

The most famous criticism of the Ontological Argument was made by Kant. In his book *The Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant stated that “Existence or “Being” was not a predicate, but an idea of something which could be added to an idea of a thing. It is only the positing of a thing, or of certain purpose, as existing in them selves. If now we take the subject (God) with all its predicates and say “God is”, or “There is God”, we attach no new predicate to the concept of God, but only posit the subject in itself with all its predicates, and indeed hypothesize it as being an object that stands in relation to my concept. The content of both must be one and the same ... Otherwise stated, the real contains no more than the merely possible. A hundred real thalers (a unit of currency) do not contain the least coin more than a hundred possible thalers.”

In other words, Kant is saying that existence is not a predicate, it is not a property of something that exists. If one was asked to list the qualities of a dog, one would say it is brown, furry, small, it would not sound logically right to add – and exists. Or another example is considering a sentence “my future house will be better if, it will be insulated than if it will be not insulated “It would not make sense to say “my future house would be a better house if it exists, than if it doesn’t”. Linked in with this criticism was another great philosopher called Malcolm, who wrote the following:

“A king might desire that his next chancellor should have knowledge, wit, and resolution; but it is a absurd to add that the king’s desire is to have a chancellor who exists.”

But going back to Kant, who continued with his argument by saying that the proposition “God is almighty”, contains two concepts, God and almightiness. The word “is”, is not an additional predicate, but only serves to put the predicate in relation to the subject (possibly an opinionated argument, as some wouldn’t use the word “is” in certain sentences but use a different word).

Reason (by itself) cannot establish the existence of anything, in order to establish the existence of anything, reason must be used in union with experience. There are no analytic existential propositions, all are synthetic.

The qualities that we might describe for a possible perfect being would tell us what the being would be like if it existed. But if we say that the perfect being exists, we seem to be doing something different. We are not saying what the being is like , instead we are simply saying that there is something with all these characteristics. If a perfect being exists, what will make it perfect are such qualities as omniscience and omnipotence. But existence isn’t a quality that adds to the being’s perfection.

So far it has been evident that existence is not a predicate. But Anselm’s argument relies on existence being a property, seeing this it seems obvious that Anselm’s argument is a failure. But whether existence is a property or not is questionable. Stephen t. Davis has said that to say that given thing exists, can sometimes “expand our idea of it”. For example if we found out that the Loch Ness monster really exists, our idea of this monster would change.

If existence is a predicate or not, seems impossible to answer. But even is existence is not a predicate, necessary existence may be. Anselm says that God cannot not exist. Then a being exists necessarily if its non-existence is inconceivable. This marks a difference among existing things, or so it seems. None of us exist necessarily. Neither do ordinary physical objects. But numbers possibly will. Perhaps qualities themselves d, in any case is we say that something exists necessarily we have conveyed some information about it. It is not an ordinary space time being, which makes us think that necessary existence seems to be a predicate, which means it can be a perfection.

Therefore if Kant is on one hand arguing that Existence is not a predicate, but Anselm's strongest argument is that the greatest conceivable being has to have necessary existence whereas Kant's criticism does not show that necessary existence is not a predicate. Therefore Kant's criticism does not completely destroy Anselm's strongest point of his argument. There isn't a strong objection to Anselm so far which destroys his argument.