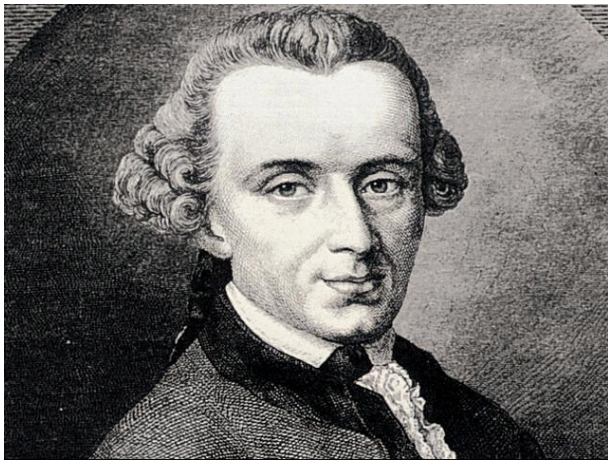


Philosophy 203
History of Modern Western Philosophy

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Spring 2010



Class 28 and Last
The Refutation of Idealism
On the Ontological Argument



Tlumak's Version of the Refutation, Part I

1. I am judging.
2. Some act of judging is occurring.
3. Any act of judging is an act of consciousness or awareness.
4. Acts of consciousness or awareness are representative (have a content).
5. Awareness of the instantaneous is impossible.
6. So the content of awareness is non-instantaneous.
7. Any non-instantaneous content is a successive content, that is, a series of items occurring in an order, and not all at a single instant.
8. So judgmental awareness is of a succession of items.
9. Awareness of succession implies awareness of a plurality of items as a plurality - awareness of a diversity or manifold.
10. Awareness of a plurality of items as a plurality requires that the plurality be apprehended as a numerically identical collection over the time during which the awareness is occurring.
11. This identity of the manifold over time requires that the act of awareness of this identical manifold connect up or relate the various elements which comprise it, that is, be aware of all the elements together.
12. Such a connective awareness requires that earlier items in the series be recognized together with the later items, and that all the items be recognized as belonging to this unity over time.
13. Only a persisting, identical subject of awareness can be connective; a series or collection of diverse subjects of consciousness is incapable of such connective activity.
14. So any act of judgment requires a persisting judger.

Tlumak's Version of the Refutation, Part II

15. An identical judger must be able to be aware of his unity of consciousness.
16. But awareness of an objectless awareness itself is impossible. I can be aware of consciousness only by being aware of the object of consciousness.
17. So awareness of a persisting consciousness requires awareness of a persisting object of consciousness.
18. So awareness of succession requires awareness of something persisting.
19. This something persisting cannot be an item in the series, or of the succession, since only by being aware of it can I be aware of the series.
20. This series of items (of acts of representation) constitutes my mental life.
21. So the persisting something is not part of my mental life.
22. But if something is not part of my mental life, it is existentially and attributively independent of me.
23. And since it is something which I can perceptually identify and which persists, it is re-identifiable.
24. So the persisting something required for awareness of succession, which in turn is required for judging, is an objective particular.
25. So I am aware of an objective particular.

The Ontological Argument

On Existence

The idea of existence, then, is the very same with the idea of what we conceive to be existent. To reflect on any thing simply, and to reflect on it as existent, are nothing different from each other. That idea, when conjoined with the idea of any object, makes no addition to it. Whatever we conceive, we conceive to be existent. Any idea we please to form is the idea of a being; and the idea of a being is any idea we please to form (Hume)

Kant, following Hume, claims that existence is not a property in the way that the perfections are properties.

Existence can not be part of an essence, since it is not a property.

“100 real thalers do not contain the least coin more than a hundred possible thalers.”

Real (determining) predicates and logical predicates

- A logical predicate serves as a predicate in grammar.
- Any property can be predicated of any object, grammatically.
- The Statue of Liberty exists.
- Seventeen loves its mother.
- A real predicate tells us something substantive about an object.
- The Statue of Liberty is over 150 feet tall.

Existence is a grammatical predicate,
but not a real predicate.
Grammatical form is not a sure guide to
logical form.

Kant's objection accounts for the objection from Caterus

the necessarily existing lion

- Both urge us to distinguish concepts from objects.
- In predicating existence of a concept, we are just restating the concept.
- We are not saying anything about the object.

Is existence a predicate?

- Kant: existence is too thin to be a real predicate.
- We do not add anything to a concept by claiming that it exists.
- The real and possible thalers must have the same number of thalers in order that the concept match its object.
- So, we do not add thalers when we mention that the thalers exist.
- But, do we add something?

Debates about existence

- The tooth fairy
- Black holes
- We seem to consider an object and wonder whether it has the property of existing.
- We thus may have to consider objects which may or may not exist.
- E.g. James Brown, Tony Soprano.



Meinongian subsistence

- Meinong attributes subsistence to fictional objects and dead folks.
- James Brown has the property of subsisting, without having the property of existing.
- Kant's claim that existence is not a real predicate, while influential, may not solve the problem.



The Fregean (linguistic) argument for Kant's solution

- First-order logic makes a distinction between predication and quantification.
- In our most austere language, existence is not a predicate.
- $(\exists x)Gx$ or $(\exists x) x=g$
- Note the distinction between the concept (represented by the predicate or object) and existence (represented by the quantifier).

Kant and first-order logic

- First-order logic was developed a full century after Kant's work
- But, it uses the distinction he made between existence and predication.
- The quantifiers deal with existence and quantity
- The predicates deal with real properties, like being a god, or a person, or being mortal or vain.
- First-order logic is supposed to be our most austere, canonical language, the *Begriffsschrift's* microscope.
- But, is first-order logic really the best framework for metaphysics?