

24.00: Problems of Philosophy  
Prof. Sally Haslanger  
September 12, 2005

### First Argument Analysis Exercise

Write 2-3 pages providing an analysis of the following argument. In doing so,

- Number the premises and the conclusion. Articulate each premise and the conclusion in no more than one sentence. Feel free to use a different wording in your statement of the premises and conclusion than is provided by the text. You may not need to use every sentence in the passage in reconstructing the argument, and you may need to supply premises that are not explicitly stated in the text given.
- Indicate for each premise whether it is an assumption, or whether it is supposed to follow from earlier premises. (This should appear in parentheses after the premise.)
- After stating the argument, briefly explain it in your own words, and then comment on its cogency: Are its premises plausible? Are the inferences sound? (If not, why not?)

In his essay, "The Ontological Argument" William Rowe argues that from the claim that  
(1) The Fountain of Youth does not exist.

We can conclude that

(C) The Fountain of Youth exists *only* in the understanding.

This is surprising, since one would think that if the Fountain of Youth does not exist (premise 1), then *it does not exist!* But it would also seem to follow from (C) that the Fountain of Youth *does* exist (though only in the understanding). Hmm...it might help to have a closer look at the argument. So...Fill in the argument between (1) and (C) articulated in this passage:

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. 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. (RR 12-13)

DUE DATE: In your discussion section Thursday/Friday Sept 22/23 Give your completed exercise to your teaching assistant. Late papers will be penalized.

NOTE: You may find the following websites helpful.

Philosophical Terms and Methods:

<http://www.princeton.edu/~jimpryor/general/vocab/index.html>

How to Read a Philosophy Paper:

<http://www.princeton.edu/~jimpryor/general/vocab/index.html>

Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper

<http://www.princeton.edu/~jimpryor/general/writing.html>