

# On guard chapter 3 essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Why does anything at all exist? G. W. Leibniz, codiscoverer of calculus and a towering intellect of 18th century Europe, wrote: " The first question which should rightly be asked is " Why is there something rather than nothing? " -" The Principles of Nature and of Grace, Based on Reason" His conclusion was that the answer is to be found, not in the universe of created things, but in God.

God exists necessarily and is the explanation why anything else exists.

LEIBNIZ's Argument There are 3 basic premises in his reasoning: 1.

Everything that exists has an explanation of its existence. .

If the universe has an explanation of its existence, that explanation is God. 3.

The universe exists. From these premises one could follow logically that from 1 & 3 that: 4.

The universe has an explanation of its existence. Add on premise 2, and then FLABLOOM! 5. Therefore, the explanation of the universe's existence is GOD. As logic goes, this is an airtight argument.

There are no fallacies located within the logic, that is not to say that there is no one to disagree with it, but it is the premises individually that they would have to argue against. Not the conclusion if given the premises. Let's take a closer look at the premises individually so we can better defend them.

Premise 1 Everything that exists has an explanation of its existence.

\* One might argue that if the universe must explain its existence in God, then God must explain His existence. Since explaining God's existence because there is nothing greater than God, it seems that premise 1 must be

false and it means that some things must be able to exist without any explanation. If the lazy apologist just says that God exists inexplicably, then he has just given the atheist license to counter that the universe just exists inexplicably without any help from God leaving them both at a stalemate. Things that exist NECESSARILY exist by a necessity of their own nature. It belongs to their very nature to exist. Things that exist CONTINGENTLY can fail to exist (die, never be born, never even come into existence) and so need an external cause to explain why they do in fact exist.

\* Objection to their objection of premise 1 In Leibniz's view there are two kinds of things: a. things that exist necessarily, and b. things that are produced by some other cause. a. Things that exist necessarily exist by a necessity of their own nature. It is impossible for them not to exist.

An example of this might be numbers, sets, and other mathematical entities. They are not caused to exist by something else; they just exist by the necessity of their own nature. b. By contrast, things that are caused to exist by something else don't exist necessarily. They exist because something else has produced them. Familiar physical objects like people, planets, and galaxies belong in this category.

So when Leibniz says that everything that exists has an explanation of its existence, the explanation may be found either in the necessity of a thing's nature or else in some external cause. This taken into consideration, his first premise could be more fully stated by saying: 1. Everything that exists has an explanation of its existence, either in the necessity of its own nature or in an external cause. Ask audience, " If God exists at all, why is it impossible for

God to have a cause? " The explanation of God's existence lies in the necessity of His own nature. Atheists acknowledge that it is impossible for God to have a cause, thus making Leibniz's argument an argument for God as a necessary, uncaused being. In Defense of Premise 1 - Size Doesn't Matter Premise 1, upon further consideration, is actually self evident.

Hiking Illustration You are walking through the woods with a friend and you come across a translucent ball lying on the forest floor. You insist that there must be an explanation for the ball, but your friend believes that it exists inexplicably. Either your friend is crazy or he's just saying that to keep the hike moving. Nobody would believe that the ball exists with no explanation. The same could be said if the ball was the size of a house, or a planet, or even the universe. Merely increasing the size of something does not affect the need for an explanation.

The Taxicab Fallacy Sometimes atheists will say that premise 1 is true of everything in the universe, but is not true of the universe itself. 9th Century Philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer says that premise 1 cannot be dismissed like a hack once you've arrived at your desired destination! You can't say that everything has an explanation of its existence and then suddenly exempt the universe. Leibniz did not commit this fallacy. He did not say that God was exempt from having an explanation as we saw that the reason for God's existence is found in His own nature. The Hiking illustration shows us that merely increasing the size of something doesn't remove its need for an explanation. This argument just sounds dumb because the entire branch of cosmology is devoted to studying reasons why the universe exists.

“ It is impossible for the Universe to have an explanation. ” Why, because the explanation of the universe would have to be some prior state of affairs in which the universe didn't yet exist, but that is nothingness. By nothing he means the absence of anything, not even God. The atheist is just assuming that atheism is true, thus begging the question and arguing in a circle. Leibniz would agree that the universe would require a previous state of affairs to explain God's existence, but instead of nothingness, he declares that God is the so-called state of affairs.

Premise 2 If the universe has an explanation of its existence, that explanation is God. Logical Equivalence Two statements are logically equivalent if it is impossible for one to be true and the other false. They are either both true or both false. One of the most important logical equivalences is called contraposition. It tells us that any statement of the form “ if P, then Q” is logically equivalent to “ If not-Q, then not-P. ” the example in the text of statements A and B is an example of contraposition.

Atheists agree with premise 2.... kind of. The atheists give the following argument for the universe's non-explanation by: A. If atheism is true, the universe has not explanation of its existence.

This is Logically Equivalent to saying: B. If the universe has an explanation of its existence, then atheism is not true. You can't affirm A and deny B.

Statement B is nearly the same as Leibniz's 2nd premise.