

The Classical Argument from Evil

1. The theistic God must create the best of all possible worlds.

- (1) God created the actual world @.
- (2) God is as the theist says (all-powerful, all-knowing, all-good).
- (3) All-powerful implies that God can create any possible world.
- (4) All-knowing implies that God knows which one is best.
- (5) All-good implies that God always does the best.
- (6) Therefore: The actual world (created by God) is the best of all possible worlds.

2. The Argument from Evil

- (1) Premise: The actual world @ is full of suffering.
- (2) Premise: The suffering is unnecessary.
- (3) So: There are better possible worlds than @.
- (4) If there are better possible worlds than @, then @ is not the best.
- (5) So: @ is not the best of all possible worlds.
- (6) Premise: God created @.
- (7) Premise: God is as the theist says.
- (8) So: @ is the best of all possible worlds (see above).
- (9) There is a contradiction between 5 and 8.
- (10) So: we have to reject either 5 or 8.
- (11) The reasoning in steps 1 to 4 is undeniable; so 5 is undeniable.
- (12) Since we can't reject 5, we have to reject the statements about God.
- (13) Conclusion: God does not exist.

The Problem of No Best Universe

The Infinite Series of Ever Better Universes

It seems obvious that for any universe you can define, including this one, there are many ways to make it better. And for those better universes, there are ways to make them better too. Hence there are levels of ever better universes:

Level-0: Some least good universes.

Level-1: Improvements of all the universes in level-0.

Level-2: Improvements of all the universes in level-1.

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Level-1001: Improvements of all the universes in level-1000.

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And so it goes to infinity. For every number n , there is a level- n of universes. Just as there is no biggest number, so there is no best level of universes, and therefore no best universe.

Leibniz Against Ever Better Universes

Leibniz (in his *Theodicy*, secs. 195-196) argues against the existence of an infinite series of ever better universes:

195. Someone will say that it is impossible to produce the best, because there is no perfect thing, and that it is always possible to produce something which would be more perfect. I answer that what can be said of a thing, which can always be surpassed by better thing, is not to be applied to the whole universe, which, since it must extend through all future eternity, is an infinity. 196. It is therefore not a question of a thing, but of the universe itself; and [anyone saying there is no best universe] will be obliged to maintain that one possible universe may be better than the other, to infinity; but there he would be mistaken, and it is that which he cannot prove. If this opinion were true, it would follow that God would not produce any universe at all: for God is incapable of acting without reason, and [producing a universe that is not the best] would be even acting against reason.

Solutions to the No Best Universe Problem

One God – Many Universes

There is one God who creates many universes.

Problem: But then how good is this God?

Many Gods – Many Universes

There are many gods who each create one universe.

Each god is finitely good and does the best it can.