

The Transcendental Argument for the Existence of God and Divine Conceptualism

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The Transcendental Argument for the Existence of God: An transcendental argument that aims to show that the existence of God is a necessary precondition for logical reasoning, which must be uncontentious in the context of a debate, since the atheist must take herself to be deploying it even entering into a debate.

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- **P5:** This necessarily existent mind is aptly called "God."
- **C4:** So, God exists. (from C3 and P5)

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The Law of Disjunctive Syllogism: For any propositions p and q , if p or q is true, and not- p is true (which is to say, p is false), then q must be true.

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- The Law of Disjunctive Syllogism is a **necessarily** true proposition. That is to say, it's true, given the way the world actually is, but also, if we consider any alternate way that the world could have been, it would still have been true if the world had turned out that way.

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- Non-existent objects only hypothetically possess properties. For instance, Pegasus does not *really* possess the property of having wings, but only hypothetically does so, in the sense that *if* Pegasus existed, then he *would* have wings.

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- The Law of Disjunctive Syllogism does not merely hypothetically possess the property of being true, but it actually possesses this property. So, it actually exists.

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- The Law of Disjunctive Syllogism does not merely hypothetically possess the property of being true, but it actually possesses this property. So, it actually exists.
- And since it would still have been true, no matter how the world had turned out, it would still exist, no matter how the world had turned out.

Conclusion 1:

Some propositions necessarily exist.

At the very least, logical laws, like the Law of Disjunctive Syllogism, which are necessarily true, necessarily exist.

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Propositions are true or false in virtue of representing things as being certain ways.

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- **Question:** How are propositions true or false?
- **Answer:** In virtue of being about things and representing those things as being certain ways. In the simplest case, a proposition that is about something and represents this thing as being some way is true just in case the thing it is about is the way that it represents it as being

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- **An Example:** The proposition that snow is white is about something, namely snow, and it represents snow as being a certain way, namely white. That's why it's true just in case snow is white.

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- **The Current Case:** The Law of Disjunctive Syllogism is a proposition about all propositions, and it represents every propositions as standing in a certain logical relation to every other proposition, being such that, if the disjunction of the two of them is true, and the negation of one of them is true, then the other is true. It's true because propositions, the things that it is about, do stand in this relation to one another that it represents them as standing in.

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Something's representing things as being a certain way can only be understood in terms of that thing's either being identical to or related to a mental act that does so.

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- Representationality is the characteristic mark of the mental.
- Any conception we have of what it is to represent something as being a certain way is either explicitly or implicitly dependent on our conception of a mind's representing something as being a certain way.
- So, it is hard to see how it could be that a proposition represents things as being certain way without either being identical to or related to a mental act that does so.

Premise 4:

Something's representing things as being a certain way can only be understood in terms of that thing's either being identical to or related to a mental act that does so.

- Many philosophers following Frege have denied that the representationality of propositions is to be understood in terms of the representationality of mental states or activities. In many cases, this is because they recognize.

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 - 1 That propositions represent things as being certain ways (as is necessary for them to be bearers of truth and falsity). .
 - 2 That propositions (at least some of them) exist necessarily.but they presume
 - 3 That minds don't necessarily exist.
- Leads to a position in which the representationality of propositions is utterly inexplicable.

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Some philosophers are upfront about this issue:

- **Trenton Merricks:** Maintains “a proposition is a necessary existent that essentially represents things as being a certain way,” but, not connecting representationality of the proposition to the mental activity of representation, goes on to say “there is no explanation of how a proposition manages to represent things as being a certain way,” (2015, xv).

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- **Jeff King and Scott Soames:** Recognize that the only way to explain propositional representationality is to tie propositions to mental or linguistic activity, but, tying them to contingently existent human mental or linguistic activity, are forced to say that propositions only contingently exist, (King 2007, 80).

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The Clear Solution: Since propositions represent things as being certain ways, this representationality can only be understood in mental terms, and some propositions necessarily exist, there are necessarily existent mental acts in terms of which these necessarily existent propositions are to be understood.

Conclusion 2:

So, there are necessarily existent mental acts.

Conclusion 3:

So, there is a necessarily existent mind, the agent of these mental acts.

Premise 3:

A necessarily existent mind is aptly called “God.”

- **Transcends the Physical:** Any mind that is limited in any way by a dependence on physical reality would be contingent, since the facts constituting physical reality are contingent. So, a necessary mind would have to be one that transcends any limitation by or dependence on on physical reality.

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- Though more would be needed to establish all of the properties traditionally ascribed to God, establishing a necessarily existent mind that transcends any limitation by physical reality surely establishes enough to call it “God.”

Conclusion 4:
So, God exists.

Divine Conceptualism: An Overarching Picture

- Propositions are thoughts of God, his acts representing things as being certain ways. The true propositions are his acts of knowing how things actually are. The false propositions are his acts of merely entertaining possible ways for things to be, without taking things to actually be those ways.

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- The existence of all of the propositions, and not just the true ones, is a consequence of God's omniscience, where this includes unlimited modal knowledge, knowledge of all possibilities.
- Logical propositions, truths about all possible propositions, are acts of God's self-knowledge, those thoughts of his that are his self-consciousness of the very form of his thinking.

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- In this way, Logic is, as Wolfram Gobsch puts it, “first-personal theology.”

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