In his article, the contemporary philosopher William Rowe is not impressed by Gaunilo's objection. Why not?

The famous German philosopher, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804 CE), on the other hand, does not challenge the validity of the ontological argument. Instead, Kant rejects a key premise of the argument.

Which premise does Kant reject, and why does he do so?

PHIL 242-71, 80-100 Fall 2011 | Northwestern University, Carnegie Mellon University

Introduction to Philosophy

Discussion on Deductive Arguments

Many of the arguments we will see in this course aspire for a very strict form of rigor in attempting to establish their conclusions. Philosophers often want to claim that their conclusions come with a 100% guarantee of being true, provided that they have established the truth of their premises.

Deductive Argument: An argument where the premises are supposed to provide *conclusive* support for the conclusion.

We call a deductive argument that is "successful" a valid argument.

Deductively Valid Argument: An argument where if all the premises are true, then the conclusion must be true as well.

Notice that saying an argument is deductively valid does not mean that its premises are actually true. Indeed, an argument might have premises that are all blatantly false, and yet still be valid. The idea here is that it is absolutely impossible for the conclusion to be false when the premises are true. All of the inferences of a deductively valid argument are "perfect": each and every (sub-)conclusion must actually follow from the premises given to support it. This sets up a very strict standard for arguments to satisfy. Many fail.

Deductively Invalid Argument: An argument where it is possible for the conclusion to be false while the premises are true.

This does not mean that the premises are false—they may be, in fact, true. The point is that, for an invalid argument, there are (sub-)conclusions being inferred that need not actually follow from the premises. The easiest way to show that an argument is deductively invalid is to create a counter-example. That is, imagine a scenario where all the premises are 100% true, but then show that it is still possible (even if it is only with only a 0.00001% chance) that the conclusion could nevertheless be false. So if you can construct a possible situation consistent with the premises but not with the conclusion, then the argument is invalid. If you cannot do this, then the argument must be valid. While valid arguments have perfect inferences, this is not enough for a good argument. An argument to have good

premises; that is, the premises must actually be true.

Deductively Sound Argument: An argument that (1) is valid and (2) has premises that are all true.

This provides the primary standard for evaluating arguments in this course; it also sets the goal for which your own arguments should constantly aim.

As an example, consider the following argument:

Professor Gray must be a millionaire. After all, everyone who works in Qatar is a millionaire and Professor Gray works in Qatar.

This argument has the following diagram:

Everyone who works in Qatar is a millionaire.

Professor Gray is a millionaire.

In order to determine whether this argument is sound, you first need to check its validity. So suppose that the premises are, in fact, true. Would this make the conclusion 100% true? It turns out, yes it would. If everyone working in Qatar is a millionaire and Professor Gray works in Qatar, then it is not possible for Professor Gray not to be a millionaire. That is, there is no possible way to imagine that the premises are true and then show how the conclusion might still be false. In this case, the conclusion must follow. So the argument is indeed valid.

That said, are the premises actually true? Of course not. While Professor Gray does indeed work in Qatar (so the second premise is true), there are obviously people working in Qatar who are not millionaires (so the first premise is false). Therefore, while valid, the argument is not sound. So validity is not enough for a good argument!

Professor Gray works in Qatar

Now consider this second argument:

This argument has the following diagram:

Introduction to Philosophy

Discussion on Deductive Arguments

Now we can begin to assess Saint Anselm of Canterbury's version of the ontological argument, which we outlined last class. Recall this argument's diagram:



Is the conclusion actually true? What about the premises, are they actually true?

Professor Gray teaches philosophy. There are two independent reasons for believing this. First, the Earth has one moon. Second, Doha is the capital of Qatar.

STW-Nothing-GIP (God

God exists

Is this a deductively valid argument? Why or why not?

Is this argument deductively sound? Explain.

The Benedictine monk Gaunilo of Marmoutier, a contemporary of Anselm's, is not convinced that the ontological proof is deductively valid. In this discussion, keep in mind that Gaunilo certainly believes in God; he is not questioning or doubting God's existence. Instead, Gaunilo is questioning the argument. This is not uncommon: many Christian theologians and philosophers are extremely skeptical of the ontological proof. What is Gaunilo's objection to the ontological proof and why does this challenge the validity of the argument?

IP.	
_	God (STW-Nothing-GIP) is a possible thing.
	P ₂ : A contingent thing that fails to exist in the real world is less perfect than a necessary thing.
Noth n a n	ning-GIP) is less necessary thing.
ing- hing	GIP) is something g greater <i>is</i> possible.
d) is	also STW- <i>Some</i> thing-GIP.
(in t	the real world).