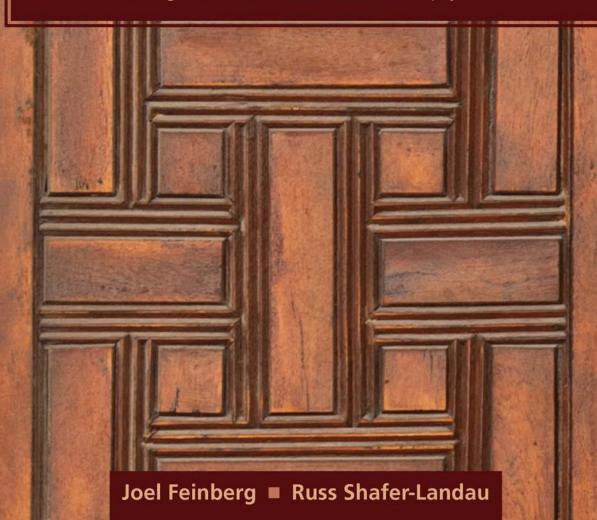


Readings in Some Basic Problems of Philosophy = 16e





REASON AND RESPONSIBILITY

Readings in Some Basic Problems of Philosophy

IOEL FEINBERG

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Australia • Brazil • Mexico • Singapore • United Kingdom • United States

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ABOUT REASON AND RESPONSIBILITY

The conviction underlying this volume is that introducing the college student to philosophy by means of a few representative problems examined in great detail is far preferable to offering a "little bit of everything," with each branch of philosophy, each major "ism," and each major historical period represented with scrupulous impartiality, even though the articles may have little relevance to one another. Accordingly, articles have been selected from both classical and contemporary sources on such topics as religion, skepticism, mind, personal identity, freedom, responsibility, moral duty, and the meaning of life. The problems that concern philosophers under these headings are not mere idle riddles, but rather questions of vital interest to any reflective person. Each set of problems is plumbed in considerable depth in essays expressing different, often opposing, views. The hope is that exposure to this argumentative giveand-take will encourage students to take part in the process themselves, and through this practice to develop their powers of philosophical reasoning.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

This new edition of *Reason and Responsibility* has been strengthened by the addition of seventeen new selections. We have retained the policy of securing the very best available English translations for foreign works. We have tried to strike a good balance between classic works and relatively new material on these subjects of enduring philosophical interest. Other than the introductory materials in Part I, each part of this work has been updated and expanded.

New to The Text

- Part II, "Reason and Religious Belief," now contains new translations of Anselm and Gaunilo's classic exchange on the ontological argument, as well as a new translation of Aquinas's "Five Ways." It also includes two new works written expressly for this edition of *Reason & Responsibility*. The first, by philosopher and historian of science Michael Ruse, is a presentation and analysis of various important versions of the argument from design for God's existence. The second, by Lawrence A. Shapiro, sets out an extended critique of justified belief in miracles. Michael Murray and Michael Rea also contribute a new entry to this Part; theirs is a systematic presentation and sympathetic reconstruction of various theodicies and defenses of God's existence in the face of the problem of evil.
- Part III, "Human Knowledge: Its Ground and Limits," is strengthened by the addition of two new entries. The first is a wide-ranging exploration of skepticism, offered by Robert Audi. The second is a lovely exploration of the value of truth, true belief, and knowledge by distinguished philosopher Linda Zagzebski.

- Part IV, "Mind and Its Place in Nature," now includes a new defense of materialism about the mind by David Papineau, and an intriguing discussion of survival after death by Shelly Kagan, who argues that on many conceptions of personal identity, post-mortem survival isn't all it's cracked up to be.
- Part V, "Determinism, Free Will and Responsibility," contains three new selections. The first, by philosopher James Rachels, presents an engaging argument that puts pressure on the idea that we ever make free choices. A second piece, written especially for this edition of *Reason & Responsibility*, is Helen Beebee's effort to explain how we can make free choices, and ones for which we are morally responsible, *even if* determinism is true. Also new in this section is an elegant piece by Galen Strawson, who presents in a very accessible way the master argument that he has been defending for many years now. That argument is designed to show that we cannot be morally responsible for anything we ever do, since the essential conditions of such responsibility can never be met.
- Part VI, "Morality and Its Critics," contains seven new selections. The first, by Mary Midgley, raises the problems for ethical relativism by means of an especially forceful example: that of the samurai ethical code that requires the testing of a new sword by using it to kill an innocent person. Kwame Anthony Appiah's entry invites us to reflect on what future generations will condemn us for, using this as a test to identify flaws in conventional wisdom about what is right and wrong. Peter Singer challenges us to give much more than we currently are doing to relieve the suffering of the less fortunate. Mary Anne Warren's influential defense of a prochoice position is now included here. Richard Taylor offers his view about the meaning of life—namely, that even a Sisyphus, condemned to roll a huge rock up a hill for eternity, can have a meaningful life if he is doing what he really wants to do. Richard Kraut rejects this view, and offers an elegant presentation of the reasons why getting what you want is not all it's cracked up to be. Finally, Susan Wolf offers the basics of her influential view regarding the meaning of life. The bumper sticker: "when subjective attraction meets objective attractiveness." On her account, a life is meaningful to the extent that we are invested in and take pleasure from activities and projects that are objectively valuable.

New Reason and Responsibility 16th Edition MindTap

Also new to this edition is MindTap for *Reason and Responsibility*. A fully online, personalized learning experience built upon Cengage Learning content, MindTap combines student learning tools—readings, multimedia, activities, and assessments—into a singular Learning Path that guides students through their course.

In addition to offerings at the part and the book levels, each chapter contains an array of activities related to the chapter content.

At the part and book-level:

 The KnowNOW! Philosophy Blog, accessible in the Part openers, provides a succinct philosophical analysis of major news stories, along with multimedia and discussion questions. Questia, available at the book level, provides two additional primary source readings for each chapter as well as access to Questia's full online library and research paper writing resources.

At the chapter level:

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- A video followed by two reflection questions, to elicit further response from the student on the topic broached in the chapter
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WHY, AND HOW TO, USE THIS TEXT

This volume currently contains eight major classics: three that are complete (Descartes' *Meditations*, and Plato's *Apology* and *Euthyphro*); one that is presented in virtual totality (Hume's *Dialogues*); and four that appear in very substantial sections (Berkeley's *Principles*, Hume's *Enquiry*, Mill's *Utilitarianism*, and Kant's *Groundwork*). In addition, there are shorter selections from eighteen more classic texts: those authored by Anselm, Gaunilo, Aquinas, Clarke, Paley, Pascal, W.K. Clifford, William James, Bertrand Russell, G.E. Moore, Locke, Hume, Plato, Nietzsche, Aristotle, Hobbes, Ross, and Epicurus. This book can be used to teach an introductory course based solidly on a reading of these classics; more recent articles can be seen as a kind of dividend. The book contains many articles by contemporary philosophers, including eleven that are addressed specifically to beginning students and that were written expressly for this book by William Rowe, Michael Ruse, Lawrence Shapiro, Wesley Salmon, John Perry, Brie Gertler, Helen Beebee, Robert Kane, Richard Joyce, and both editors.

There is no single "necessary and natural" order in which to read these materials. The book begins with the philosophy of religion because many beginners are familiar with its problems. But it is just as "natural" to begin with Part III, because the question of our knowledge of God presupposes the question of the "grounds and limits of human knowledge" generally. Similarly, there is no reason why one could not begin with the mind-body problem (Part IV) or the problem of determinism and free will (Part V). Indeed, many professors have said that they prefer to begin with ethics (Part VI) and work their way toward the front of the book.

ACNOWLEDGMENTS

Many fine philosophers offered generous advice about how to improve this latest edition of *Reason and Responsibility*. I'd like to thank Matthew Mangum, Palo Alto College; Luca Ferrero, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; Anthony Carreras, Lone Star College, Kingwood; David Stegall, Clemson University; David Godden, Old Dominion University; Ken Hochstetter, College of Southern Nevada; Daniel Mittag, Albion College; Jacob Caton, Arkansas State University; and Senem Saner, California State University, Bakersfield. And a special note of thanks to my research assistant, Ben Schwan, who updated most of the online materials and helped to identify likely candidates for new selections in this edition—and did it all with efficiency and good cheer.

I welcome advice on how to improve the format and content of subsequent editions of *Reason & Responsibility*. Those with such advice are very welcome to email me at RussShaferlandau@gmail.com with their suggestions.

Russ Shafer-Landau Chapel Hill, North Carolina JOEL FEINBERG (1926–2004) was a brilliant philosopher, certainly one of the most important social and political philosophers of the last half century. He was also a very kind, humble man. And he was an extremely conscientious teacher. The great care and preparation that he devoted to his teaching is evident here, in the plan and format of *Reason & Responsibility*. Joel developed the first edition of this textbook nearly fifty years ago, dissatisfied with existing options, and intent on providing coverage of those areas of philosophy that struck him as deeply important and deserving of every student's careful study.

Most of you reading this will know Joel Feinberg only as the editor of a book you've been assigned to read. If you have a chance, you ought to seek out one of the many exciting works that Joel penned during his prolific career. He was a philosophical writer of rare talent. He wrote about things that matter, and did so in a way that everyone could understand. He was clear, he was elegant, always ready with the telling example, the well-chosen reference to literature or history, dropped into place with a light touch. Open any one of his many books and read at random—you can't help but be impressed by the humanism, the clarity, the originality and, certainly, the wisdom of the views that receive expression there.

Joel was also a man of great common sense and discernment. One of the most desirable things in life is to have a person of integrity and genuinely sound judgment to rely on for advice, companionship, and, if one is especially fortunate, for friendship. I was lucky enough to study with him for five years, to write a dissertation under his direction, and later to work with him as a collaborator on this book for just over decade prior to his passing. His suggestions during our collaboration, both about substantive matters of content and about the more mundane, practical matters of the publishing world, epitomized his practical wisdom. He was a man whose judgment you could trust.

Joel was curious, interested in the whole range of human experience, attentive to relevant detail, appreciative of salient distinctions, a lover of taxonomies and, at the same time, able to resist the pressure that such taxonomies impose–pressure to falsify the phenomena and straitjacket it into categories that generate misunderstanding. It is a very rare talent, to be so analytically minded and yet so broad in one's outlook, to appreciate system and yet to be sensitive to the fine detail that must constrain its development. Joel possessed such talent, to a degree that was almost unrivalled. There were very few in his league.

Joel died in 2004 after a long struggle with Parkinson's disease and its complications. Though I have overseen this book in the decade since his death, his influence on its contents remains very substantial. More generally, he left us a great and valuable legacy, both personal and professional. It was a true honor to have known him, to have learned from him, and to have counted him a friend.

R.S.L. Chapel Hill 2016



Introduction to the Nature and Value of Philosophy

1. A Logic Lesson

JOEL FEINBERG

CORRECT AND INCORRECT REASONING

Logic is the intellectual discipline that distinguishes correct from incorrect reasoning. Correct rules of logic are indeed useful. It staggers the imagination to picture a world in which they have no authority. But their utility derives from their correctness, not the other way around. They are as clear models of *objective* truth, or objective "correctness," as any that we have.

DEDUCTIVE AND INDUCTIVE REASONING

As we shall soon see, the direct concern of logic with "correct reasoning" is more precisely a concern with good and bad *arguments*. All arguments fall into one or the other of two basic types: deductive and inductive.

Deductive arguments claim not merely to give support but to give conclusive or decisive

support to their conclusion. They claim to *prove* or *demonstrate* that their conclusion is true, that its truth *necessarily follows* from its premises so that, if the premises are true (a matter to be investigated independently), then the conclusion *must be true*.

A deductive argument may have any number of premises, but we shall follow pedagogical custom and adopt, as our model of a standard deductive argument, one that has two premises and a conclusion. When we say of a given argument that its premises are false, we shall mean simply that *at least one* of its premises is false.

An inductive argument is best defined simply as a genuine argument that is not deductive. The terms "valid" and "invalid" are normally applied to deductive arguments only. Inductive arguments are subject to different terms of evaluation, good-bad, strong-weak, and so on. Unlike the terms of inductive evaluation ("highly probable," "moderately probable," "improbable," etc.), the terms of deductive

evaluation, "valid" and "invalid," are not subject to degrees. A deductive argument is either wholly, unqualifiedly valid, or not valid at all. It cannot be just "a little bit invalid." Neither can it be the case that one argument can be more or less valid than another.

An inductive argument, then, is an argument whose conclusion is claimed to follow from its premises, not with necessity, but only with probability. One conclusion may be rendered more probable than another, and therefore be a better or stronger inductive argument.

ARGUMENTS

An argument is a set of propositions, one of which (the conclusion) is said to be true on the basis of the others (the premises). The conclusion is often signaled in ordinary English by the term "therefore." In logic, the traditional symbol for "therefore" is a triangle of dots [∴]. There are, however, many different ways of indicating which proposition is the conclusion: "It follows from p that q," "p, consequently q," "because p is true, q is true," "the reason for q is p." Premises are often said to be reasons or evidence for their conclusions. Premises support, imply, entail, or require their conclusion. The nature of that support is precisely what the discipline of logic studies.

LOGICAL NECESSITY VERSUS PSYCHOLOGICAL CERTAINTY

A person may stand in any number of possible relations to a proposition. She can be absolutely confident that p is true, having no trace of doubt, reasonable or not. It is easy to confuse this psychological certainty with logical necessity. An argument of the form "If p then q; p; therefore q" is valid quite independently of any belief that any person might have toward it. Given the truth of its premises, its conclusion must be true. Even individual propositions, as we shall see below, are sometimes necessarily true (when they are "analytic," or tautologies, or "true by

definition"). Similarly, propositions that have the form of logical contradictions *must* be false; they cannot be true. It cannot be true even of an infinitely powerful deity that He both exists and does not exist at the same time. To assert a logical contradiction is to say something of the form "p and not p," and all statements of that form are necessarily false. A rational person may believe p and another rational person might believe not p. But no rational person could believe both p and not p.

POSSIBLE TRUTH VALUE COMBINATIONS

When we do not know whether a given proposition is true or false, it is convenient to say that we do not know its "truth value." This is a useful term of art that enables us conveniently to pose some important questions about valid deductive arguments. Various combinations of truth values are possible. Each premise will have a truth value, and the conclusion will have a truth value, in both cases either true or false. The overall validity of the argument will vary, leading to a larger combination of possibilities. It is essential to understand these combinations and examples of each. Do not forget that a valid argument can have a false conclusion and an invalid argument can have a true conclusion. Various other combinations are possible. The rules for determining validity remain constant, but individual propositions in premise or conclusion will be true or false depending on the facts. And sometimes (in fact most times) the best way of determining the facts will be to go out and look at the world.

Here are some samples of truth value combinations in the premises and conclusions of valid and invalid arguments.

1. True premises; true conclusion; valid argument:

All humans are mortal. (True) Feinberg is human. (True) Therefore, Feinberg is mortal. (True) (VALID)

2.	False premises; false conclusion; valid
	argument:

All mammals have wings. (False) All reptiles are mammals. (False) Therefore, all reptiles have wings. (False) (VALID)

3. All true premises; true conclusion: invalid argument:

Chicago is north of Dallas. (True) Feinberg is mortal. (True) Therefore, all birds have wings. (True) (INVALID)

4. All true premises; false conclusion; invalid argument. (By the very definition of "valid," arguments of this form cannot be valid.)

If Bill Gates owned all the gold in Fort Knox, then he would be wealthy. (True) Bill Gates does not own all the gold in Fort Knox. (True)

Therefore Bill Gates is not wealthy. (False)

(INVALID)

5. False premises; true conclusion; valid argument:

All fish are mammals. (False) All whales are fish. (False) Therefore, all whales are mammals. (True) (VALID)

6. False premises; true conclusion; invalid argument:

All dogs have wings. (False) All puppies have wings. (False) Therefore, all puppies are dogs. (True) (INVALID)

In summary, a deductive argument may have any of the following truth and validity combinations:

PREMISES	CONCLUSION	ARGUMENT
Т	Т	VALID
T	T	INVALID
F	F	VALID
F	F	INVALID
F	T	VALID
F	F	INVALID
T	F	MUST BE
		INVALID

Illustrations have been given of arguments in several of these categories. All combinations are possible except one: An argument cannot have true premises and a false conclusion and still be valid. But a valid argument can go from false to false, from true to true, or from false to true, and an invalid argument can be in any of these categories, without restriction.

VALIDITY AND SOUNDNESS

A final bit of logical terminology will be useful. The philosophers who "do logic" never speak of statements or propositions as "valid" or "invalid." These evaluative terms apply to arguments, not to the propositions out of which arguments are constructed. Speaking very generally, valid arguments are logically correct arguments, having premises and conclusions as their constituent parts.

A particular proposition is true or false depending on what the facts happen to be. If you are trying to classify a given argument and you would like to know whether "some fish have wings" is T or F, you must look at books about fish or otherwise consult biologists. Logic can only tell you whether a given set of premises has a certain relationship—logical validity—to the biological proposition.

Ideally, what we need if logic is to be practical are arguments that are both valid and have true premises. The conclusion of such an argument cannot be false. Logicians call such an argument "sound." We can thus define soundness as validity plus truth (of the premises). One of

the most common ways in which philosophers criticize one another is to concede that the other person's argument is logically impeccable but to insist that some or all of her premises are false.

Propositions containing the "if...then..." relation are also commonly called "conditional statements" or "hypothetical statements." The part of the compound normally following the "if" is called the "antecedent." The part following the "then" is called the "consequent." A conditional statement asserts that the truth of the antecedent is a guarantee, or "sufficient condition," for the truth of the consequent: that if the antecedent is true, then the consequent is true. Another way of saying this is that the antecedent "implies" or "entails" the consequent, or that the consequent "follows" from the antecedent.

NECESSARY AND SUFFICIENT CONDITIONS

We can use concepts of necessary and sufficient conditions to relate propositions to one another. Thus we can say such things as "if it rains any more tonight, then the football field will be muddy tomorrow at game time," which means that more rain will be sufficient to bring about more mud; we could also say that "the light will come on only if someone pulls the switch," which means that pulling the switch is necessary for lighting the room. It is usually the case that many conditions are necessary for some result; if these necessary conditions are all satisfied, then that will be sufficient to produce the result.

There are many equivalent ways of saying that one thing is necessary for another. We sometimes speak of preconditions, requirements, or prerequisites. Lawyers speak of necessary conditions as "but for conditions," that is, conditions but for which an event to be explained would not have occurred. Sometimes lawyers resort to the ancient Latin expression, conditio sine qua non, "a condition without which not."

It should be noted carefully that if p is necessary for q, then q is sufficient for p. Thus,

An airplane flies only if there is gas in its tank.

is equivalent to

If this airplane flies, then there is gas in its tank.

Imagine yourself at the airport. You have been very worried that your visiting friends' plane is out of gas. You are convinced that gas in the tank is necessary if he is to fly home. When you get to the airport, he climbs into the plane and takes off. You could say—would you not?—that "There must have been gas in the tank. The fact that the plane is flying is sufficient to show that there was gas in the tank."

In general, if p is a sufficient condition for q, then q is a necessary condition for p. Note that p can be sufficient for q without also being necessary for q. Heavy cigarette smoking may well be sufficient to cause lung cancer, but it is not necessary, because nonsmokers sometimes get lung cancer too. And p can be necessary for q without also being sufficient for q. Oxygen is a necessary condition for a fire, but is not, by itself, enough to create one.

VALID DEDUCTIVE ARGUMENT FORMS: A SAMPLER

Determining the validity, or invalidity, of a deductive argument is a matter of form, not of content. A number of well-studied logical patterns exhibit the forms of the leading categories of deductive validity. Let us begin a brief sketch of these formal patterns with those that have a conditional statement as a premise.

Strictly speaking, any set of propositions whose premises are simply irrelevant to its conclusion is an invalid argument. So any argument properly symbolized as (p, q, therefore g) is invalid. Whatever the truth values of p and q and g, they have no logical bearing on one another. So if p is the proposition "All mammals are quadrupeds," and q is the proposition "Some millionaires are neurotic," then p and q have no relation to one another. They are not even talking about the same thing. Then if g is the proposition "Objects attract one another with a force that is directly proportional to their masses," we have an argument that consists of three true propositions totally irrelevant to one another. The premises can give no support to the conclusion, so that if we interpret an argument as a claim that such support is given, that claim must be rejected and the argument declared invalid. It is the sort of argument commonly called a "non sequitur" ("not following").

The more interesting fallacies (invalid arguments) have component propositions whose truth values are indeed relevant to one another but whose recognizable forms determine that the conclusion necessarily does not follow from the premises. By contrast, some of the standard deductive argument forms are valid, guaranteeing that any actual argument that has that form is valid—if its premises are true then its conclusion cannot be false. Needless to say, it is important to learn how to recognize these forms and learn how to distinguish at first sight the always valid ones from the fallacies, just as in mushroom hunting, it is important to know how to distinguish the fatally poisonous specimens from the innocuous ones.

Let us begin, then, with a pair of standard valid forms and the poisonous counterparts often confused with them. The first of these was given the Latin name modus ponens by medieval logicians, a name still used. An argument has this form when its component propositions are related as follows:

If p, then q Therefore, q

It is not difficult to see intuitively that this argument form is always valid. If an argument of this form has true premises, as is sometimes the case, then the conclusion must be true. For example:

If this horse's leg is broken, then he will be mercifully shot.

This horse's leg is broken.

Therefore, this horse will be mercifully shot.

If the premises of this argument are true (as they could easily be, depending on what the facts

are), then it is logically necessary that the conclusion is true too. If the conclusion is false, then it must be because one or more premise is false. A more revealing name for *modus ponens* is "the assertion of the antecedent." An argument that qualifies for that description is always valid.

Similarly, the argument whose traditional Latin name is modus tollens employs a conditional statement as a key premise and consists in the denial of the consequent. Its form is:

If p, then q Not q Therefore, not p

The alternative (English) name of this perfectly valid form is "denying the consequent." All actual arguments of this form must be valid.

But now we come to the masquerade ball, at which counterfeits for modus ponens and modus tollens pose as valid arguments, though in fact they are standard fallacies with standard names, and always invalid. The names are given this time only in English, namely affirming the consequent and denying the antecedent. The former is rendered as follows:

If p, then q Therefore, p

For example:

If Gates owns all the gold in Fort Knox, then he is rich.

Gates is rich.

Therefore, Gates owns all the gold in Fort Knox.1

Note that the example has true premises and a false conclusion, and therefore must be invalid.

The second fallacious argument form mentioned above is "denying the antecedent." It can be formulated as follows:

If p, then q Not p Therefore, not q For example—

If Gates owns all the gold in Fort Knox, then he is rich.

Gates does not own all the gold in Fort Knox.

Therefore, Gates is not rich.

There are various other forms of deductive argument in which a crucial premise is a conditional statement (if p then q). For example, there is the intuitively obvious valid form called the **hypothetical syllogism**. The name no doubt derives from the prominent role played in it by hypothetical (that is, conditional) propositions. Arguments of this type can be formulated thus—

If p, then q
If q, then r
Therefore, if p, then r

Note that all three component propositions are conditional. An example

If Witherspoon wins the next primary election, then he will win the nomination. If Witherspoon wins the nomination, then he will win the presidential election. Therefore, if Witherspoon wins the next primary election, then he will win the presidency.

Arguments of this form are always logically valid.

INFORMAL FALLACIES

We can mean by the word "fallacy" any instance of incorrect reasoning. That would include an enormous miscellany of reasoning errors that have no particular form except that their premises are irrelevant to their conclusions. But some invalid arguments have a clear, recognizable form, easy to symbolize, that permits us to treat them as a particular standardized mistake. This group of "informal fallacies," as they are sometimes called, includes, among many others, the following.

The standard name *argumentum* ad baculum is applied to an effort to persuade by

threatening force: "If you do not say what I want you to say (or believe or do what I want you to believe or do, as the case may be), then I will beat the hell out of you," is obviously not an argument. If it were, I suppose it would have to have the following form:

If you do not admit that p, then I will beat you up. (sole premise)

Therefore, p.

It may be that your threat gives me a good reason for saying that I believe that p, but that is quite another thing from saying that the credibility of your threat is evidence for p, or that it implies or entails or proves that p. In fact it is wholly irrelevant to p. A person of ordinary prudence who is persuaded by fear of the threatener's superior size, strength, and pugilistic prowess may admit, at the moment the blows begin, that he has just been given some "reasons," even some good reasons, for acting as demanded, though he has been given no reason that supports p, no reason for changing his belief to the one demanded, even if it were possible to do so.

Another set of "arguments" confusing persuasive efficacy with validity bears the Latin name argumentum ad miseracordium, and it is every bit as much an informal fallacy as the argumentum ad baculum. Consider the undergraduate student in tears who complains to her professor about the "unfairness" of her grade. The grade of B in his course, she says, did not do her justice. She deserved an A given the special circumstances that she has applied to medical school, and if she is not admitted, the disappointment will ruin her life and break her parents' hearts. Therefore she deserves an A, and her professor has the duty of changing her present grade to an A. The word "Therefore" is the sign that a conclusion is about to be stated, and supported by reasons stated in the premises. In effect the argument says: "You owe me an A, because I and others will be disappointed and heartbroken if you do not make the change I am begging you for." The verdict: invalid!

SOME INDUCTIVE INFERENCES, GOOD AND BAD

There are numerous tasks in life that require reasonable persons to "give reasons for" rather than prove, demonstrate, or render certain. Law courts are a familiar example. In the criminal law, for instance, a defendant cannot be convicted unless the jury believes that she behaved as charged and believes further that her guilt, while neither logically necessary, nor psychologically certain, is nevertheless supported by pretty strong evidence, so strong that it is "beyond a reasonable doubt." And yet the argument in the mind of the jury does not involve exclusive use of deduction. Inductive arguments, too, can carry conviction. Instead of logical necessity, the inductive argument (by definition) purports to show the probability of certain vital propositions that would lead a reasonable person in the direction of belief. In other branches of the law, the required evidence is somewhat weaker but still strong, for example, reasons that are "clear and compelling" and conclusions that are "highly probable," "more probable than not," or "plausible."

Inductive arguments, however, are no more immune from mistakes, and although inductive mistakes are less commonly labeled "fallacies," they can be as destructive to the reasoning processes as those mistakes that are called fallacies. A few samples will suffice.

Inductive arguments play an important part in ascriptions of causation to events, in explanations, predictions, and opinion surveys, among other things. Where inductive reasoning gives us the opportunity to go right in these activities, it usually offers the opportunity to go wrong. Consider the famous argument post hoc ergo propter hoc ("after the fact, therefore because of the fact"). One commits this mistake in reasoning when one attributes the cause of a given event to another event that came earlier, for the sole apparent reason that it *did* come earlier. This mistake is made so frequently in political debates that one might almost call it the basic argument of democratic politics, except for the

fact that it is almost always used against the incumbent candidate, holding him responsible for what has happened "during his watch." Did the Ohio River flood during his presidency? Then his election or the policies he pursued must have been the cause. It is enough to show that prices on the stock market fell during his term of office to show (allegedly with high probability) that his policies caused the decline. Were we at peace before he assumed office and at war later? It must be because his actions caused it. But incumbents can and do use this weak argument too. Are you better off now than you were under the previous president? If so, that shows that this president's policies have worked. Actually what facts of this sort "prove" is that the speaker's inductive logic is not to be trusted.

BEGGING THE QUESTION

Medieval logicians, who wrote in Latin, had their own fancy name for our next fallacy: a "petitio principii." English speakers too have other names for it—a "circular argument" and "begging the question." Technically, a circular argument can be defined as an argument that assumes in its premises the conclusion it claims to be proving. That procedure makes the reasoner's task altogether too easy to do her any good. She argues in a circle when she uses her premises to prove (or otherwise support) her conclusion, and uses her conclusion in the proof of one of her premises. The circularity fallacy brings to mind the two persons, Mr. A and Ms. B, who apply at a bank for a loan. First Mr. A asks for a loan. The banker asks him if there is anyone who can testify to his honesty and trustworthiness. At that point Mr. A introduces his friend Ms. B to the banker. Ms. B then recommends Mr. A, declaring him to be absolutely truthful and trustworthy. "Very good," says the banker to Mr. A. "Your friend Ms. B has given us a very good testimonial in your behalf. Now all we need to know is whether Ms. B is herself truthful and trustworthy. Who can recommend her? "No problem," replies Mr. A. "I will recommend her." And so we have a circle. We learn that A

can be trusted on the authority of B, who can be trusted on the authority of A.

In philosophy a circular argument often takes the same form. A conclusion is supported on someone's authority, and that authority is derived logically from an argument one of whose tacit premises is the very proposition that is meant to be proved. The standard example in logic texts is a particular kind of religious fundamentalism. "We can know that God exists," the argument proceeds, "because the bible tells us so." "Yes, but how do you know that the bible is true?" asks the critic of this particular argument. "No problem," the proof-giver replies, "The bible must be true because it is the word of God." The proof-giver has begged the question.

Put more formally, an argument is offered to prove p. A key premise in that argument is q. So the argument at this point is q, therefore p. Let us suppose that this is a valid argument, but that we cannot tell whether it is sound until we learn whether its premise, q, is true. So we come up with another valid argument: p, therefore q. So

now we have completed two arguments, one proving p, our immediate objective, and the other proving q, which is a premise in the argument for p. But the argument for q uses p as a premise in its own proof. In order to show that p is true, we have to assume that p is true!

An interesting thing about circular arguments is that although they are fallacies in the very broad sense of "mistaken reasoning," they are not fallacies in the narrow sense of "invalidity." In fact, a circular argument is actually a valid argument in the logician's technical sense of "valid." Assuming itself in its own proof may make the circular argument a poor argument, but no more an invalid one than any argument of the form p, therefore p. An argument of this sort will not advance our knowledge. Begging the question is a bad way to reason.

NOTE

1. I borrow this alluring example from Irving M. Copi and Keith Burgess-Jackson, Informal Logic (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1995) third edition, p. 55.

2. Apology

PLATO

Plato (427?-347 BCE) lived and taught in Athens. Most of his surviving works have the form of fictitious dialogues between Socrates (who had been his teacher) and other Greek contemporaries.

I do not know, men of Athens, how my accusers affected you; as for me, I was almost carried away in spite of myself, so persuasively did they speak. And yet, hardly anything of what they said is true. Of the many lies they told, one in particular surprised me, namely that you should be careful not to be deceived by an accomplished speaker like me. That they were not ashamed to be

immediately proved wrong by the facts, when I show myself not to be an accomplished speaker at all, that I thought was most shameless on their part—unless indeed they call an accomplished speaker the man who speaks the truth. If they mean that, I would agree that I am an orator, but not after their manner, for indeed, as I say, practically nothing they said was true. From me

From Plato, Five Dialogues, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Hackett 2002), pp. 2-18, 22-44. Reprinted by permission of Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. All rights reserved.

you will hear the whole truth, though not, by Zeus, gentlemen, expressed in embroidered and stylized phrases like theirs, but things spoken at random and expressed in the first words that come to mind, for I put my trust in the justice of what I say, and let none of you expect anything else. It would not be fitting at my age, as it might be for a young man, to toy with words when I appear before you.

One thing I do ask and beg of you, gentlemen: if you hear me making my defense in the same kind of language as I am accustomed to use in the marketplace by the bankers' tables, where many of you have heard me, and elsewhere, do not be surprised or create a disturbance on that account. The position is this: This is my first appearance in a lawcourt, at the age of seventy; I am therefore simply a stranger to the manner of speaking here. Just as if I were really a stranger, you would certainly excuse me if I spoke in that dialect and manner in which I had been brought up, so too my present request seems a just one, for you to pay no attention to my manner of speech—be it better or worse—but to concentrate your attention on whether what I say is just or not, for the excellence of a judge lies in this, as that of a speaker lies in telling the truth.

It is right for me, gentlemen, to defend myself first against the first lying accusations made against me and my first accusers, and then against the later accusations and the later accusers. There have been many who have accused me to you for many years now, and none of their accusations are true. These I fear much more than I fear Anytus and his friends, though they too are formidable. These earlier ones, however, are more so, gentlemen; they got hold of most of you from childhood, persuaded you and accused me quite falsely, saying that there is a man called Socrates, a wise man, a student of all things in the sky and below the earth, who makes the worse argument the stronger. Those who spread that rumor, gentlemen, are my dangerous accusers, for their hearers believe that those who study these things do not even believe in the gods. Moreover, these accusers are numerous, and have been at it a long time; also, they spoke

to you at an age when you would most readily believe them, some of you being children and adolescents, and they won their case by default, as there was no defense.

What is most absurd in all this is that one cannot even know or mention their names unless one of them is a writer of comedies. Those who maliciously and slanderously persuaded youwho also, when persuaded themselves then persuaded others—all those are most difficult to deal with: one cannot bring one of them into court or refute him; one must simply fight with shadows, as it were, in making one's defense, and cross-examine when no one answers. I want you to realize too that my accusers are of two kinds: those who have accused me recently, and the old ones I mention; and to think that I must first defend myself against the latter, for you have also heard their accusations first, and to a much greater extent than the more recent.

Very well then, men of Athens. I must surely defend myself and attempt to uproot from your minds in so short a time the slander that has resided there so long. I wish this may happen, if it is in any way better for you and me, and that my defense may be successful, but I think this is very difficult and I am fully aware of how difficult it is. Even so, let the matter proceed as the god may wish, but I must obey the law and make my defense.

Let us then take up the case from its beginning. What is the accusation from which arose the slander in which Meletus trusted when he wrote out the charge against me? What did they say when they slandered me? I must, as if they were my actual prosecutors, read the affidavit they would have sworn. It goes something like this: Socrates is guilty of wrongdoing in that he busies himself studying things in the sky and below the earth; he makes the worse into the stronger argument, and he teaches these same things to others. You have seen this yourself in the comedy of Aristophanes, a Socrates swinging about there, saying he was walking on air and talking a lot of other nonsense about things of which I know nothing at all. I do not speak in contempt of such knowledge, if someone is wise in these things-lest

Meletus bring more cases against me—but, gentlemen, I have no part in it, and on this point I call upon the majority of you as witnesses. I think it right that all those of you who have heard me conversing, and many of you have, should tell each other if any one of you has ever heard me discussing such subjects to any extent at all. From this you will learn that the other things said about me by the majority are of the same kind.

Not one of them is true. And if you have heard from anyone that I undertake to teach people and charge a fee for it, that is not true either. Yet I think it a fine thing to be able to teach people as Gorgias of Leontini does, and Prodicus of Ceos, and Hippias of Elis. Each of these men can go to any city and persuade the young, who can keep company with any one of their own fellow citizens they want without paying, to leave the company of these, to join with themselves, pay them a fee, and be grateful to them besides. Indeed, I learned that there is another wise man from Paros who is visiting us, for I met a man who has spent more money on sophists than everybody else put together, Callias, the son of Hipponicus. So I asked him—he has two sons-"Callias," I said, "if your sons were colts or calves, we could find and engage a supervisor for them who would make them excel in their proper qualities, some horse breeder or farmer. Now since they are men, whom do you have in mind to supervise them? Who is an expert in this kind of excellence, the human and social kind? I think you must have given thought to this since you have sons. Is there such a person," I asked, "or is there not?" "Certainly there is," he said. "Who is he?" I asked. "What is his name, where is he from? And what is his fee?" "His name, Socrates, is Evenus, he comes from Paros, and his fee is five minas." I thought Evenus a happy man, if he really possesses this art, and teaches for so moderate a fee. Certainly I would pride and preen myself if I had this knowledge, but I do not have it, gentlemen.

One of you might perhaps interrupt me and say: "But Socrates, what is your occupation? From where have these slanders come? For

surely if you did not busy yourself with something out of the common, all these rumors and talk would not have arisen unless you did something other than most people. Tell us what it is, that we may not speak inadvisedly about you." Anyone who says that seems to be right, and I will try to show you what has caused this reputation and slander. Listen then. Perhaps some of you will think I am jesting, but be sure that all that I shall say is true. What has caused my reputation is none other than a certain kind of wisdom. What kind of wisdom? Human wisdom, perhaps. It may be that I really possess this, while those whom I mentioned just now are wise with a wisdom more than human; else I cannot explain it, for I certainly do not possess it, and whoever says I do is lying and speaks to slander me. Do not create a disturbance, gentlemen, even if you think I am boasting, for the story I shall tell does not' originate with me, but I will refer you to a trustworthy source. I shall call upon the god at Delphi as witness to the existence and nature of my wisdom, if it be such. You know Chaerephon. He was my friend from youth, and the friend of most of you, as he shared your exile and your return. You surely know the kind of man he was, how impulsive in any course of action. He went to Delphi at one time and ventured to ask the oracle—as I say, gentlemen, do not create a disturbance—he asked if any man was wiser than I, and the Pythian replied that no one was wiser. Chaerephon is dead, but his brother will testify to you about this.

Consider that I tell you this because I would inform you about the origin of the slander. When I heard of this reply I asked myself: "Whatever does the god mean? What is his riddle? I am very conscious that I am not wise at all; what then does he mean by saying that I am the wisest? For surely he does not lie; it is not legitimate for him to do so." For a long time I was at a loss as to his meaning; then I very reluctantly turned to some such investigation as this; I went to one of those reputed wise, thinking that there, if anywhere, I could refute the oracle and say to it: "This man is wiser than I, but you said I was."

Then, when I examined this man—there is no need for me to tell you his name, he was one of our public men-my experience was something like this: I thought that he appeared wise to many people and especially to himself, but he was not. I then tried to show him that he thought himself wise, but that he was not. As a result he came to dislike me, and so did many of the bystanders. So I withdrew and thought to myself: "I am wiser than this man; it is likely that neither of us knows anything worthwhile, but he thinks he knows something when he does not, whereas when I do not know, neither do I think I know; so I am likely to be wiser than he to this small extent, that I do not think I know what I do not know." After this I approached another man, one of those thought to be wiser than he, and I thought the same thing, and so I came to be disliked both by him and by many others.

After that I proceeded systematically. I realized, to my sorrow and alarm, that I was getting unpopular, but I thought that I must attach the greatest importance to the god's oracle, so I must go to all those who had any reputation for knowledge to examine its meaning. And by the dog, men of Athens—for I must tell you the truth—I experienced something like this: In my investigation in the service of the god I found that those who had the highest reputation were nearly the most deficient, while those who were thought to be inferior were more knowledgeable. I must give you an account of my journeyings as if they were labors I had undertaken to prove the oracle irrefutable. After the politicians, I went to the poets, the writers of tragedies and dithyrambs and the others, intending in their case to catch myself being more ignorant than they. So I took up those poems with which they seemed to have taken most trouble and asked them what they meant, in order that I might at the same time learn something from them. I am ashamed to tell you the truth, gentlemen, but I must. Almost all the bystanders might have explained the poems better than their authors could. I soon realized that poets do not compose their poems with knowledge,

but by some inborn talent and by inspiration, like seers and prophets who also say many fine things without any understanding of what they say. The poets seemed to me to have had a similar experience. At the same time I saw that, because of their poetry, they thought themselves very wise men in other respects, which they were not. So there again I withdrew, thinking that I had the same advantage over them as I had over the politicians.

Finally I went to the craftsmen, for I was conscious of knowing practically nothing, and I knew that I would find that they had knowledge of many fine things. In this I was not mistaken; they knew things I did not know, and to that extent they were wiser than I. But, men of Athens, the good craftsmen seemed to me to have the same fault as the poets: each of them, because of his success at his craft, thought himself very wise in other most important pursuits, and this error of theirs overshadowed the wisdom they had, so that I asked myself, on behalf of the oracle, whether I should prefer to be as I am, with neither their wisdom nor their ignorance, or to have both. The answer I gave myself and the oracle was that it was to my advantage to be as I am.

As a result of this investigation, men of Athens, I acquired much unpopularity, of a kind that is hard to deal with and is a heavy burden; many slanders came from these people and a reputation for wisdom, for in each case the bystanders thought that I myself possessed the wisdom that I proved that my interlocutor did not have. What is probable, gentlemen, is that in fact the god is wise and that his oracular response meant that human wisdom is worth little or nothing, and that when he says this man, Socrates, he is using my name as an example, as if he said: "This man among you, mortals, is wisest who, like Socrates, understands that his wisdom is worthless." So even now I continue this investigation as the god bade me—and I go around seeking out anyone, citizen or stranger, whom I think wise. Then if I do not think he is, I come to the assistance of the god and show him that he is not wise. Because of this occupation, I do

not have the leisure to engage in public affairs to any extent, nor indeed to look after my own, but I live in great poverty because of my service to the god.

Furthermore, the young men who follow me around of their own free will, those who have most leisure, the sons of the very rich, take pleasure in hearing people questioned; they themselves often imitate me and try to question others. I think they find an abundance of men who believe they have some knowledge but know little or nothing. The result is that those whom they question are angry, not with themselves but with me. They say: "That man Socrates is a pestilential fellow who corrupts the young." If one asks them what he does and what he teaches to corrupt them, they are silent, as they do not know, but, so as not to appear at a loss, they mention those accusations that are available against all philosophers, about "things in the sky and things below the earth," about "not believing in the gods" and "making the worse the stronger argument"; they would not want to tell the truth, I'm sure, that they have been proved to lay claim to knowledge when they know nothing." These people are ambitious, violent, and numerous; they are continually and convincingly talking about me; they have been filling your ears for a long time with vehement slanders against me. From them Meletus attacked me, and Anytus and Lycon, Meletus being vexed on behalf of the poets, Anytus on behalf of the craftsmen and the politicians, Lycon on behalf of the orators, so that, as I started out by saying, I should be surprised if I could rid you of so much slander in so short a time. That, men of Athens, is the truth for you. I have hidden or disguised nothing. I know well enough that this very conduct makes me unpopular, and this is proof that what I say is true, that such is the slander against me, and that such are its causes. If you look into this either now or later, this is what you will find.

Let this suffice as a defense against the charges of my earlier accusers. After this I shall try to defend myself against Meletus, that good and patriotic man, as he says he is, and my later

accusers. As these are a different lot of accusers, let us again take up their sworn deposition. It goes something like this: Socrates is guilty of corrupting the young and of not believing in the gods in whom the city believes, but in other new spiritual things. Such is their charge. Let us examine it point by point.

He says that I am guilty of corrupting the young, but I say that Meletus is guilty of dealing frivolously with serious matters, of irresponsibly bringing people into court, and of professing to be seriously concerned with things about none of which he has ever cared, and I shall try to prove that this is so. Come here and tell me, Meletus. Surely you consider it of the greatest importance that our young men be as good as possible? — Indeed I do.

Come then, tell these men who improves them. You obviously know, in view of your concern. You say you have discovered the one who corrupts them, namely me, and you bring me here and accuse me to these men. Come, inform these men and tell them who it is who improves them. You see, Meletus, that you are silent and know not what to say. Does this not seem shameful to you and a sufficient proof of what I say, that you have not been concerned with any of this? Tell me, my good sir, who improves our young men? — The laws.

That is not what I am asking, but what person who has knowledge of the laws to begin with? — These jurymen, Socrates.

How do you mean, Meletus? Are these able to educate the young and improve them? — Certainly.

All of them, or some but not others? — All of them.

Very good, by Hera. You mention a great abundance of benefactors. But what about the audience? Do they improve the young or not? — They do, too.

What about the members of Council? — The Councillors, also.

But, Meletus, what about the assembly? Do members of the assembly corrupt the young, or do they all improve them? — They improve them.

All the Athenians, it seems, make the young into fine good men, except me, and I alone corrupt them. Is that what you mean? — That is most definitely what I mean.

You condemn me to a great misfortune. Tell me: does this also apply to horses, do you think? That all men improve them and one individual corrupts them? Or is quite the contrary true, one individual is able to improve them, or very few, namely, the horse breeders, whereas the majority, if they have horses and use them, corrupt them? Is that not the case, Meletus, both with horses and all other animals? Of course it is, whether you and Anytus say so or not. It would be a very happy state of affairs if only one person corrupted our youth, while the others improved them.

You have made it sufficiently obvious, Meletus, that you have never had any concern for our youth; you show your indifference clearly; that you have given no thought to the subjects about which you bring me to trial.

And by Zeus, Meletus, tell us also whether it is better for a man to live among good or wicked fellow citizens. Answer, my good man, for I am not asking a difficult question. Do not the wicked do some harm to those who are ever closest to them, whereas good people benefit them? — Certainly.

And does the man exist who would rather be harmed than benefited by his associates? Answer, my good sir, for the law orders you to answer. Is there any man who wants to be harmed? — Of course not.

Come now, do you accuse me here of corrupting the young and making them worse deliberately or unwillingly? — Deliberately.

What follows, Meletus? Are you so much wiser at your age than I am at mine that you understand that wicked people always do some harm to their closest neighbors while good people do them good, but I have reached such a pitch of ignorance that I do not realize this, namely that if I make one of my associates wicked I run the risk of being harmed by him so that I do such a great evil deliberately, as you say? I do not believe you, Meletus, and

I do not think anyone else will. Either I do not corrupt the young or, if I do, it is unwillingly, and you are lying in either case. Now if I corrupt them unwillingly, the law does not require you to bring people to court for such unwilling wrongdoings, but to get hold of them privately, to instruct them and exhort them; for clearly, if I learn better, I shall cease to do what I am doing unwillingly. You, however, have avoided my company and were unwilling to instruct me, but you bring me here, where the law requires one to bring those who are in need of punishment, not of instruction.

And so, men of Athens, what I said is clearly true: Meletus has never been at all concerned with these matters. Nonetheless tell us, Meletus, how you say that I corrupt the young; or is it obvious from your deposition that it is by teaching them not to believe in the gods in whom the city believes but in other new spiritual things? Is this not what you say I teach and so corrupt them? — That is most certainly what I do say.

Then by those very gods about whom we are talking, Meletus, make this clearer to me and to these men: I cannot be sure whether you mean that I teach the belief that there are some gods—and therefore I myself believe that there are gods and am not altogether an atheist, nor am I guilty of that—not, however, the gods in whom the city believes, but others, and that this is the charge against me, that they are others. Or whether you mean that I do not believe in gods at all, and that this is what I teach to others. — This is what I mean, that you do not believe in gods at all.

You are a strange fellow, Meletus. Why do you say this? Do I not believe, as other men do, that the sun and the moon are gods? — No, by Zeus, gentlemen of the jury, for he says that the sun is stone, and the moon earth.

My dear Meletus, do you think you are prosecuting Anaxagoras? Are you so contemptuous of these men and think them so ignorant of letters as not to know that the books of Anaxagoras of Clazomenae are full of those theories, and further, that the young men learn from me what they can buy from time to time for a drachma,

at most, in the bookshops, and ridicule Socrates if he pretends that these theories are his own, especially as they are so absurd? Is that, by Zeus, what you think of me, Meletus, that I do not believe that there are any gods? — That is what I say, that you do not believe in the gods at all.

You cannot be believed, Meletus, even, I think, by yourself. The man appears to me, men of Athens, highly insolent and uncontrolled. He seems to have made this deposition out of insolence, violence, and youthful zeal. He is like one who composed a riddle and is trying it out: "Will the wise Socrates realize that I am jesting and contradicting myself, or shall I deceive him and others?" I think he contradicts himself in the affidavit, as if he said: "Socrates is guilty of not believing in gods but believing in gods," and surely that is the part of a jester!

Examine with me, gentlemen, how he appears to contradict himself, and you, Meletus, answer us. Remember, gentlemen, what I asked you when I began, not to create a disturbance if I proceed in my usual manner.

Does any man, Meletus, believe in human activities who does not believe in humans? Make him answer, and not again and again create a disturbance. Does any man who does not believe in horses believe in horsemen's activities? Or in flute-playing activities but not in flute-players? No, my good sir, no man could. If you are not willing to answer, I will tell you and these men. Answer the next question, however. Does any man believe in spiritual activities who does not believe in spirits? — No one.

Thank you for answering, if reluctantly, when these gentlemen made you. Now you say that I believe in spiritual things and teach about them, whether new or old, but at any rate spiritual things according to what you say, and to this you have sworn in your deposition. But if I believe in spiritual things I must quite inevitably believe in spirits. Is that not so? It is indeed. I shall assume that you agree, as you do not answer. Do we not believe spirits to be either gods or the children of gods? Yes or no? — Of course.

Then since I do believe in spirits, as you admit, if spirits are gods, this is what I mean when I

say you speak in riddles and in jest, as you state that I do not believe in gods and then again that I do, since I do believe in spirits. If, on the other hand, the spirits are children of the gods, bastard children of the gods by nymphs or some other mothers, as they are said to be, what man would believe children of the gods to exist, but not gods? That would be just as absurd as to believe the young of horses and asses, namely mules, to exist, but not to believe in the existence of horses and asses. You must have made this deposition, Meletus, either to test us or because you were at a loss to find any true wrongdoing of which to accuse me. There is no way in which you could persuade anyone of even small intelligence that it is possible for one and the same man to believe in spiritual but not also in divine things, and then again for that same man to believe neither in spirits nor in gods nor in heroes.

I do not think, men of Athens, that it requires a prolonged defense to prove that I am not guilty of the charges in Meletus' deposition, but this is sufficient. On the other hand, you know that what I said earlier is true, that I am very unpopular with many people. This will be my undoing, if I am undone, not Meletus or Anytus but the slanders and envy of many people. This has destroyed many other good men and will, I think, continue to do so. There is no danger that it will stop at me.

Someone might say: "Are you not ashamed, Socrates, to have followed the kind of occupation that has led to your being now in danger of death?" However, I should be right to reply to him: "You are wrong, sir, if you think that a man who is any good at all should take into account the risk of life or death; he should look to this only in his actions, whether what he does is right or wrong, whether he is acting like a good or a bad man." According to your view, all the heroes who died at Troy were inferior people, especially the son of Thetis who was so contemptuous of danger compared with disgrace. When he was eager to kill Hector, his goddess mother warned him, as I believe, in some such words as these: "My child, if you avenge the death of your comrade, Patroclus, and you kill Hector, you will die

yourself, for your death is to follow immediately after Hector's." Hearing this, he despised death and danger and was much more afraid to live a coward who did not avenge his friends. "Let me die at once," he said, "when once I have given the wrongdoer his deserts, rather than remain here, a laughingstock by the curved ships, a burden upon the earth." Do you think he gave thought to death and danger?

This is the truth of the matter, men of Athens: wherever a man has taken a position that he believes to be best, or has been placed by his commander, there he must I think remain and face danger, without a thought for death or anything else, rather than disgrace. It would have been a dreadful way to behave, men of Athens, if, at Potidaea, Amphipolis, and Delium, I had, at the risk of death, like anyone else, remained at my post where those you had elected to command had ordered me, and then, when the god ordered me, as I thought and believed, to live the life of a philosopher, to examine myself and others, I had abandoned my post for fear of death or anything else. That would have been a dreadful thing, and then I might truly have justly been brought here for not believing that there are gods, disobeying the oracle, fearing death, and thinking I was wise when I was not. To fear death, gentlemen, is no other than to think oneself wise when one is not, to think one knows what one does not know. No one knows whether death may not be the greatest of all blessings for a man, yet men fear it as if they knew that it is the greatest of evils. And surely it is the most blameworthy ignorance to believe that one knows what one does not know. It is perhaps on this point and in this respect, gentlemen, that I differ from the majority of men, and if I were to claim that I am wiser than anyone in anything, it would be in this, that, as I have no adequate knowledge of things in the underworld, so I do not think I have. I do know, however, that it is wicked and shameful to do wrong, to disobey one's superior, be he god or man. I shall never fear or avoid things of which I do not know, whether they may not be good rather than things that I know to be

bad. Even if you acquitted me now and did not believe Anytus, who said to you that either I should not have been brought here in the first place, or that now I am here, you cannot avoid executing me, for if I should be acquitted, your sons would practice the teachings of Socrates and all be thoroughly corrupted; if you said to me in this regard: "Socrates, we do not believe Anytus now; we acquit you, but only on condition that you spend no more time on this investigation and do not practice philosophy, and if you are caught doing so you will die"; if, as I say, you were to acquit me on those terms, I would say to you: "Men of Athens, I am grateful and I am your friend, but I will obey the god rather than you, and as long as I draw breath and am able, I shall not cease to practice philosophy, to exhort you and in my usual way to point out to any one of you whom I happen to meet: Good Sir, you are an Athenian, a citizen of the greatest city with the greatest reputation for both wisdom and power; are you not ashamed of your eagerness to possess as much wealth, reputation, and honors as possible, while you do not care for nor give thought to wisdom or truth, or the best possible state of your soul?" Then, if one of you disputes this and says he does care, I shall not let him go at once or leave him, but I shall question him, examine him, and test him, and if I do not think he has attained the goodness that he says he has, I shall reproach him because he attaches little importance to the most important things and greater importance to inferior things. I shall treat in this way anyone I happen to meet, young and old, citizen and stranger, and more so the citizens because you are more kindred to me. Be sure that this is what the god orders me to do, and I think there is no greater blessing for the city than my service to the god. For I go around doing nothing but persuading both young and old among you not to care for your body or your wealth in preference to or as strongly as for the best possible state of your soul, as I say to you: "Wealth does not bring about excellence, but excellence makes wealth and everything else good for men, both individually and collectively."

Now if by saying this I corrupt the young, this advice must be harmful, but if anyone says that I give different advice, he is talking nonsense. On this point I would say to you, men of Athens: "Whether you believe Anytus or not, whether you acquit me or not, do so on the understanding that this is my course of action, even if I am to face death many times:" Do not create a disturbance, gentlemen, but abide by my request not to cry out at what I say but to listen, for I think it will be to your advantage to listen, and I am about to say other things at which you will perhaps cry out. By no means do this. Be sure that if you kill the sort of man I say I am, you will not harm me more than yourselves. Neither Meletus nor Anytus can harm me in any way; he could not harm me, for I do not think it is permitted that a better man be harmed by a worse; certainly he might kill me, or perhaps banish or disfranchise me, which he and maybe others think to be great harm, but I do not think so. I think he is doing himself much greater harm doing what he is doing now, attempting to have a man executed unjustly. Indeed, men of Athens, I am far from making a defense now on my own behalf, as might be thought, but on yours, to prevent you from wrongdoing by mistreating the god's gift to you by condemning me; for if you kill me you will not easily find another like me. I was attached to this city by the god—though it seems a ridiculous thing to say—as upon a great and noble horse which was somewhat sluggish because of its size and needed to be stirred up by a kind of gadfly. It is to fulfill some such function that I believe the god has placed me in the city. I never cease to rouse each and every one of you, to persuade and reproach you all day long and everywhere I find myself in your company.

Another such man will not easily come to be among you, gentlemen, and if you believe me you will spare me. You might easily be annoyed with me as people are when they are aroused from a doze, and strike out at me; if convinced by Anytus you could easily kill me, and then you could sleep on for the rest of your days, unless the god, in his care for you, sent you someone else. That I am

the kind of person to be a gift of the god to the city you might realize from the fact that it does not seem like human nature for me to have neglected all my own affairs and to have tolerated this neglect now for so many years while I was always concerned with you, approaching each one of you like a father or an elder brother to persuade you to care for virtue. Now if I profited from this by charging a fee for my advice, there would be some sense to it, but you can see for yourselves that, for all their shameless accusations, my accusers have not been able in their impudence to bring forward a witness to say that I have ever received a fee or ever asked for one. I, on the other hand, have a convincing witness that I speak the truth, my poverty.

It may seem strange that while I go around and give this advice privately and interfere in private affairs, I do not venture to go to the assembly and there advise the city. You have heard me give the reason for this in many places. I have a divine or spiritual sign which Meletus has ridiculed in his deposition. This began when I was a child. It is a voice, and whenever it speaks it turns me away from something I am about to do, but it never encourages me to do anything. This is what has prevented me from taking part in public affairs, and I think it was quite right to prevent me. Be sure, men of Athens, that if I had long ago attempted to take part in politics, I should have died long ago, and benefited neither you nor myself. Do not be angry with me for speaking the truth; no man will survive who genuinely opposes you or any other crowd and prevents the occurrence of many unjust and illegal happenings in the city. A man who really fights for justice must lead a private, not a public, life if he is to survive for even a short time.

I shall give you great proofs of this not words but what you esteem, deeds. Listen to what happened to me, that you may know that I will not yield to any man contrary to what is right, for fear of death, even if I should die at once for not yielding. The things I shall tell you are commonplace and smack of the law-courts, but they are true. I have never held any other office in the city, but I served as a member

of the Council, and our tribe Antiochis was presiding at the time when you wanted to try as a body the ten generals who had failed to pick up the survivors of the naval battle. This was illegal, as you all recognized later. I was the only member of the presiding committee to oppose your doing something contrary to the laws, and I voted against it. The orators were ready to prosecute me and take me away, and your shouts were egging them on, but I thought I should run any risk on the side of law and justice rather than join you, for fear of prison or death, when you were engaged in an unjust course.

This happened when the city was still a democracy. When the oligarchy was established, the Thirty summoned me to the Hall, along with four others, and ordered us to bring Leon from Salamis, that he might be executed. They gave many such orders to many people, in order to implicate as many as possible in their guilt. Then I showed again, not in words but in action, that, if it were not rather vulgar to say so, death is something I couldn't care less about, but that my whole concern is not to do anything unjust or impious. That government, powerful as it was, did not frighten me into any wrongdoing. When we left the Hall, the other four went to Salamis and brought in Leon, but I went home. I might have been put to death for this, had not the government fallen shortly afterwards. There are many who will witness to these events.

Do you think I would have survived all these years if I were engaged in public affairs and, acting as a good man must, came to the help of justice and considered this the most important thing? Far from it, men of Athens, nor would any other man. Throughout my life, in any public activity I may have engaged in, I am the same man as I am in private life. I have never come to an agreement with anyone to act unjustly, neither with anyone else nor with any one of those who they slanderously say are my pupils. I have never been anyone's teacher. If anyone, young or old, desires to listen to me when I am talking and dealing with my own concerns, I have never begrudged this to anyone, but I do not converse when I receive a fee and not when I do not. I am equally

ready to question the rich and the poor if anyone is willing to answer my questions and listen to what I say. And I cannot justly be held responsible for the good or bad conduct of these people, as I never promised to teach them anything and have not done so. If anyone says that he has learned anything from me, or that he heard anything privately that the others did not hear, be assured that he is not telling the truth.

Why then do some people enjoy spending considerable time in my company? You have heard why, men of Athens; I have told you the whole truth. They enjoy hearing those being questioned who think they are wise, but are not. And this is not unpleasant. To do this has, as I say, been enjoined upon me by the god, by means of oracles and dreams, and in every other way that a divine manifestation has ever ordered a man to do anything. This is true, gentlemen, and can easily be established.

If I corrupt some young men and have corrupted others, then surely some of them who have grown older and realized that I gave them bad advice when they were young should now themselves come up here to accuse me and avenge themselves. If they were unwilling to do so themselves, then some of their kindred, their fathers or brothers or other relations should recall it now if their family had been harmed by me. I see many of these present here, first Crito, my contemporary and fellow demesman, the father of Critobulus here; next Lysanias of Sphettus, the father of Aeschines here; also Antiphon the Cephisian, the father of Epigenes; and others whose brothers spent their time in this way; Nicostratus, the son of Theozotides, brother of Theodotus, and Theodotus has died so he could not influence him; Paralius here, son of Demodocus, whose brother was Theages; there is Adeimantus, son of Ariston, brother of Plato here; Aeantidorus, brother of Apollodorus here.

I could mention many others, some of whom surely Meletus should have brought in as witness in his own speech. If he forgot to do so, then let him do it now; I will yield time if he has anything of the kind to say. You will find quite the contrary, gentlemen. These men are

all ready to come to the help of the corruptor, the man who has harmed their kindred, as Meletus and Anytus say. Now those who were corrupted might well have reason to help me, but the uncorrupted, their kindred who are older men, have no reason to help me except the right and proper one, that they know that Meletus is lying and that I am telling the truth.

Very well, gentlemen. This, and maybe other similar things, is what I have to say in my defense. Perhaps one of you might be angry as he recalls that when he himself stood trial on a less dangerous charge, he begged and implored the jurymen with many tears, that he brought his children and many of his friends and family into court to arouse as much pity as he could, but that I do none of these things, even though I may seem to be running the ultimate risk. Thinking of this, he might feel resentful towards me and, angry about this, cast his vote in anger. If there is such a one among you-I do not deem there is, but if there is-I think it would be right to say in reply: My good sir, I too have a household and, in Homer's phrase, I am not born "from oak or rock" but from men, so that I have a family, indeed three sons, men of Athens, of whom one is an adolescent while two are children. Nevertheless, I will not beg you to acquit me by bringing them here. Why do I do none of these things? Not through arrogance, gentlemen, nor through lack of respect for you. Whether I am brave in the face of death is another matter, but with regard to my reputation and yours and that of the whole city, it does not seem right to me to do these things, especially at my age and with my reputation. For it is generally believed, whether it be true or false, that in certain respects Socrates is superior to the majority of men. Now if those of you who are considered superior, be it in wisdom or courage or whatever other virtue makes them so, are seen behaving like that, it would be a disgrace. Yet I have often seen them do this sort of thing when standing trial, men who are thought to be somebody, doing amazing things as if they thought it a terrible thing to die, and as if they were to be immortal if you did not execute them. I think

these men bring shame upon the city so that a stranger, too, would assume that those who are outstanding in virtue among the Athenians, whom they themselves select from themselves to fill offices of state and receive other honors, are in no way better than women. You should not act like that, men of Athens, those of you who have any reputation at all, and if we do, you should not allow it. You should make it very clear that you will more readily convict a man who performs these pitiful dramatics in court and so makes the city a laughingstock, than a man who keeps quiet.

Quite apart from the question of reputation, gentlemen, I do not think it right to supplicate the jury and to be acquitted because of this, but to teach and persuade them. It is not the purpose of a juryman's office to give justice as a favor to whoever seems good to him, but to judge according to law, and this he has sworn to do. We should not accustom you to perjure yourselves, nor should you make a habit of it. This is irreverent conduct for either of us.

Do not deem it right for me, men of Athens, that I should act towards you in a way that I do not consider to be good or just or pious, especially, by Zeus, as I am being prosecuted by Meletus here for impiety; clearly, if I convinced you by my supplication to do violence to your oath of office, I would be teaching you not to believe that there are gods, and my defense would convict me of not believing in them. This is far from being the case, gentlemen, for I do believe in them as none of my accusers do. I leave it to you and the god to judge me in the way that will be best for me and for you.

[The jury now gives its verdict of guilty, and Meletus asks for the penalty of death.]

There are many other reasons for my not being angry with you for convicting me, men of Athens, and what happened was not unexpected. I am much more surprised at the number of votes cast on each side, for I did not think the decision would be by so few votes but by a great many. As it is, a switch of only thirty votes would have acquitted me. I think myself that I have

been cleared on Meletus' charges, and not only this, but it is clear to all that, if Anytus and Lycon had not joined him in accusing me, he would have been fined a thousand drachmas for not receiving a fifth of the votes.

He assesses the penalty at death. So be it. What counter-assessment should I propose to you, men of Athens? Clearly it should be a penalty I deserve, and what do I deserve to suffer or to pay because I have deliberately not led a quiet life but have neglected what occupies most people: wealth, household affairs, the position of general or public orator or the other offices, the political clubs and factions that exist in the city? I thought myself too honest to survive if I occupied myself with those things. I did not follow that path that would have made me of no use either to you or to myself, but I went to each of you privately and conferred upon him what I say is the greatest benefit, by trying to persuade him not to care for any of his belongings before caring that he himself should be as good and as wise as possible, not to care for the city's possessions more than for the city itself, and to care for other things in the same way. What do I deserve for being such a man? Some good, men of Athens, if I must truly make an assessment according to my deserts, and something suitable. What is suitable for a poor benefactor, who needs leisure to exhort you? Nothing is more suitable, gentlemen, than for such a man to be fed in the Prytaneum-much more suitable for him than for any one of you who has won a victory at Olympia with a pair or a team of horses. The Olympian victor makes you think yourself happy; I make you be happy. Besides, he does not need food, but I do. So if I must make a just assessment of what I deserve, I assess it as this: free meals in the Prytaneum.

When I say this you may think, as when I spoke of appeals to pity and entreaties, that I speak arrogantly, but that is not the case, men of Athens; rather it is like this: I am convinced that I never willingly wrong anyone, but I am not convincing you of this, for we have talked together but a short time. If it were the law with us, as it is elsewhere, that a trial for life

should not last one but many days, you would be convinced, but now it is not easy to dispel great slanders in a short time. Since I am convinced that I wrong no one, I am not likely to wrong myself, to say that I deserve some evil and to make some such assessment against myself. What should I fear? That I should suffer the penalty Meletus has assessed against me, of which I say I do not know whether it is good or bad? Am I then to choose in preference to this something that I know very well to be an evil and assess the penalty at that? Imprisonment? Why should I live in prison, always subjected to the ruling magistrates, the Eleven? A fine, and imprisonment until I pay it? That would be the same thing for me, as I have no money. Exile? For perhaps you might accept that assessment.

I should have to be inordinately fond of life, men of Athens, to be so unreasonable as to suppose that other men will easily tolerate my company and conversation when you, my fellow citizens, have been unable to endure them, but found them a burden and resented them so that you are now seeking to get rid of them. Far from it, gentlemen. It would be a fine life at my age to be driven out of one city after another, for I know very well that wherever I go the young men will listen to my talk as they do here. If I drive them away, they will themselves persuade their elders to drive me out; if I do not drive them away, their fathers and relations will drive me out on their behalf.

Perhaps someone might say: But Socrates, if you leave us will you not be able to live quietly, without talking? Now this is the most difficult point on which to convince some of you. If I say that it is impossible for me to keep quiet because that means disobeying the god, you will not believe me and will think I am being ironical. On the other hand, if I say that it is the greatest good for a man to discuss virtue every day and those other things about which you hear me conversing and testing myself and others, for the unexamined life is not worth living for men, you will believe me even less.

What I say is true, gentlemen, but it is not easy to convince you. At the same time, I am not

accustomed to think that I deserve any penalty. If I had money, I would assess the penalty at the amount I could pay, for that would not hurt me, but I have none, unless you are willing to set the penalty at the amount I can pay, and perhaps I could pay you one mina of silver. So that is my assessment.

Plato here, men of Athens, and Crito and Critobulus and Apollodorus bid me put the penalty at thirty minas, and they will stand surety for the money. Well then, that is my assessment, and they will be sufficient guarantee of payment.

[The jury now votes again and sentences Socrates to death.]

It is for the sake of a short time, men of Athens, that you will acquire the reputation and the guilt, in the eyes of those who want to denigrate the city, of having killed Socrates, a wise man, for they who want to revile you will say that I am wise even if I am not. If you had waited but a little while, this would have happened of its own accord. You see my age, that I am already advanced in years and close to death. I am saying this not to all of you but to those who condemned me to death, and to these same ones I say: Perhaps you think that I was convicted for lack of such words as might have convinced you, if I thought I should say or do all I could to avoid my sentence. Far from it. I was convicted because I lacked not words but boldness and shamelessness and the willingness to say to you what you would most gladly have heard from me, lamentations and tears and my saying and doing many things that I say are unworthy of me but that you are accustomed to hear from others. I did not think then that the danger I ran should make me do anything mean, nor do I now regret the nature of my defense. I would much rather die after this kind of defense than live after making the other kind. Neither I nor any other man should, on trial or in war, contrive to avoid death at any cost. Indeed it is often obvious in battle that one could escape death by throwing away one's weapons and by turning to supplicate one's pursuers, and there are many ways to avoid death in every kind of danger if one will venture to do or say anything to avoid it. It is not difficult to avoid death, gentlemen; it is much more difficult to avoid wickedness, for it runs faster than death. Slow and elderly as I am, I have been caught by the slower pursuer, whereas my accusers, being clever and sharp, have been caught by the quicker, wickedness. I leave you now, condemned to death by you, but they are condemned by truth to wickedness and injustice. So I maintain my assessment, and they maintain theirs. This perhaps had to happen, and I think it is as it should be.

Now I want to prophesy to those who convicted me, for I am at the point when men prophesy most, when they are about to die. I say, gentlemen, to those who voted to kill me, that vengeance will come upon you immediately after my death, a vengeance much harder to bear than that which you took in killing me. You did this in the belief that you would avoid giving an account of your life, but I maintain that quite the opposite will happen to you. There will be more people to test you, whom I now held back, but you did not notice it. They will be more difficult to deal with as they will be younger and you will resent them more. You are wrong if you believe that by killing people you will prevent anyone from reproaching you for not living in the right way. To escape such tests is neither possible nor good, but it is best and easiest not to discredit others but to prepare oneself to be as good as possible. With this prophecy to you who convicted me, I part from you.

I should be glad to discuss what has happened with those who voted for my acquittal during the time that the officers of the court are busy and I do not yet have to depart to my death. So, gentlemen, stay with me awhile, for nothing prevents us from talking to each other while it is allowed. To you, as being my friends, I want to show the meaning of what has occurred. A surprising thing has happened to me, jurymen—you I would rightly call jurymen. At all previous times my familiar prophetic power, my spiritual manifestation, frequently opposed me, even in small matters, when I was about to do something wrong, but now that, as you can

see for yourselves, I was faced with what one might think, and what is generally thought to be, the worst of evils, my divine sign has not opposed me, either when I left home at dawn, or when I came into court, or at any time that I was about to say something during my speech. Yet in other talks it often held me back in the middle of my speaking, but now it has opposed no word or deed of mine. What do I think is the reason for this? I will tell you. What has happened to me may well be a good thing, and those of us who believe death to be an evil are certainly mistaken. I have convincing proof of this, for it is impossible that my familiar sign did not oppose me if I was not about to do what was right.

Let us reflect in this way, too, that there is good hope that death is a blessing, for it is one of two things: either the dead are nothing and have no perception of anything, or it is, as we are told, a change and a relocating for the soul from here to another place. If it is complete lack of perception, like a dreamless sleep, then death would be a great advantage. For I think that if one had to pick out that night during which a man slept soundly and did not dream, put beside it the other nights and days of his life, and then see how many days and nights had been better and more pleasant than that night, not only a private person but the great king would find them easy to count compared with the other days and nights. If death is like this I say it is an advantage, for all eternity would then seem to be no more than a single night. If, on the other hand, death is a change from here to another place, and what we are told is true and all who have died are there, what greater blessing could there be, gentlemen of the jury? If anyone arriving in Hades will have escaped from those who call themselves jurymen here, and will find those true jurymen who are said to sit in judgment there, Minos and Rhadamanthus and Aeacus and Triptolemus and the other demigods who have been upright in their own life, would that be a poor kind of change? Again, what would one of you give to keep company with Orpheus and Musaeus, Hesiod and Homer? I am willing to die many times if that is true. It would be a wonderful way

for me to spend my time whenever I met Palamedes and Ajax, the son of Telamon, and any other of the men of old who died through an unjust conviction, to compare my experience with theirs. I think it would be pleasant. Most important, I could spend my time testing and examining people there, as I do here, as to who among them is wise, and who thinks he is, but is not.

What would one not give, gentlemen of the jury, for the opportunity to examine the man who led the great expedition against Troy, or Odysseus, or Sisyphus, and innumerable other men and women one could mention? It would be an extraordinary happiness to talk with them, to keep company with them and examine them. In any case, they would certainly not put one to death for doing so. They are happier there than we are here in other respects, and for the rest of time they are deathless, if indeed what we are told is true.

You too must be of good hope as regards death, gentlemen of the jury, and keep this one truth in mind, that a good man cannot be harmed either in life or in death, and that his affairs are not neglected by the gods. What has happened to me now has not happened of itself, but it is clear to me that it was better for me to die now and to escape from trouble. That is why my divine sign did not oppose me at any point. So I am certainly not angry with those who convicted me, or with my accusers. Of course that was not their purpose when they accused and convicted me, but they thought they were hurting me, and for this they deserve blame. This much I ask from them: When my sons grow up, avenge yourselves by causing them the same kind of grief that I caused you, if you think they care for money or anything else more than they care for virtue, or if they think they are somebody when they are nobody. Reproach them as I reproach you, that they do not care for the right things and think they are worthy when they are not worthy of anything. If you do this, I shall have been justly treated by you, and my sons also.

Now the hour to part has come. I go to die, you go to live. Which of us goes to the better lot is known to no one, except the god.

3. The Value of Philosophy

BERTRAND RUSSELL

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) was one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century. His philosophical contributions ranged across many areas; he was also an important social critic. He received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1950.

Having now come to the end of our brief and very incomplete review of the problems of philosophy, it will be well to consider, in conclusion, what is the value of philosophy and why it ought to be studied. It is the more necessary to consider this question, in view of the fact that many men, under the influence of science or of practical affairs, are inclined to doubt whether philosophy is anything better than innocent but useless trifling, hair-splitting distinctions, and controversies on matters concerning which knowledge is impossible.

This view of philosophy appears to result, partly from a wrong conception of the ends of life, partly from a wrong conception of the kind of goods which philosophy strives to achieve. Physical science, through the medium of inventions, is useful to innumerable people who are wholly ignorant of it; thus the study of physical science is to be recommended, not only, or primarily, because of the effect on the student, but rather because of the effect on mankind in general. This utility does not belong to philosophy. If the study of philosophy has any value at all for others than students of philosophy, it must be only indirectly, through its effects upon the lives of those who study it. It is in these effects, therefore, if anywhere, that the value of philosophy must be primarily sought.

But further, if we are not to fail in our endeavour to determine the value of philosophy, we must first free our minds from the prejudices of what are wrongly called "practical" men. The "practical" man, as this word is often used, is one

who recognizes only material needs, who realizes that men must have food for the body, but is oblivious of the necessity of providing food for the mind. If all men were well off, if poverty and disease had been reduced to their lowest possible point, there would still remain much to be done to produce a valuable society; and even in the existing world the goods of the mind are at least as important as the goods of the body. It is exclusively among the goods of the mind that the value of philosophy is to be found; and only those who are not indifferent to these goods can be persuaded that the study of philosophy is not a waste of time.

Philosophy, like all other studies, aims primarily at knowledge. The knowledge it aims at is the kind of knowledge which gives unity and system to the body of the sciences, and the kind which results from a critical examination of the grounds of our convictions, prejudices, and beliefs. But it cannot be maintained that philosophy has had any very great measure of success in its attempts to provide definite answers to its questions. If you ask a mathematician, a mineralogist, a historian, or any other man of learning, what definite body of truths has been ascertained by his science, his answer will last as long as you are willing to listen. But if you put the same question to a philosopher, he will, if he is candid, have to confess that his study has not achieved positive results such as have been achieved by other sciences. It is true that this is partly accounted for by the fact that, as soon as definite knowledge concerning any subject becomes

possible, this subject ceases to be called philosophy, and becomes a separate science. The whole study of the heavens, which now belongs to astronomy, was once included in philosophy; Newton's great work was called "the mathematical principles of natural philosophy." Similarly, the study of the human mind, which was a part of philosophy, has now been separated from philosophy and has become the science of psychology. Thus, to a great extent, the uncertainty of philosophy is more apparent than real: those questions which are already capable of definite answers are placed in the sciences, while those only to which, at present, no definite answer can be given, remain to form the residue which is called philosophy.

This is, however, only a part of the truth concerning the uncertainty of philosophy. There are many questions—and among them those that are of the profoundest interest to our spiritual life—which, so far as we can see, must remain insoluble to the human intellect unless its powers become of quite a different order from what they are now. Has the universe any unity of plan or purpose, or is it a fortuitous concourse of atoms? Is consciousness a permanent part of the universe, giving hope of indefinite growth in wisdom, or is it a transitory accident on a small planet on which life must ultimately become impossible? Are good and evil of importance to the universe or only to man? Such questions are asked by philosophy, and variously answered by various philosophers. But it would seem that, whether answers be otherwise discoverable or not, the answers suggested by philosophy are none of them demonstrably true. Yet, however slight may be the hope of discovering an answer, it is part of the business of philosophy to continue the consideration of such questions, to make us aware of their importance, to examine all the approaches to them, and to keep alive that speculative interest in the universe which is apt to be killed by confining ourselves to definitely ascertainable knowledge.

Many philosophers, it is true, have held that philosophy could establish the truth of certain answers to such fundamental questions. They

have supposed that what is of most importance in religious beliefs could be proved by strict demonstration to be true. In order to judge of such attempts, it is necessary to take a survey of human knowledge, and to form an opinion as to its methods and its limitations. On such a subject it would be unwise to pronounce dogmatically; but if [our] investigations...have not led us astray, we shall be compelled to renounce the hope of finding philosophical proofs of religious beliefs. We cannot, therefore, include as part of the value of philosophy any definite set of answers to such questions. Hence, once more, the value of philosophy must not depend upon any supposed body of definitely ascertainable knowledge to be acquired by those who study it.

The value of philosophy is, in fact, to be sought largely in its very uncertainty. The man who has no tincture of philosophy goes through life imprisoned in the prejudices derived from common sense, from the habitual beliefs of his age or his nation, and from convictions which have grown up in his mind without the cooperation or consent of his deliberate reason. To such a man the world tends to become definite, finite, obvious; common objects rouse no questions, and unfamiliar possibilities contemptuously rejected. As soon as we begin to philosophize, on the contrary, we find...that even the most everyday things lead to problems to which only very incomplete answers can be given. Philosophy, though unable to tell us with certainty what is the true answer to the doubts which it raises, is able to suggest many possibilities which enlarge our thoughts and free them from the tyranny of custom. Thus, while diminishing our feeling of certainty as to what things are, it greatly increases our knowledge as to what they may be; it removes the somewhat arrogant dogmatism of those who have never travelled into the region of liberating doubt, and it keeps alive our sense of wonder by showing familiar things in an unfamiliar aspect.

Apart from its utility in showing unsuspected possibilities, philosophy has a value—perhaps its chief value—through the greatness of the objects which it contemplates, and the freedom from narrow and personal aims resulting from this contemplation. The life of the instinctive man is shut up within the circle of his private interests: family and friends may be included, but the outer world is not regarded except as it may help or hinder what comes within the circle of instinctive wishes. In such a life there is something feverish and confined, in comparison with which the philosophic life is calm and free. The private world of instinctive interests is a small one, set in the midst of a great and powerful world which must, sooner or later, lay our private world in ruins. Unless we can so enlarge our interests as to include the whole outer world, we remain like a garrison in a beleaguered fortress, knowing that the enemy prevents escape and that ultimate surrender is inevitable. In such a life there is no peace, but a constant strife between the insistence of desire and the powerlessness of will. In one way or another, if our life is to be great and free, we must escape this prison and this strife.

One way of escape is by philosophic contemplation. Philosophic contemplation does not, in its widest survey, divide the universe into two hostile camps—friends and foes, helpful and hostile, good and bad-it views the whole impartially. Philosophic contemplation, when it is unalloyed, does not aim at proving that the rest of the universe is akin to man. All acquisition of knowledge is an enlargement of the Self, but this enlargement is best attained when it is not directly sought. It is obtained when the desire for knowledge is alone operative, by a study which does not wish in advance that its objects should have this or that character, but adapts the Self to the characters which it finds in its objects. This enlargement of Self is not obtained when, taking the Self as it is, we try to show that the world is so similar to this Self that knowledge of it is possible without any admission of what seems alien. The desire to prove this is a form of self-assertion and, like all self-assertion, it is an obstacle to the growth of Self which it desires, and of which the Self knows that it is capable. Self-assertion, in philosophic speculation as

elsewhere, views the world as a means to its own ends; thus it makes the world of less account than Self, and the Self sets bounds to the greatness of its goods. In contemplation, on the contrary, we start from the not-Self, and through its greatness the boundaries of Self are enlarged; through the infinity of the universe the mind which contemplates it achieves some share in infinity.

For this reason greatness of soul is not fostered by those philosophies which assimilate the universe to Man. Knowledge is a form of union of Self and not-Self; like all union, it is impaired by dominion, and therefore by any attempt to force the universe into conformity with what we find in ourselves. There is a widespread philosophical tendency towards the view which tells us that Man is the measure of all things, that truth is man-made, that space and time and the world of universals are properties of the mind, and that, if there be anything not created by the mind, it is unknowable and of no account for us. This view, if our previous discussions were correct, is untrue; but in addition to being untrue, it has the effect of robbing philosophic contemplation of all that gives it value, since it fetters contemplation to Self. What it calls knowledge is not a union with the not-Self, but a set of prejudices, habits, and desires, making an impenetrable veil between us and the world beyond. The man who finds pleasure in such a theory of knowledge is like the man who never leaves the domestic circle for fear his word might not be law.

The true philosophic contemplation, on the contrary, finds its satisfaction in every enlargement of the not-Self, in everything that magnifies the objects contemplated, and thereby the subject contemplating. Everything, in contemplation, that is personal or private, everything that depends upon habit, self-interest, or desire, distorts the object, and hence impairs the union which the intellect seeks. By thus making a barrier between subject and object, such personal and private things become a prison to the intellect. The free intellect will see as God might see, without a *here* and *now*, without hopes and fears,

without the trammels of customary beliefs and traditional prejudices, calmly, dispassionately, in the sole and exclusive desire of knowledge knowledge as impersonal, as purely contemplative, as it is possible for man to attain. Hence also the free intellect will value more the abstract and universal knowledge into which the accidents of private history do not enter, than the knowledge brought by the senses, and dependent, as such knowledge must be, upon an exclusive and personal point of view and a body whose senseorgans distort as much as they reveal.

The mind which has become accustomed to the freedom and impartiality of philosophic contemplation will preserve something of the same freedom and impartiality in the world of action and emotion. It will view its purposes and desires as parts of the whole, with the absence of insistence that results from seeing them as infinitesimal fragments in a world of which all the rest is unaffected by any one man's deeds. The impartiality which, in contemplation, is the unalloyed desire for truth, is the very same quality of mind which, in action, is justice, and in emotion is that

universal love which can be given to all, and not only to those who are judged useful or admirable. Thus contemplation enlarges not only the objects of our thoughts, but also the objects of our actions and our affections: it makes us citizens of the universe, not only of one walled city at war with all the rest. In this citizenship of the universe consists man's true freedom, and his liberation from the thraldom of narrow hopes and fears.

Thus, to sum up our discussion of the value of philosophy: Philosophy is to be studied, not for the sake of any definite answers to its questions since no definite answers can, as a rule, be known to be true, but rather for the sake of the questions themselves; because these questions enlarge our conception of what is possible, enrich our intellectual imagination and diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes the mind against speculation; but above all because, through the greatness of the universe which philosophy contemplates, the mind also is rendered great, and becomes capable of that union with the universe which constitutes its highest good.



Reason and Religious Belief

HAT CAN REASON TELL US about such vast topics as the origin of the universe and the existence and nature of God? Most of us have beliefs about these matters—beliefs derived from religious authorities or based on faith; but is there any way to demonstrate that these beliefs are reasonable or unreasonable? This question provides the unifying theme for the readings in Part II.

Traditional arguments for the existence of God are often divided into two groups: those whose premises are justified a posteriori (based on experience) and those whose premises are known a priori (independently of experience). In fact, however, only one mode of argument has ever purported to be wholly independent of experience namely, the **ontological argument**, invented by St. Anselm in the eleventh century and defended in one form or another by Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz in the seventeenth century. (For Descartes's version of the argument, see his Fifth Meditation.) According to this argument, the very concept of God (or definition of the word *God*) entails that God must exist. If the argument is correct, anyone who has an idea of God—even if that person has no knowledge whatever of the kind derived from sense experience—has conclusive rational grounds for believing that God exists. The ontological argument still has defenders among philosophers of religion today, but among those who reject it, there is little agreement over precisely what is wrong with the argument. One classic and one recent discussion of the argument are included here. The brief but famous reply of Gaunilo, a monk who was a contemporary of Anselm's, appears here, and is complemented by an article that reflects some current thinking regarding the famous argument. William L. Rowe's essay sets forth Anselm's argument clearly, step by step (including steps that are only implicit in Anselm's own formulation), summarizes the three most important objections to the argument, and then presents his own criticism. Rowe concludes that the ontological argument is defective but is nevertheless a "work of genius," which, despite its apparent simplicity, raises philosophical questions about the nature of existence that are subtle and fascinating in their own right.

Other arguments for God's existence are often called a priori, but these always contain at least one premise that asserts some simple experiential fact. Factual premises summarizing some facet of our experience are found in the various versions of the **cosmological argument**—illustrated in this section by the selections from St. Thomas Aquinas and Samuel Clarke. For the first three of his "Five Ways," Aquinas begins each argument by citing a familiar fact of experience: Some things are in motion; there are causes and effects; things are generated and corrupted. He then tries to show that this fact can be explained only by the existence of God, because alternative explanations lead to logical absurdities. In his second article in this section, Rowe examines the

cosmological argument in the form given it by Samuel Clarke and other seventeenthand eighteenth-century philosophers. Put simply, the argument goes as follows:

- 1. Every being (that exists or ever did exist) is either a dependent being or a self-existent being.
- 2. Not every being can be a dependent being.
- 3. Therefore, there exists a self-existent being.

The argument clearly is valid; that is, if its premises are true, then its conclusion is true. But the premises, especially the second, are highly controversial. Rowe reviews the dialectic of the debate, pro and con, over the truth of the second premise, before cautiously concluding that the premise has not yet been conclusively shown to be true.

Both the ontological and the cosmological arguments are **deductive** in form; that is, they purport to demonstrate that if their premises are true, then their conclusions must necessarily be true. It is logically impossible for a valid deductive argument to have both true premises and false conclusion. The teleological argument (more commonly called "the argument from design") for God's existence is more modest. It argues not that its conclusion follows necessarily from its premises, but only that its premises establish a probability that the conclusion is true. It is therefore what logicians call an **inductive argument**. The famous argument from design is given classic formulations in William Paley's Natural Theology (1802), and by Cleanthes, a character in David Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (1779). In an essay specially commissioned for this book, philosopher Michael Ruse provides a brief history of the argument(s) from design, along with a philosophical critique of classic and newer versions of the argument.

A standard reading of the argument from design interprets it as an inductive argument. More precisely, it is an argument by analogy, with the following form:

- 1. a, b, c, and d all have properties P and Q.
- 2. α , b, and c all have property R as well.
- 3. Therefore, d has property R too (probably).

The more similar d is to a, b, and c, the more probable is the conclusion. Cleanthes' argument can be rendered as follows:

- 1. Boats, houses, watches, and the whole experienced world have such properties as "mutual adjustment of parts to whole" and "curious adapting of means to ends."
- 2. Boats, houses, and watches have the further property of having been produced by design.
- 3. Therefore, it is probable that the universe also has this further property—that it, too, was produced by design.

The conclusion of this argument—that a designer of the world exists—has the same logical role as a scientific hypothesis designed to explain the facts of experience, and must be accepted or rejected according to whether it meets the criteria of adequacy by which hypotheses are appraised in science and in everyday life.

In Hume's Dialogues, the case against the argument from design is stated with great force and ingenuity by Philo, probably speaking for Hume himself. The

analogies cited by the argument, he claims, are weak, partly because we know only one small part of the universe and cannot with confidence infer from it the nature of the whole. Moreover, he argues, there are other equally plausible ways of accounting for the observed order in the world. One of these alternative explanations, called "The Epicurean Hypothesis" by Philo in Part VIII of the *Dialogues*, bears a striking resemblance to the Darwinian theory that biological adaptations are the result of chance variations and the survival of the fittest.

After canvassing some classic arguments for God's existence, and some replies, we come to what is perhaps the strongest of the arguments of the other side—namely, the problem of evil. Parts X and XI of Hume's *Dialogues* contain one of the most famous discussions of this problem, so central to religious belief. Here Philo concedes that if the existence of God has already been established by some a priori argument, then perhaps one can account for the appearance of evil in the world. But, he goes on to argue, one cannot infer the existence of an all-good and all-powerful being from the appearance of evil; that is, the former can hardly be an *explanation* of the latter.

In the subsection devoted entirely to the problem of evil, the great Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky dramatically sets the stage for the philosophical discussion that follows by showing how the problem can arise in human experience. Dostoevsky's excerpt (from his novel The Brothers Karamazov) is complemented by two sets of contemporary discussions of this problem.

The first reading is focused on the so-called *logical problem of evil.* J. L. Mackie's now classic critique of theism is perhaps the best-known presentation of this problem. Mackie claims that the idea of an all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good God is logically incoherent, given the existence of evil in our world. Logically speaking, claims Mackie, a perfect God is one who is (among other things) able and willing to eradicate evil. Since evil exists, God either does not exist or does exist but is not perfect. In short, the very idea of an omnipotent, omniscient, and perfectly good God logically requires that any such being eliminate evil. So it is logically incoherent to suppose that a perfect God can coexist with evil.

We next offer a reply on behalf of theism by Peter van Inwagen. Van Inwagen offers what is known as a *defense*—an effort to construct a plausible explanation of the world's ills on the assumption that a just God exists. In other words, van Inwagen begins not by arguing for God's existence, or for why it is positively morally good to allow the sufferings we see around us, but rather by trying to show that if we assume God's existence, then there are intelligible, reasonable possibilities that can account for the breadth of the harm that humans and animals suffer in our world. Van Inwagen's preferred possibility relies on the so-called **free will defense**. **Moral evil** (wickedness), according to a predominant strain of Christian teaching, is a necessary by-product of human free will—indeed, the price we pay for freedom—and it is impossible, on this line of thought, for God to have created perfectly free creatures who always behave in a perfectly good way. God is a just and loving God, for He cared enough about us to endow us with something of very great value: free will. Being free, we sometimes make mistakes. The misery in this world is properly charged to our misdeeds, rather than God's culpability. A world with free will, and the suffering it sometimes engenders, is a better world than one in which human beings are mere automata.

B. C. Johnson takes direct aim at van Inwagen's kind of theodicy, finding no contradiction in the thought of beings perfectly free and perfectly virtuous. In a

nutshell, Johnson's argument is that God could have created a world inhabited by such people. That world would have been far better than ours. Therefore, if God were perfect, he'd have created such a world. He didn't. Therefore, the perfect God of classical monotheism doesn't exist.

Some of Johnson's many critical arguments echo Mackie's skepticism, seeking to show that it is logically impossible for evil and a perfect God to coexist. But Johnson also develops a variety of evidential arguments from evil. These do not assert that the idea of a perfect God is logically incoherent. There could be such a being. But, given the vast evidence we have of avoidable suffering, the odds are very good that God does not exist. This is thus an inductive argument; it seeks to establish that the probability of atheism is very high, given our evidence. On this skeptical view, God might yet exist, though our best evidence says that He doesn't.

We conclude this chapter with Michael Murray and Michael Rea's rigorous analysis of both the logical and evidential arguments from evil. After reconstructing the sharpest versions of both forms of these arguments, Murray and Rea carefully identify the central assumptions that underlie the anti-theists' arguments from evil. Though they do not pretend to offer the final word on these matters, Murray and Rea nicely identify the necessary steps that theists need to make in order to defend against these criticisms, while also showing what further work atheists need to do in order to adequately support their skepticism. Murray and Rea conclude with a helpful survey of the important theodicies that have been advanced by theists in an effort to show that the existence of evil is fully compatible with the existence of a just God.

What if it should turn out (as many philosophers now believe) that all traditional arguments for the existence of God are defective, or at least inconclusive? Would it follow that religious belief is unreasonable? Not necessarily. Some believers have claimed that the grounds of their belief have nothing to do with argument, but rather derive from a direct experience of deity (a "mystic experience"). These believers cannot prove that God exists, but they cannot prove that they themselves exist either. In both cases, they claim to know directly, by immediate confrontation, that something exists, and argue that further proof is unnecessary.

Although they have nothing to do with argument, mystical experiences might nevertheless be considered a kind of "evidence" for their attendant beliefs. The question posed by the final chapter of Part II, however, is whether beliefs based on no evidence at all can nonetheless be, in some circumstances, reasonable. In his selection here, Kelly James Clark defends an affirmative answer to this question. He argues that we already accept the credibility of certain nonreligious beliefs on the basis of no evidence at all, and it is quite reasonable to do so. If we criticize the religious believer for lack of evidence, then, to be consistent, we must abandon many eminently reasonable beliefs. Since, in the end, it would not be rational to abandon them, it wouldn't be rational for the theist to abandon her religious beliefs either.

W. K. Clifford argues emphatically for the negative and affirms his own rationalistic "ethic of belief"—namely, that "it is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone to believe anything upon insufficient evidence." The seventeenth-century mathematicianphilosopher Blaise Pascal had argued for the reasonableness of a kind of "bet" on God's existence even in the absence of all evidence, urging that it costs little to believe in God and act accordingly even if God in fact does not exist, whereas there is an infinite amount to lose by not believing if in fact God exists. Many Christian fideists (those whose belief is based on faith rather than argument), including William James, have found the unveiled appeal to self-interest in Pascal's "wager" to be a kind of embarrassment. James, in his famous "The Will to Believe," disowns Pascal but goes on to explain in his own way why belief in the absence of evidence can in some circumstances be reasonable. (Careful readers might well ask themselves, however, whether James's strict conditions for the proper exercise of "the will to believe" are in fact ever satisfied.) If there is one thing that James, the nineteenth-century Protestant, has in common with Pascal, the seventeenth-century Catholic, it is the conviction that the primary function of religious belief is not simply to allay philosophical curiosity about things. Both writers are aware that, to many, religious belief is a vital practical need, and each in his own way urges this to be taken into account when the reasonableness of belief is assessed.

The last pair of offerings in the philosophy of religion sound a decidedly skeptical note. Central to many religions is the idea of literally miraculous divine intervention. Many think that religious faith can receive rational support from warranted belief in miracles. Lawrence Shapiro, in an article written expressly for this book, explains what miracles are and must be if they are to play this central role. He sides with Hume and others in claiming that we never have better evidence for thinking that what we have experienced is a genuine miracle, as opposed to some phenomenon subject to scientific or psychological explanation. To the extent that our religious beliefs are grounded in the view that we (or others we know) have experienced miracles, our religious beliefs are unjustified. Simon Blackburn then returns to Pascal's wager and offers a contemporary critique of the religious belief based on the betting strategy that Pascal endorses.

CHAPTER 1

THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF GOD

1.1 The Ontological Argument, from *Proslogion*

ANSELM OF CANTERBURY

Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109) was Archbishop of Canterbury.

CHAPTER II: THAT GOD TRULY **EXISTS**

Therefore, O God, you who give understanding to faith, provide for me so that I might understand, as much as you see fit, that you exist just

as we believe you do and that you are what we believe you to be. Now we believe that you are something than which nothing greater can be conceived. But is it possible that something of such a nature does not really exist, since "the fool said in his heart: 'there is no God'"? But

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certainly, even the fool himself, when he hears this phrase of mine: "something than which nothing greater can be conceived," understands what he hears; and what he understands is in his intellect, even if he does not understand that this thing actually exists. For it is one thing for an object to be in the intellect, and another thing to understand that that object exists. For when a painter conceives in advance what he will make, he has it in his intellect, but he does not yet think that it exists, because he has not yet made it. Once he has painted it, however, he both has it in his intellect and understands that it exists because he has now made it. Therefore, even the fool must concede that there exists in the intellect something than which nothing greater can be conceived, since he understands this when he hears it, and whatever is understood is in the intellect. And certainly the greatest conceivable being cannot exist solely in the intellect. For if it exists solely in the intellect, it can be conceived to exist in reality as well, which is greater. Therefore, if the greatest conceivable being exists only in the intellect, then the greatest conceivable being itself is that than which something greater can be conceived. But this clearly is impossible. Therefore, there cannot be any doubt that the greatest conceivable being exists both in the intellect and in reality.

CHAPTER III: THAT HE CANNOT BE THOUGHT NOT TO EXIST

And certainly He so truly exists, that He cannot be conceived not to exist. For something can be conceived to exist which cannot be conceived not to exist, and this is greater than something that can be conceived not to exist. For this reason, if the greatest conceivable being can be conceived not to exist, then the greatest conceivable being is not the greatest conceivable being, which is absurd. Therefore, there so truly exists a greatest conceivable being that he cannot even be conceived not to exist.

And this is you, O Lord our God. You therefore so truly exist, O Lord my God, that you cannot be conceived not to exist. And rightly so. For if some mind were able to conceive

something better than you, a creature would rise above its creator and would judge its creator, which is clearly absurd. Indeed, everything other than you alone can be conceived not to exist. Therefore, you alone of all things exist most truly, and therefore of all things have being to the highest degree, since any other thing does not exist so truly, and therefore has less existence. Why, then, did the fool say in his heart: "there is no God," since it is so obvious to any rational mind that you of all things exist to the highest degree? Why? Because he is stupid and a fool.

CHAPTER IV: HOW THE FOOL SAID IN HIS HEART WHAT CANNOT BE CONCEIVED

And yet how did he say in his heart what he was not able to conceive; or how could he not conceive what he said in his heart, since to say something in the heart and to conceive it are one and the same? Because if he truly, and yes he did truly, both conceive something because he said it in his heart and did not say it in his heart because he could not conceive it, then there is not only one way in which something is said to be in the heart or conceived. For in one sense something is conceived when a word signifying the thing is conceived; but in another sense, when the object itself is conceived. And so in the first sense God can be conceived not to exist, but certainly not in the second sense. Certainly no one who understands what God is can conceive that God does not exist, even if he should say these words in his heart, either without any meaning or with some strange meaning. For God is the greatest conceivable being. And whoever properly understands this at least understands that this same being so exists that even in thought it cannot fail to exist. Whoever, therefore, understands that God exists in this way cannot conceive that he does not exist.

I give thanks to you, good Lord, I give thanks to you, since what I first believed through your gift I now, through your illumination, so understand that even if I did not want to believe that you exist, still, I cannot fail to understand that you exist.

CHAPTER V: THAT GOD IS WHATEVER IT IS BETTER TO BE THAN NOT BE; AND THAT, **EXISTING SOLELY THROUGH** HIMSELF, HE MAKES ALL OTHER THINGS OUT OF NOTHING

What, then, are you, O Lord God, than whom nothing greater can be conceived? But what are you except that greatest being of all, existing solely through itself and making all other things out of nothing? For whatever is not this is less than the greatest that might be conceived. But this cannot be conceived about you. What goodness, therefore, is lacking to the supreme good, through which every good exists? You are thus just, truthful, happy, and whatever else it is better to be than not be. For it is better to be just than unjust, happy than unhappy.

1.2 On Behalf of the Fool

GAUNILO OF MARMOUTIERS

Gaunilo was an eleventh-century Benedictine monk whose fame rests on his critique of Anselm's ontological argument.

WHAT SOMEONE, ON BEHALF OF THE FOOL, RESPONDS TO THESE **ARGUMENTS**

To someone who either doubts or denies that there exists any such being than which nothing greater can be thought, it is said [by Anselm] that the existence of this being is proved in the following way: First, the very one who denies or doubts the existence of this being already has the being in his intellect since upon hearing it spoken of, he understands what it is said. Further, it is necessary that the being which he understands not only exists in his intellect, but also in reality. This is proved in the following way: To exist also in reality is greater than existing only in the intellect. So, if it were to exist only in the intellect, then whatever also existed in reality would be greater than it. And, thus, that which is greater than all others would be less than something and it would not be greater than all others. This is clearly a contradiction. Therefore, this conclusion is necessary: the being greater than all others, which has already been proved to exist in the intellect, does not exist only in the intellect, rather it also exists in reality—otherwise, it could not be greater than all others.

The doubter or denier can perhaps make the following reply [in response to the argument above]: The being than which nothing greater can be thought is claimed to exist in my intellect only because of the mere reason that I understand what is said. By the same reasoning, could I not also be said to have in my intellect all kind of false things which in no way exist in themselves since if someone were to speak of them I would be able to understand whatever he said?

Suppose that perhaps it is established that this being is such that it cannot exist in thought in the same way as all manner of false and unreal things. Therefore, I am not said to think or to have in *thought* this being of which I have heard. Rather, I am said to understand it or to have it in my intellect since I cannot think of it in any way,

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except by understanding (i.e., by comprehending with certainty) that it exists in reality.

But if this were the case, the first difficulty is this: there would be no difference between having a thing in one's intellect at one time, and then understanding at a later time that the thing exists, as happens in the case of a painting, which exists first in the mind of the painter, and then later as a finished product. Secondly, it is nearly impossible to believe that when this being is spoken of and heard of, it is not able to be thought not to exist in the way that even God can be thought not to exist. For if this were the case, why was your whole argument addressed to someone who denies or doubts that such a being exists? Lastly, it must be proved to me by some compelling argument that this being is such that when it is thought of, the intellect immediately apprehends with certainty its indubitable existence. This is not proven to me by the claim that the being exists in my intellect since I understood what I heard spoken about it. For I still think that in a similar way all kinds of unreal and even false things would be able to exist in my intellect when I heard them spoken of by someone whose words I have understood. Those false and unreal things would exist in my intellect even more so if I-who do not yet believe that this being exists—were to be deceived into believing that those things exist, as often happens.

Accordingly, the example of the painter, who already has in his intellect the picture he is going to paint, does not adequately support your argument. For that picture, before it is made, exists in the painter's art; and any such thing in the art of a craftsman is nothing other than a part of his intelligence. Augustine says: "When a carpenter is going to make a chest, he first has it in his art. The chest which he makes is not alive; but the chest which is in his art is alive because the soul of the craftsman, in which all of these things exist before they are made, is alive." Now are these things alive in the living soul of the craftsman for any reason other than the fact that they are nothing but the knowledge and intelligence of his soul? But in contrast, except for those things which pertain to the nature of the mind itself, every true thing when heard of or thought of is apprehended by the intellect, and without a doubt the true thing is distinct from the intellect which understands it. Therefore, even if it were true that there exists something than which a greater cannot be thought, nevertheless when it was heard of and understood it would not be like a picture which exists in the intellect of the painter before it is painted.

There is another argument, mentioned earlier, which adds to this one: When I hear of that being which is greater than all others which can be thought (which, it is claimed, can be nothing other than God himself), I am not able to think of this being or to have it in my intellect by making reference to the genus or species of a thing known to me-just as I am, likewise, unable to think of God himself (whom for this same reason, I am able to think of as not existing). For I am neither acquainted with the very being itself nor am I able to know it through being acquainted with another being like it, since even you maintain that there cannot be anything else like it.

Suppose I were to hear something said about a man unknown by me and whom I was not even sure existed. Through specific or general knowledge of what a man is or what men are, I would still be able to think of this man by referring to the real thing which a man is. And if it should happen that the one who told me about this man was lying, and in fact, that man whom I thought of does not exist, it is nevertheless still the case that my thought of him relied on a reference to real a thing-not a real thing which is that very man, but rather the real thing which any man is. But when I hear spoken the words "God" or "something greater than all others," I am not able to have them in my thought or intellect in the same way as this false thing [i.e., that unreal man]. I was able to think of that false thing by making reference to a real thing known to me. But I can only think of "God" or "something greater than all others" on the basis of words alone; and relying on words alone, one is scarcely or never able to think of any true thing. Indeed when one thinks

of a true thing on the basis of words alone, one thinks not so much about the word itself (which no doubt is a real thing, i.e., the sound of the letters or syllables), but more so about the heard word's meaning. But one cannot think of "God" or "something greater than all others" as someone who knows the meaning of a word usually does, namely by thinking of a real thing or a true thing existing in one's thought. Rather, in this case, one thinks in the manner of one who does not know a word's meaning: he thinks only of the impression the hearing of the word made on his mind and he tries to imagine its meaning. It would be amazing if he were ever able to reach the truth of what the word means in this way. Therefore, when I hear and understand one speaking about "something greater than all others which can be thought," in this way and no other way—do I have it in my intellect. All of this is said against the claim that the supreme nature already exists in my intellect.

Then this further argument is given to me [by Anselm]: This being necessarily exists in reality since if it did not exist, whatever does exist in reality would be greater than it, and for this reason, that which was already proven to exist in the intellect would not be greater than all others. To this argument, I respond: If we are to say that a thing which cannot even be thought on the basis of the true nature of any real thing exists in the intellect, then I do not deny that this being exists in my intellect. Since one cannot derive from this supposition the further conclusion that this being also exists in reality, I will not concede to the being's real existence until it is proved to me by an indubitable argument.

And when he says that this being exists [in reality] because otherwise that which is greater than all others would not be greater than all others, he does not pay enough attention to the person to whom he is speaking. For I do not yet admit—in fact I doubt or even deny that this being is greater than any real thing. Nor do I accord to that being any existence except for the kind of existence (if it is to be called "existence") which an unknown thing has when the mind imagines it on the basis of hearing words

spoken about it. How, then, is it proved to me that this greatest being exists as a real thing because it is apparent that the being is greater than all others? For I still doubt or even deny that this is apparent—indeed so much so that I say that this "greater" being does not even exist in my intellect or thought in the way in which many doubtful and uncertain things do. First it must be made certain to me that this greatest being truly exists somewhere; and only then, will the fact that it is greater than all others prove to me without doubt that it also subsists in itself.

For example, some people say that there is an island somewhere in the ocean. Some call it "Lost Island" because of the difficulty—or rather the impossibility—of finding what does not exist. According to the fable, the island gives forth an uncountable abundance of all riches and delights, and is even more plentiful than the Isles of the Blessed. Since it has no owner or inhabitant, it wholly surpasses every land inhabited by men in its abundance of riches. Suppose that someone were to tell all of this to me. I would easily understand what is said, as there is nothing difficult in it. But if he were to then say, as if it logically followed: You can no more doubt that the island surpassing all other lands truly exists somewhere in reality. For you do not doubt that it exists in your intellect. Because it is more excellent to exist not merely in the intellect, but also in reality; therefore the island must necessarily exist in reality. For if it did not, every other land which exists in reality would be more excellent than it. And, so this most excellent island, which you already understood, would not be most excellent. If he were to try to prove to me with these arguments that one should no longer doubt that this island truly exists, then I would think he were joking or I would not know who to judge as the most foolish—either me, if I were to concede to him, or him, if he were to think that he proved the island's existence with some degree of certainty. For he would first have to show that the island's excellence is in my intellect in the way in which a real, undoubtedly existing thing is and not in any way as how a false or uncertain thing is.

The fool might make these responses to the arguments brought against him at the outset: When it is next asserted that "this greatest being is such that it cannot even be thought not to exist, and this in turn is proved by the claim that otherwise it would not be greater than all others"; the fool can make the very same response and say, "When did I say that such a being-i.e., one which is greater than all others—exists in reality, so that from this claim it could be proved to me that it exists so greatly that it cannot even be thought not to exist?" For first it must be proved by some most certain argument that there exists some highest nature—i.e., one that is greater and better than all others which exist—so that from this we can go on to prove all of the qualities which a being greater and better than all others must necessarily have. But when it is said that this cannot be thought not to exist, perhaps it would be better to say that it cannot be understood not to exist or even to be capable of not existing. For according to the strict meaning of the word [i.e., to understand], false things cannot be understood—but they are able to be thought in a

way, just as the fool is able to think that God does not exist.

Now, I also know most certainly that I exist, but nevertheless I know that I am able not to exist. I know with absolute certainty that the highest being, namely God, both exists and is not capable of not existing. I do not know whether I am able to think of myself as not existing while I know with certainty that I exist. But if I am able to do this, why couldn't I also do it with whatever other thing which I know to exist with the same certainty? And if I am not able to this, then being "unable to be thought not to exist" will not be a unique feature proper to God alone.

The rest of that book is argued so truthfully, so clearly, and magnificently, full of so much that is useful, and fragrant with the scent of holy and pious affection, that it should in no way be scorned because of the claims in the beginning which are indeed rightly sensed, but less firmly argued. Rather, those claims should be argued more compellingly, and then the whole book can be received with great honor and praise.

1.3 The Ontological Argument

WILLIAM L. ROWE

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Arguments for the existence of God are commonly divided into a posteriori and a priori arguments. An a posteriori argument depends on a principle or premise that can be known only by means of our experience of the world. An a priori argument, on the other hand, purports to rest on principles which can be known independently of our experience of the world, just by reflecting on and understanding them. Of the three major

arguments for the existence of God—the Cosmological, Teleological, and Ontological—only the last is entirely a priori. In the Cosmological argument one starts from some simple fact about the world, such as the fact that it contains things which are caused to exist by other things. In the Teleological argument a somewhat more complicated fact about the world serves as a starting point: the fact that the world exhibits order and

design. In the Ontological argument, however, one begins simply with a concept of God.

I

It is perhaps best to think of the Ontological argument as a family of arguments, each member of which begins with a concept of God, and by appealing only to a priori principles, endeavors to establish that God actually exists. Within this family of arguments the most important historically is the argument set forth by Anselm in the second chapter of his *Proslogium* (A Discourse).¹ Indeed, the Ontological argument begins with chapter II of Anselm's Proslogium. In an earlier work, Monologium (A Soliloguy), Anselm had endeavored to establish the existence and nature of God by weaving together several versions of the Cosmological argument. In the Preface to Proslogium Anselm remarks that after the publication of Monologium he began to search for a single argument which alone would establish the existence and nature of God. After much strenuous but unsuccessful effort, he reports that he sought to put the project out of his mind in order to turn to more fruitful tasks. The idea, however, continued to haunt him until one day the proof he had so strenuously sought became clear to his mind. Anselm sets forth this proof in the second chapter of *Proslogium*.

Before discussing Anselm's argument in step-by-step fashion, there are certain concepts that will help us understand some of the central ideas of the argument. Suppose we draw a vertical line in our imagination and agree that on the left side of our line are all the things which exist, while on the right side of the line are all the things which don't exist. We might then begin to make a list of some of the things on both sides of our imaginary line, as follows:

Things Which Exist	Things Which Don't Exist
The Empire State Building	The Fountain of Youth
The planet Mars	The Abominable Snowman
Dogs	Unicorns

Now each of the things (or sorts of things) listed thus far has (have) the following feature: it (they) logically might have been on the other side of the line. The Fountain of Youth, for example, is on the right side of the line, but *logically* there is no absurdity in the idea that it might have been on the left side of the line. Similarly, although dogs do exist, we surely can imagine without logical absurdity that they might not have existed, that they might have been on the right side of the line. Let us then record this feature of the things thus far listed by introducing the idea of a *contingent thing* as a thing that logically might have been on the other side of the line from the side it actually is on. The planet Mars and the Abominable Snowman are contingent things, even though the former happens to exist and the latter does not.

Suppose we add to our list the phrase "the object which is completely round and completely square at the same time" on the right side of our line. The round square, however, unlike the other things thus far listed on the right side of our line, is something that logically could not have been on the left side of the line. Noting this, let us introduce the idea of an impossible thing as a thing that is on the right side of the line and logically could not have been on the left side of the line.

Looking again at our list, we wonder if there is anything on the left side of our imaginary line which, unlike the things thus far listed on the left side, logically could not have been on the right side of the line. At this point we don't have to answer this question, but it is useful to have a concept to apply to any such things, should there be any. Accordingly, let us say that a necessary thing is a thing on the left side of our imaginary line and logically could not have been on the right side of the line.

Finally, a *possible thing* is any thing that is either on the left side of our imaginary line or logically might have been on the left side of the line. Possible things, then, will be all those things that are not impossible things—that is, all those things that are either contingent or necessary. If there are no necessary things, then all possible

things will be contingent and all contingent things will be possible. If there is a necessary thing, however, then there will be a possible thing which is not contingent.

Armed with these concepts, we can clarify certain important distinctions and ideas in Anselm's thought. The first of these is his distinction between existence in the understanding and existence in reality. Anselm's notion of existence in reality is the same as our notion of existence; that is, being on the left side of our imaginary line. Since the Fountain of Youth is on the right side of the line, it does not exist in reality. The things which exist are, to use Anselm's phrase, the things which exist in reality. Anselm's notion of existence in the understanding, however, is not the same as any idea we normally employ. When we think of a certain thing, say the Fountain of Youth, then that thing, on Anselm's view, exists in the understanding. Also, when we think of an existing thing like the Empire State Building, it, too, exists in the understanding. So some of the things on both sides of our imaginary line exist in the understanding, but only those on the left side of our line exist in reality. Are there any things that don't exist in the understanding? Undoubtedly there are, for there are things, both existing and non-existing, of which we have not really thought. Now suppose I assert that the Fountain of Youth does not exist. Since to meaningfully deny the existence of something I have to have that thing in mind, I have to think of it, it follows on Anselm's view that whenever someone asserts that some thing does not exist, that thing does exist in the understanding.² So in asserting that the Fountain of Youth does not exist, I imply that the Fountain of Youth does exist in the understanding. And in asserting that it does not exist I have asserted (on Anselm's view) that it does not exist in reality. This means that my simple assertion amounts to the somewhat more complex claim that the Fountain of Youth exists in the understanding but does not exist in reality—in short, that the Fountain of Youth exists *only* in the understanding.

We can now understand why Anselm insists that anyone who hears of God, thinks about God, or even denies the existence of God is, nevertheless, committed to the view that God exists in the understanding. Also, we can understand why Anselm treats what he calls "the fool's claim" that God does not exist as the claim that God exists only in the understanding—that is, that God exists in the understanding but does not exist in reality.

In Monologium Anselm sought to prove that among those beings which do exist there is one which is the greatest, highest, and the best. But in Proslogium he undertakes to prove that among those beings which exist there is one which is not just the greatest among existing beings, but is such that no conceivable being is greater. We need to distinguish these two ideas: (1) a being than which no existing being is greater, and (2) a being than which no conceivable being is greater. If the only things in existence were a stone, a frog, and a man, the last of these would satisfy our first idea but not our second—for we can conceive of a being (an angel or God) greater than a man. Anselm's idea of God, as he expresses it in *Proslogium* II, is the same as (2) above; it is the idea of "a being than which nothing greater can be conceived." It will facilitate our understanding of Anselm's argument if we make two slight changes in the way he has expressed his idea of God. For his phrase I shall substitute the following: "the being than which none greater is possible."3 This idea says that if a certain being is God then no possible being can be greater than it, or conversely, if a certain being is such that it is even possible for there to be a being greater than it, then that being is not God. What Anselm proposes to prove, then, is that the being than which none greater is possible exists in reality. If he proves this he will have proved that God, as he conceives of Him, exists in reality.

But what does Anselm mean by "greatness"? Is a building, for example, greater than a man? In Monologium, chapter II, Anselm remarks: "But I do not mean physically great, as a material object is great, but that which, the greater it is, is the better or the more worthy—wisdom, for instance." Contrast wisdom with size. Anselm is saying that wisdom is something that contributes

to the greatness of a thing. If a thing comes to have more wisdom than it did before then (given that its other characteristics remain the same), that thing has become a greater, better, more worthy thing than it was. Wisdom, Anselm is saying, is a great-making quality. However, the mere fact that something increases in size (physical greatness) does not make that thing a better thing than it was before, so size is not a greatmaking quality. By "greater than" Anselm means "better than," "superior to," or "more worthy than," and he believes that some characteristics, like wisdom and moral goodness, are greatmaking characteristics in that anything which has them is a better thing than it would be (other characteristics of it remaining the same) were it to lack them.

We come now to what we may call the key idea in Anselm's Ontological argument. Anselm believes that existence in reality is a great-making quality. Does Anselm mean that anything that exists is a greater thing than anything that doesn't? Although he does not ask or answer the question, it is perhaps reasonable to believe that Anselm did not mean this. When he discusses wisdom as a great-making quality he is careful not to say that any wise thing is better than any unwise thing—for he recognizes that a just but unwise man might be a better being than a wise but unjust man. 4 I suggest that what Anselm means is that anything that doesn't exist but might have existed (is on the right side of our line but might have been on the left) would have been a greater thing if it had existed (if it had been on the left side of our line). He is not comparing two different things (one existing and one not existing) and saying that the first is therefore greater than the second. Rather, he is talking about *one* thing and pointing out that if it does not exist but might have existed, then it would have been a greater thing if it had existed. Using Anselm's distinction between existence in the understanding and existence in reality, we may express the key idea in Anselm's reasoning as follows: If something exists only in the understanding but might have existed in reality, then it might have been greater than it is. Since the

Fountain of Youth, for example, exists only in the understanding but (unlike the round square) might have existed in reality, it follows by Anselm's principle that the Fountain of Youth might have been a greater thing than it is.

П

We can now consider the step-by-step development of Anselm's Ontological argument. I shall use the term "God" in place of the longer phrase "the being than which none greater is possible"—wherever the term "God" appears we are to think of it as simply an abbreviation of the longer phrase.

1. God exists in the understanding.

As we have noted, anyone who hears of the being than which none greater is possible is, on Anselm's view, committed to premise (1).

2. God might have existed in reality (God is a possible being).

Anselm, I think, assumes the truth of (2) without making it explicit in his reasoning. By asserting (2) I do not mean to imply that God does not exist in reality, but that, unlike the round square, God is a possible being.

3. If something exists only in the understanding and might have existed in reality, then it might have been greater than it is.

As we noted, this is the key idea in Anselm's Ontological argument. It is intended as a general principle, true of anything whatever.

Steps (1)–(3) constitute the basic premises of Anselm's Ontological argument. From these three items, Anselm believes, it follows that God exists in reality. But how does Anselm propose to convince us that if we accept (1)-(3) we are committed by the rules of logic to accept his conclusion that God exists in reality? Anselm's procedure is to offer what is called a reductio ad absurdum proof of his conclusion. Instead of showing directly that the existence of God follows from steps (1)–(3), Anselm invites us to suppose that God does not exist (i.e., that the

conclusion he wants to establish is false) and then shows how this supposition, when conjoined with steps (1)-(3), leads to an absurd result, a result that couldn't possibly be true because it is contradictory. Since the supposition that God does not exist leads to an absurdity, that supposition must be rejected in favor of the conclusion that God does exist.

Does Anselm succeed in reducing the "fool's belief" that God does not exist to an absurdity? The best way to answer this question is to follow the steps of his argument.

4. Suppose God exists only in the understanding.

This supposition, as we saw earlier, is Anselm's way of expressing the belief that God does not exist.

5. God might have been greater than He is. $(2, 4, and 3)^5$

Step (5) follows from steps (2), (4), and (3). Since (3), if true, is true of anything whatever, it will be true of God. Therefore, (3) implies that if God exists only in the understanding and might have existed in reality, then God might have been greater than He is. If so, then given (2) and (4), (5) must be true. For what (3) says when applied to God is that given (2) and (4), it follows that (5).

6. God is a being than which a greater is possible. (5)

Surely if God is such that He logically might have been greater, then He is such than which a greater is possible.

We can now appreciate Anselm's reductio argument. He has shown that if we accept steps (1)–(4), we must accept step (6). But (6) is unacceptable; it is the absurdity Anselm was after. By replacing "God" in (6) with the longer phrase it abbreviates, we see that (6) amounts to the absurd assertion:

7. The being than which none greater is possible is a being than which a greater is possible.

Now since steps (1)–(4) have led us to an obviously false conclusion, and if we accept Anselm's basic premises (1)–(3) as true, then (4), the supposition that God exists only in the understanding, must be rejected as false. Thus we have shown that:

8. It is false that God exists only in the understanding.

But since premise (1) tells us that God does exist in the understanding and (8) tells us that God does not exist only there, we may infer that

9. God exists in reality as well as in the understanding. (1, 8)

Ш

Most of the philosophers who have considered this argument have rejected it because of a basic conviction that from the logical analysis of a certain idea or concept we can never determine that there exists in reality anything answering to that idea or concept. We may examine and analyse, for example, the idea of an elephant or the idea of a unicorn, but it is only by our experience of the world that we can determine that there exist things answering to our first idea and not to the second. Anselm, however, believes that the concept of God is utterly unique—from an analysis of this concept he believes that it can be determined that there exists in reality a being which answers to it. Moreover, he presents us with an argument to show that it can be done in the case of the idea of God. We can, of course, simply reject Anselm's argument on the grounds that it violates the basic conviction noted above. Many critics, however, have sought to prove more directly that it is a bad argument and to point out the particular step that is mistaken. Next we shall examine the three major objections that have been advanced by the argument's critics.

The first criticism was advanced by a contemporary of Anselm's, a monk named "Gaunilo," who wrote a response to Anselm entitled, "On Behalf of the Fool." Gaunilo sought to prove that Anselm's reasoning is mistaken by applying it to things other than God, things which we know don't exist. He took as his example the island than which none greater is possible. No such island really exists. But, argues Gaunilo, if Anselm's reasoning were correct we could show that such an island really does exist. For since it is greater to exist than not to exist, if the island than which none greater is possible doesn't exist then it is an island than which a greater is possible. But it is impossible for the island than which none greater is possible to be an island than which a greater is possible. Therefore, the island than which none greater is possible must exist. About this argument Gaunilo remarks:

If a man should try to prove to me by such reasoning that this island truly exists, and that its existence should no longer be doubted, either I should believe that he was jesting, or I know not which I ought to regard as the greater fool: myself, supposing I should allow this proof; or him, if he should suppose that he had established with any certainty the existence of this island.

Gaunilo's strategy is clear: by using the very same reasoning Anselm employs in his argument, we can prove the existence of things we know don't exist. Therefore, Anselm's reasoning in his proof of the existence of God must be mistaken. In reply to Gaunilo, Anselm insisted that his reasoning applies only to God and cannot be used to establish the existence of things other than God. Unfortunately, Anselm did not explain just why his reasoning cannot be applied to things like Gaunilo's island.

In defense of Anselm against Gaunilo's objection, there are two difficulties in applying Anselm's reasoning to things like Gaunilo's island. The first derives from the fact that Anselm's principle that existence is a great-making quality was taken to mean that if something does not exist then it is not as great α thing (being) as it would have been had it existed. Now if we use precisely this principle in Gaunilo's argument, all we will prove is that if Gaunilo's island does not exist then the island than which none greater is possible is an island than which a greater thing is possible. But this statement is not an absurdity.

For the island than which no greater *island* is possible can be something than which a greater thing is possible—an unsurpassable island may be a surpassable thing. (A perfect man might be a greater thing than a perfect island.) Consequently, if we follow Anselm's reasoning exactly, it does not appear that we can derive an absurdity from the supposition that the island than which none greater is possible does not exist.

A second difficulty in applying Anselm's reasoning to Gaunilo's island is that we must accept the premise that Gaunilo's island is a possible thing. But this seems to require us to believe that some finite, limited thing (an island) might have unlimited perfections. It is not at all clear that this is possible. Try to think, for example, of a hockey player than which none greater is possible. How fast would he have to skate? How many goals would he have to score in a game? How fast would he have to shoot the puck? Could he ever fall down, be checked, or receive a penalty? Although the phrase, "the hockey player than which none greater is possible," seems meaningful, as soon as we try to get a clear idea of what such a being would be like we discover that we can't form a coherent idea of it all. For we are being invited to think of some limited, finite thing—a hockey player or an island and then to think of it as exhibiting unlimited, infinite perfections. Perhaps, then, since Anselm's reasoning applies only to possible things, Anselm can reject its application to Gaunilo's island on the grounds that the island than which none greater is possible is, like the round square, an impossible thing.

By far the most famous objection to the Ontological argument was set forth by Immanuel Kant in the eighteenth century. According to this objection the mistake in the argument is its claim, implicit in premise (3), that existence is a quality or predicate that adds to the greatness of a thing. There are two parts to this claim: (1) existence is a quality or predicate, and (2) existence, like wisdom and unlike physical size, is a great-making quality or predicate. Someone might accept (1) but object to (2); the objection made famous by Kant, however, is directed