

Philosophical Demonstration of God as Creator

Directions: Carefully read through this argument and respond to the prompts below. Make sure to read any footnote for additional explanation.

Initial Statement: When we reflect on our experience, we recognize that the universe in which we live contains a variety of conditioned beings (i.e. beings that depend on other beings for their existence). In other words, none of the beings in our experience are self-sufficient. They need something else for their own existence.

1. What would be an example a conditioned being? Are you a conditioned being? If so, on whom do you depend for your existence?

As we look around us, we see that beings depend upon other beings outside of themselves to exist. For example, beings depend upon things that came before them to come into existence.

Philosophically we can call “causes” which produce effects in such a way that those effects can continue to exist even after their causes themselves have ceased to exist, "**non-simultaneously acting causes**".

2. Would your parents be a “non-simultaneously acting cause” of your existence? Why or why not?

However, there is a second kind of dependency in which the effect and cause are essentially dependent on one another. This means that the effect would cease to exist should the cause cease to exist or stop its causal activity. Let’s call this “**simultaneously acting causes**”. For example, the earth is causing its “gravitational field” to exist right now. The existence of the earth is the present condition for the existence of its gravitational field. Without the existence of the earth, its gravitational field would cease to exist.

3. What other “simultaneously acting causes” do you depend on for your existence?

When thinking about the question of why the universe exists at all, we are not thinking about non-simultaneously acting causes but rather “simultaneously acting causes”. We want to know why does anything, in the here and now, exist at all? We can point to a variety of “non- and simultaneously acting causes” as our “chain of explanation”, but the question then is, can an unending chain of simultaneously acting causes give us the ultimate explanation we are looking for?

4. Train analogy: You and your friend are watching a train travel down a track. After the final car passes by, you turn to your friend and ask, “What is pulling the caboose?” To which your friend responds, “The car in front of it.” You then ask, “Well, what is pulling that car?” To which your friend responds, “The car in front of it.” In this scenario, does your friend’s answer give you a complete explanation of the caboose’s movement? Why or why not?