye and the watch are both analogies which make the argument easier to understand as he relates it to everyday objects. By doing this, Paley is making his argument more convincing and bridges the gap between the known and the unknown.

'What we recognise in the watch, we must recognise in the world, only to a vastly higher degree...'

Here Paley is telling the reader to relate the watch to the world but on a higher scale.

He also tells us that what the watch maker and the world maker have in common is they are both 'intelligent designers'. Paley, who writes that the designer of the world is G-d would have believed G-d to be omniscient and omnipotent. This is because he must be knowledgeable and powerful in order to have the ability to design the world and have the power to make it happen.

The final key idea of the design argument is that it is inductive because the conclusion is not sound even though the premises can be argued to be valid, (Although some designed things do not have intelligent designers).

The argument is also a posterior which means it has been formed after of with experience or evidence. In Paley's case, his form of evidence is his study of the watch and the eye.

There are many strengths and weaknesses to the design argument,

Hume was a critic of the design argument who had six main points to back up his reasoning;

He said that the analogy used is unsound because the World is not like a machine at all and is composed of vegetables and animals and is therefore more organic than

mechanical. He reinforces the idea of the World not being like something man made by talking of a house. Hume says that we know who has designed and built a house because we have seen the architect and builder do it, however we did not see the World being created and therefore cannot suggest the creator. He also says that there are 'Also a number of people involved in designing a house so perhaps, by analogy, there are a team of gods who designed the world.'

He also examines the idea that intelligence may not be the governing principle for the creation of the Earth and suggests other reasons, like gravity and vegetation.

Hume questions whether similar effects implies similar causes, for example two people with the same name are not likely to be from the same parents.

The design argument says that similar effects do imply similar causes, e.g. the watch has an intelligent designer so therefore the world has an intelligent designer. Hume criticises this saying that by using these analogies, G-d appears to be more human than divine.

To prove that analogy leads to a non-moral G-d, Hume lists some horrible things that occur in nature, for example earthquakes, disease and war. He questions how a just and good G-d could have designed these unpleasant things.

Darwinism is another weakness for the Design argument. It is the theory that humans evolved from apes and we were not just put on the earth by G-d. Natural selection is also part of Darwinism, and both of these things rely on chance and are completely random, there are no designers or plans and therefore no G-d.

The design argument is inductive,

Premise 1; The world is full of designed things

Premise 2; Designed objects have intelligent designers

Conclusion; The world has an intelligent designer, who is G-d.

Inductive arguments are weak because there is always one unsound fact within it which is not valid and they can never provide 100% proof.

Kant is a critic and claimed that 'the world is in chaos and that humans interpret the world through their minds and whilst doing this, imposes order onto the world that they see.' Therefore, he states there is no order purpose or regularity in the world.

Although a known critic Kant said,

'The proof always deserves to be mentioned with respect, it's the oldest, clearest and most accordant with the common reason of mankind.'

This leads onto the strengths of the argument as it shows that even a critic says that it is good to some degree.

Crowder said the Design argument is 'common sensual' and most people can understand it.

This is helped by the aid of analogies, which makes the argument convincing as it uses everyday objects. Therefore it has evidence which makes it harder to criticise (even though many have.)

The Design argument can 'range from gastropods to galaxies', which shows the diversity of the argument and that it relates to everything imaginable.

The reason Paley said he wrote about the design argument was to make things clearer to those who believed in G-d and this adds strength to the argument as it most probably achieves this aim.

The strengths are not more convincing than the weaknesses, in fact the weaknesses are more persuasive.

Humes speculation that from the analogy of looking at the design of a house compared to the design of the world, there may be a team of gods. This is a strong criticism as it

prevents the design argument from proving monotheism. However it does not destroy the design argument and in fact supports some parts of it as a house does have order purpose and regularity which supports what Paley said. Also some may argue that if G-d is omnipotent then G-d could do the jobs of many.

Hume says that G-d should not be compared to humans and that the design argument does this by using analogies of human things. G-d is meant to be omni everything and humans are not, however if analogies cannot be made of human objects there is not anything else which we can relate to.

Part of the design argument is that similar effects have similar causes. This is not true as things can have the same characteristics but have different causes so this is a weakness.

Paley and many others try to prove the classical concept of G-d, and one classical property is that G-d is omni benevolent. However if this is true, how can we explain why the world is not perfect? For instance natural disasters like flooding or disease.

Some would argue that G-d is testing his people to see if they remain faithful to him or these terrible things are a punishment for doing wrong. Nevertheless this does not seem to be a strong case.

A major weakness of the design argument is Darwinism, which scientifically proves that G-d cannot have designed the world as it has evolved and is a random process.

The 20th Century design argument disagrees with this and suggests that G-d designed evolution, this is called argument to design.

Tennent believed in the anthropic and aesthetic principle. This is saying that there is no purpose for beauty in the world and so beauty is the evidence that G-d is involved.

Scientists would answer these theories by saying there is no proof for them and there is evidence of Darwinism.

Just because the design argument is easy to understand does not make it convincing, it just indicates that it was written well. Again the use of analogies does not prove that G-d exists and Hume would say that analogies have problems, for example *the house* analogy that he made, may lead people against monotheism.

As mentioned above, the argument is 'common sensual'. This is a strength as it means you do not have to be a scholar to understand it, but it does not mean that it has scientific proof.

The argument is inductive which immediately indicates that it can not be proven. But some may disagree and say it is not fair to criticise an inductive argument about G-d because we do not have facts to make the premises out of. Also, if the argument was deductive then it would mean the existence of G-d had been proven. Therefore there would be no discussion about it as the conclusion would be true.

Overall the weaknesses are more convincing than the strengths because you cannot prove the existence of G-d by using common sense or making the argument easy to understand by using analogies.

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