

# Introduction to Philosophy

Philosophy 110W-03

Russell Marcus

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Continuing Part I of the course: Philosophy of Religion

Kant, Moore, Rowe, Aquinas, Martin, Hume

# Recapitulation

- Last week, we looked at Anselm's ontological argument, and criticism from Gaunilo.
- We also peeked at Descartes's version of the argument, and Caterus's criticism.
- And, we talked a bit about Kant's solution, that existence is not a predicate, or property.
- While Kant's argument may not work, there are other arguments for his conclusion.
- We will now look at the argument from formal logic, and at Moore's argument.

# I. The formal logic 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.

# Propositional logic

Simple terms (capital letters) for statements, punctuation, and some connectives:

- Negation ( $\sim$ ): “It is not the case that...”
- Conjunction ( $\cdot$ ): “and”
- Disjunction ( $\vee$ ): “or”
- Material Implication ( $\supset$ ): “If... then...”

# Building complex statements

- Let 'P' stand for: Gonzales resigned.
- Let 'Q' stand for: Vick pleaded guilty.
- 'P•Q' means that Gonzales resigned and Vick pleaded guilty.
- ' $(P \vee Q) \supset P$ ' means that if either Gonzales resigned or Vick pleaded guilty, then Gonzales resigned.

# First-order logic

- We can decompose the simple terms for statements.
- Complex terms for statements are made of objects (or variables) and predicates.
- Quantifiers indicate existence.
- We represent objects and variables using lower case letters.
- We represent predicates using capital letters.
- Predicates stand for properties of the objects, and are placed in front of the object letters.

# Translating into Predicate Logic

- $Pa$ : means object  $a$  has property  $P$ , and is said “ $P$  of  $a$ ”
- Alice is clever:  $Ca$
- Bobby works hard:  $Wb$
- Chuck plays tennis regularly:  $Pc$

# Consider: All philosophers are happy.

- The subject of this sentence is not a specific philosopher, no specific object.
- Similarly for “Something is made in the USA”.
- There is no a specific thing to which the sentence refers.
- For sentences like these, we use universal and existential quantifiers.
- We also use variables (usually ‘x’, ‘y’, and ‘z’).



# The existential quantifier, $\exists x$

Used with any of the following expressions:

- There exists an x, such that
- For some x
- There is an x
- For at least one x
- Something

# The universal quantifier, $\forall x$ ,

Used with:

- For all x
- Everything

# Sample Translations

- Something is made in the USA:  $(\exists x)Ux$
- Everything is made in the USA:  $(\forall x)Ux$
- Nothing is made in the USA:  $(\forall x)\sim Ux$  or  $\sim(\exists x)Ux$
- All persons are mortal:  $(x)(Px \supset Mx)$
- Some actors are vain:  $(\exists x)(Ax \cdot Vx)$
- Some gods aren't mortal:  $(\exists x)(Gx \cdot \sim Mx)$
- No frogs are people:  $(x)(Fx \supset \sim Px)$  or  $\sim(\exists x)(Fx \cdot Px)$

# 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.
- Since first-order logic is supposed to be our most austere, canonical language, there does seem to be a real difference between existence and predication.

# Against Kant's solution

- Formal systems can be constructed with all sorts of properties.
- We can turn any predicate into a quantifier, or a functor, even turn all of them into functors.
- The question, which is beyond the scope of this course, is whether first-order logic really is the best framework for metaphysics.

## II. Moore

The same conclusion as Kant, but with a different argument

- First, clear up a terminological confusion.
- Kant calls real predicates determining, and calls grammatical predicates logical.
- Moore, following Kneale, contrasts logical predicates (Kant's real predicates) with grammatical predicates.
- The Moore/Kneale terminology derives from the fact that we do not use a predicate to represent existence in first-order logic.
- Thus, existence is not a first-order-logical predicate.

# Moore and ordinary language

- Moore's argument is based on how we use words.
- 'Tame tigers growl' can mean that all do, or only some do.
- 'Tame tigers exist' lacks that ambiguity.
- 'All tame tigers exist' is just odd, perhaps unusable.

# Another Route, for Moore

- 'All tame tigers growl' means that some tame tigers growl and no tame tigers do not growl.
- By analogy, 'all tame tigers exist' should mean that some tame tigers exist, and no tame tigers do not exist.
- That last clause seems meaningless.
- So 'all tame tigers exist' should be meaningless as well.
- Similarly, 'some tigers do not exist' is odd.



# Moore's conclusion

- Existence is seems logically tied to 'some' and 'all'.
- These are represented by quantifiers in first-order logic, in a way which ordinary predicates, like 'growl' and 'are striped' are not.
- Thus, a difference in the way we use sentences supports the formal distinction.
- Again, existence is not a predicate.

# III. Rowe's argument

- Kant's denial of the ontological argument is tied up with general points about existence and predication.
- Rowe's criticism is, like Gaunilo's, directed at the argument itself.
- Rowe: the ontological argument is question begging since it presumes what it sets out to prove, if we accept that God possibly exists.

# Rowe's version of Anselm's argument

1. If God possibly exists, then either God exists or God does not exist.
2. But God can not not exist, since 'God' refers to that than which no greater can be thought.
3. So, God exists.

- Rowe thus concedes to Anselm that no non-existent thing can be God.
- But, he denies premise 1.
- Rowe thus leaves open the question whether any existent thing is God.

# Existence and possibility

- The concept of God could be impossible to instantiate.
- That is, 'God' would refer to nothing coherent, or consistent.
- Then, either God exists or God is impossible.

# Magicians

Defined as existing magicians

- There can be no non-existent magicians.
- If something does not exist, then it can not be a magician.
- So, if there are no existing magicians, then there are no magicians.
- But, if a magician exists, then there is a magician.

# Rowe's solution

- Anselm's argument leaves open the possibility that the concept of God is impossible.
- If the concept is possible to instantiate, then God must exist.
- But, it remains to be shown that it is possible for God to exist.

# Rowe v Kant

- Note that Rowe's approach to criticizing the argument differs from that of Kant.
- Kant denied that existence was a property.
- Rowe uses existence as a property, but shows that it is an awkward property.

# Evaluating the Kant/Moore argument

- Kant's criticism is usually taken to be decisive against the ontological argument.
- Existence is certainly a thin property.
- But, there do seem to be some things which exist and some things, like James Brown, that do not exist.
- Rowe takes this approach: magicians and God are things which may or may not exist.
- Many contemporary philosophers think that such a claim, though, is self-contradictory.
- We'll need more logic than we can do here to fully evaluate the contemporary situation.



# IV. A priori and a posteriori arguments

- The ontological argument is an example of an a priori argument for God's existence.
- A priori statements are explained by the use of thought, rather than experience.
- A statement is believed a priori if our justification of that belief is independent of experience.
- It is hard to specify exactly what 'independent of experience' means.
- A statement is believed a posteriori, or empirically, if our justification refers to sense experience.

# Hume's principle

Matters of fact can not hold a priori

- Kant, following Hume, urged that a priori arguments which purport to conclude that something exists are inappropriate.
- Logic, which precedes a priori, should make no existence assertions according to Hume and Kant
- We generally construct logic to tell us about the relations among statements, not to tell us about the nature of the world.
- It is the job of science to tell us about the nature of the world.
- The distinction between logic and science is the distinction between validity and truth.

# A response to Hume

- Anselm and Descartes might respond that the ontological argument is an exception to Hume's principle.
- Who is to say that a general principle can not admit of exceptions?

# A posteriori arguments for the existence of God

- Other arguments start with premises about the existence of the world, and its properties.
- In particular, the argument from design and the cosmological arguments are a posteriori.
- Aquinas's arguments are cosmological.
- Hume discusses mostly the argument from design.
- Read these for Tuesday.

# V. A priori or a posteriori?

1. It is Thursday.
2. Thursday is a day of the week.
3. If it is raining, then it is raining.
4. What goes up, must come down.
5. The sky is blue.
6.  $2+2=4$ .
7. We are studying at Hamilton College.
8. Hamilton College is a College.
9. Bachelors are unmarried.
10. It is time to leave.

# VI. Empirical arguments for the existence of God

1. The cosmological argument, from Aquinas.
2. The argument from design, from Paley, but anticipated by Hume.
  - ▶ Sometimes Aquinas's fifth way is called the argument from design, as well, but this is misleading.

# Is the cosmological argument a priori?

- In Part IX of Hume's *Dialogues*, Demea calls the cosmological argument a priori.
- Some elements of the cosmological argument could be called a priori.
- E.g., the claim that every effect has a cause may be seen as a definition of the concept of a cause.
- So, it would be known a priori, as we know that bachelors are unmarried.
- But, even the argument from first cause has to start with the claim that the world exists.
- Our belief in the existence of the world is clearly empirical.
- So, the cosmological argument is not as purely a priori as the ontological argument.

# VII. Aquinas's Cosmological Argument

## The five ways

- 1. There must be an unchanged changer.
- 2. There must be a first cause.
- 3. Something must exist necessarily.
- 4. There must be something which has all perfections.
- 5. The arrow must be guided by the archer.
- These five ways are more or less independent arguments.
- The differences are subtle.
- We will, following Martin, focus on the general point, most clearly expressed in the second way, that there must be a first cause.



# Aquinas's Cosmological Argument, as rendered by Martin:

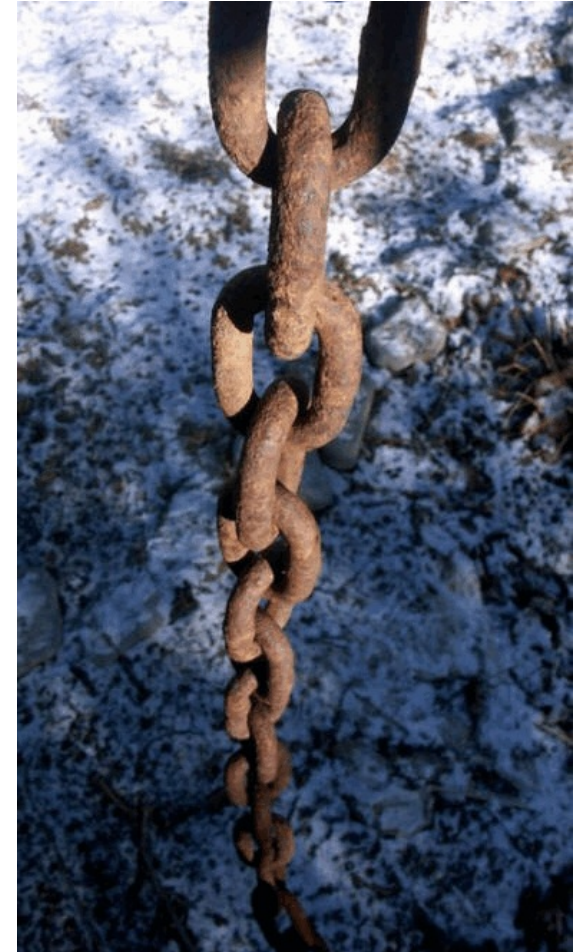
1. Everything we know has a cause.
  2. There can not be an infinite regress of causes.
- So, there must be a first cause; call it God.

Martin points to two flaws in Aquinas

# Martin's first criticism

Premise two is unsupported.

- Martin calls this premise non-empirical.
- He means that we are making an unsupported assumption.
- For Aquinas, and all thinkers prior to Cantor in the mid-nineteenth century, the notion of an infinite series was uncomfortable.
- Even the application of infinities in the calculus of Newton and Leibniz did not alleviate worries about infinity.
- We now work quite effectively in mathematics, with infinite series.
- We find the sum of an infinite sequence, for example.
- Why can't there be an infinite chain of causes?



# Martin's second criticism

The first cause may not have the attributes we normally attribute to God.

- Martin repeats this complaint about the third way, too.
- See the inference from steps 14 to 15, p 38.
- But, if we establish the existence of an unchanged changer, or of a necessary being, we have established quite a bit.
- So, Martin's second criticism is weaker than his first.

# VIII. Hume, and the argument from design

Cleanthes argues a posteriori.

Demea argues a priori, in Part IX.

Philo is a skeptic, although he aligns himself initially with Demea.

- Hume considers a variety of arguments, concerning:
  - ▶ The existence of God
  - ▶ The attributes of God
  - ▶ General philosophical topics
  - ▶ The problem of evil and the compatibility of a benevolent God with human suffering, especially in Parts IX and XI

# Hume on the problem of evil

Four causes of human suffering:

1. Our ability to feel pain.
2. The presence of general, inviolable physical laws.
  - ▶ (E.g., if a lightning bolt, or a train, is headed toward you, it will continue in its path.)
3. Our limited natural abilities.
  - ▶ “An indulgent parent would have bestowed a large stock in order to guard against accidents... (69).
4. Unpredictability of nature, or “inaccurate workmanship of all the springs and principles of the great machine of nature (70)”.

# The Manichean universe

- Two designers, one good and one evil, battle for control of the world
- But, the uniformity of natural law, the second cause of human suffering, seems to undermine the Manichean view.
- We are going to focus on the argument from design, which is a denial of Hume's fourth cause of human suffering, above.

# The argument from design

- Often credited to William Paley, though the argument is much older.
- Proponents argue that the world looks so well made that we are forced to posit a designer.
- Paley was a younger contemporary of Hume, and influenced the young Darwin.

# Paley's argument

...when we come to inspect the watch, we perceive... that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose, e.g. that they are so formed and adjusted as to produce motion, and that motion so regulated as to point out the hour of the day; that if the different parts had been differently shaped from what they are, or placed after any other manner or in any other order than that in which they are placed, either no motion at all would have been carried on in the machine, or none which would have answered the use that is now served by it...the inference we think is inevitable, that the watch must have had a maker, that there must have existed, at some time and at some place or other, an artificer or artificers who formed it for the purpose which we find it actually to answer, who comprehended its construction and designed its use.

<http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/history/paley.html/>



# Hume's version of design

Cleanthes, p 46

Consider, anatomize the eye, survey its structure and contrivance, , and tell me, from your own feeling, if the idea of a contriver does not immediately flow in upon you with a force like that of sensation. The most obvious conclusion, surely, is in favor of design... Who can behold the male and female of each species, the correspondence of their parts and instincts, their passions and whole course of life before and after generation, but must be sensible that the propagation of the species is intended by nature?

Note the use of the word 'intended'.

# The argument from design is an argument from analogy.

1. From like effects we infer like causes. (See Hume, p 42.)
  2. The workings of nature are like the workings of artifacts, like watches.
  3. Artifacts like watches demand thoughtful design.
- So, nature must have a designer.

# Hume's central objection to the argument from design

The similarities mentioned in premise 2 are insufficient.

- We only have experience of a small corner of the universe, p 43.
- Our explorations of the universe, both in the large and small, make it seem quite unlike any human artifact, Part V.

# Well-designed artifacts may not require an intelligent designer

- In Part V, Philo mentions the ship built by a “stupid mechanic”.
- The stupid mechanic argument is similar to the argument from order, in Part VII.
- Demea argues that we only see order in the presence of thought.
  - Philo responds that we see it all the time in nature: trees, birds, etc.
  - It begs the question to assume that there has to be a designer of the trees and birds.
- Because the similarities are weak, the design argument invites other, similar arguments.

# Another argument from design

1. From like effects we infer like causes.
  2. Every time we have seen thought, it has been connected with a human body.
  3. The designer has the capacity for thought.
- So, the designer must be human. (See p 52.)

# Still another one

1. From like effects we infer like causes.
  2. The workings of nature are like the workings of the human body; see p 53.
  3. The human body is connected to a soul.
- So, the universe is the body connected to the designer's soul.  
That is, the universe is a giant animal; see p 56.

Since the universe seems more analogous to an animal (or even a vegetable), it is likely to have originated from generation (or vegetation)

The world is like an animal, a comet is the egg of the animal, and, like an ostrich, hatches the egg and produces a new animal (55).

# The point of the alternative cosmogenies

- Philo does not really intend to promote these deviant cosmological/cosmogenical theories.
- His point, and Hume's point, is that a posteriori arguments about the existence of God are destined to fail.
- They go beyond human experience, beyond our capacity to know.
- We are merely speculating, and our choices are arbitrary, p 57.
- Proponents of the argument from design emphasize only the similarities that support the conclusion they want.

# Other interesting cosmologies

- The giant turtle
- We may be living in a computer simulation.
- We live in a hollow/inverted earth.
- Put aside such odd speculation, after noting that such theories are often more difficult than one imagines to disprove.



# A last problem with the argument from design

- It does not explain the origin of intelligence.
- Philo expresses this complaint in Part IV.
- Designers could be creatures from other planets, rather than God.
- We would need an explanation of the origins of these creatures, and their superior intellects.

# Distinguish the argument from design from intelligent design.

- Intelligent design is promoted as an alternative explanation of human origins.
- The argument from design is compatible with evolution.
- The proponent of the argument from design might marvel at the wonders of evolution and say that they themselves are evidence of a designer.
- Darwin himself may have held such an opinion.

# IX. Other topics to noticed in Hume's *Dialogues*

- the problem of induction: esp 42, 56, 69
  - ▶ “The effects of these principles [of nature] are all known to us from experience; but the principles themselves and their manner of operation are totally unknown... (56)”.
- the relation between mind and body: p 52
  - ▶ “No man [has] ever seen reason but in a human figure; therefore, the gods must have a human figure (52)”.
- matters of fact and relations of ideas, p 61
- happiness and misery, good and evil, in Part X.