is not an anachronistic interjection, but one that these ontotheists could make perfect sense of. [97]

1.6. Real Predicates

In *Beweisgrund* Kant objects to the ontological argument that "existence is not a predicate or a determination of a thing" (Ak. 2: 72), and in the *CPR* he writes that "being is obviously not a real predicate" (A598/B626). In this section I explore what these claims mean.

First of all, 'real predicate' and 'determination' are synonymous, as Kant makes clear in a parthenthetical remark at A598/B626: "a real predicate (that is, a determination of a thing)." A logical predicate is any concept that can be a predicate in a judgment: "anything one wishes can serve as a logical predicate, even the subject can be predicated of itself" (A598/B626).[98] So from the fact that there are existential judgments, judgments whose predicate is *<exists>*, it follows immediately that *<exists>* is a logical predicate. So there is really one claim, expressed in two synonymous ways: *<exists>* is not a determination, and *<exists>* is not a real predicate. While Kant does not explicitly distinguish 'real' from merely 'logical' predicates in *Beweisgrund*, this distinction is implicit when he claims that, although existence is not a (real) predicate, it is admissible to use it as a (logical) predicate in ordinary speech as long as one does not thereby assume that it is a determination of objects:

Nonetheless, the expression 'existence' is used as a predicate. And, indeed, one can do this safely and without troublesome errors, as long as one does not insist on trying to derive existence from merely possible concepts [. . .] (*OPG*, Ak. 2: 72)

However, it is not at all clear what Kant means by denying that existence is a "determination." On this point, his definition in the *Critique* is unhelpful: "the **determination** is a predicate, which goes beyond the concept of the subject and enlarges it. It must therefore not be contained in the subject concept" (A598/B626).[99] On the most literal reading of this passage, a determination of an object is a 'synthetic predicate,' a predicate of the object that is not contained in its concept. More precisely, since every object falls under indefinitely many concepts, a concept C is a synthetic predicate of concept C⋆ just in case C is not contained in C⋆ (the judgment

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[97] Descartes explicitly discusses the essence/existence issue; see section 2.2. For Wolff's views see *Dt. Met*. §544; for an analysis of Wolff's relation to the Scholastic debate about essence and existence see Honnefelder (1990), 320, and 367–70. See also the supplementary article "Essence and Existence" on my website (see Notes on the Text). Thanks to Uygar Abaci for pointing out the relevance of the essence-existence debate to my argument here.

[98] Since the predicate of one judgment can be made the subject of another, this means that all concepts that can be predicates of judgments—that is, all concepts whatsoever (A69/B94)—are logical predicates; see A94/B129. See Proops (2015), 11 for more evidence that predicates are concepts.

[99] For more on the notion of a 'synthetic predicate' see *JL* (Ak. 9: 59).

All C*s are C is synthetic). However, as other commentators have pointed out, this interpretation commits Kant to the following inconsistent triad:

(1) Existence is not a determination of any concept, i.e. the predicate <*exists*> is not synthetic with respect to any concept.
(2) All existential judgments are synthetic.
(3) If a judgment is synthetic, then its predicate is synthetic with respect to its subject.[100]

Since Kant repeatedly asserts (2) in this section of the *CPR* and (3) follows from the definition of a synthetic judgment, either the interpretation of determinations as 'synthetic predicates' is mistaken, or Kant contradicts himself within the space of a few paragraphs.

Another possibility is that Kant means 'determination' here in Baumgarten's technical sense: "what is either posited to be A, or posited not to be A, is DETER-MINED."[101] However, this refers to any predicate whatsoever; that there are existential judgments (judgments in which the predicate is <*exists*>) entails that existence is a determination in Baumgarten's sense. In his own copy of *Metaphysica* Kant identifies Baumgarten's definition of 'determination' with that of a *logical* predicate (*Refl.* 3520, Ak. 17: 33); since <*exists*> is a logical predicate, it is a determination in Baumgarten's sense.

A more tempting possibility is to deny that <*exists*> is a predicate of objects at all, but a predicate of concepts, anticipating the Fregean theory of the existential quantifier as a second-order concept that applies to concepts that have a non-empty extension. This interpretation finds support in this oft-quoted passage from *Beweisgrund*:

But when existence occurs as a predicate in common speech, it is a predicate not so much of the thing itself as the thought which one has of the thing. For example: existence belongs to the narwhal [*Seeeinhorn*] but not to the unicorn [*Einhorn*]. This simply means: the representation of a narwhal is an empirical concept; in other words, it is the representation of an existent thing. [. . .] The expression 'A narwhal is an existent animal' is not, therefore, entirely correct. The expression ought to be formulated the other way around to read 'The predicates, which I think collectively when I think of a narwhal, attach to a certain existent animal.' (*OPG*, Ak. 2: 72–3)[102]

Kant claims that the judgment *a narwhal is an existent animal* does not assert that some predicate is contained in the concept <*narwhal*>, and does not attribute further predicates to the objects that fall under <*narwhal*>; it asserts that there is at least one object that falls under <*narwhal*>, i.e. that the concept is instantiated.[103] I take this to

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[100] Cf. Wood (1978), 105 and Shaffer (1969), 125.   [101] *Meta.* §34.   [102] Cf. A599/B627.
[103] Kant gives the mistaken impression that, on his analysis, 'narwhals exist' is equivalent to 'there is a narwhal *and I have experienced it*'. This would make the following judgment false as a matter of meaning: there are narwhals but no one has ever encountered one. But he drops the misleading suggestion that the

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be clear evidence that the *fundamental* (though not the *only*) role of the predicate <*exists*> is to apply to concepts: it applies to a concept if and only if that concept is instantiated by an object. While this is not yet the complete Fregean theory of the existential quantifier, it does anticipate it.[104] Consequently, I will borrow from the contemporary symbolism and formalize *narwhals exist* as:

(4) $\exists x(\text{narwhal}(x))$

which is to be read as 'there is an object in the extension of <*narwhal*>.'[105]

This, however, cannot *exhaust* the content of Kant's claim that existence is not a determination or 'real predicate' because it is not something ontotheists *need* to deny and thus has no force *by itself* against the ontological argument. As we saw in section 5, ontotheists are committed to possibilism, the view that there could be non-existent objects. This is entirely compatible with the view that to make existence claims we need a quantifier expression, a second-order predicate that applies to a concept just in case it is instantiated; the ontotheist needs merely to add that in existential judgments like *narwhals exist* the quantifier is restricted to *existing* objects.[106] So the ontotheist can fully accept Kant's analysis of existential judgments as long as he interprets the quantifier-expression in (4) as implicitly restricted to *existing* objects, that is:

(4*) $\exists x \in \text{E} (\text{narwhal}(x))$

where E is the set of all existing objects. This is equivalent (assuming E is non-empty) to the following claim, using an unrestricted quantifier and an existence predicate for objects:

(5) $\exists x(\text{exists}(x) \ \& \ \text{narwhal}(x))$.[107]

In other words, the ontotheist can fully accept that existence is a second-order predicate (a quantifier) as long as it is a *restricted* quantifier; alternately, that

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instance of the concept must be *experienced* when he analyzes 'God exists' as "an existing thing has those predicates, which we collectively designate with the expression: God" (Ak. 2: 74).

[104]   For one thing, Kant has not yet developed the Fregean function-object analysis of judgment, and his neglect of relational predicates leaves him without the resources to develop a theory of polyadic quanti-fication. Friedman (1992*a*), 96–135 discusses the limitations of Kant's logic.

[105]   Rosenkoetter (2010) objects to what he calls the 'Frege-anticipation' thesis that it is incompatible with Kant's claim that the assertoric function of judgment corresponds to the category of existence. He claims that the Frege-anticipation thesis would entail that "Kant would need to hold, in parallel, that all assertoric judgments can be reduced to *q* is true" (552). However, it is unclear what Rosenkoetter's argument for this claim is, nor is it clear why the defender of the Frege-anticipation thesis cannot hold Rosenkoetter's own account of the assertoric function of judgment.

[106]   One can (as e.g., Quine did) hold that existence is a quantifier without holding that it is a second-order predicate of concepts. For the purposes of this book I will be identifying the view that existence is a quantifier with the view that it is second-order.

[107]   Where the extension of the predicate 'exists(*x*)' is E, the set of existing things used to restrict the quantifier in (4*).

existential judgments are made using an unrestricted quantifier ('there is,' which ranges over all objects) and an existence predicate that applies to only some objects. This interpretation may even be encouraged by Kant's own text, quoted above, because he interprets *narwhals exist* as the judgment that "the predicates, which I think collectively when I think of a narwhal, attach to a certain <u>existent</u> animal". This may give the (false, or so I will argue) impression that Kant himself thinks that existential judgments are made using an unrestricted quantifier ('there is') and an existence predicate for objects.

This brings out an important, and, I believe, too often neglected point: <u>the real issue between the ontotheist and Kant over existence is not whether existence is a quantifier (second-order predicate) but whether it is a restricted or unrestricted quantifier. The real issue is whether there is an existence predicate *for objects* that applies to only a subset of them (equivalently, whether the existence quantifier is a restriction of the 'there is' quantifier); the ontotheist (I have argued) must maintain that the existence predicate *for objects* applies only to a subset of them.</u>[108]

The 'synthetic predicate' interpretation, from above, assumes that, when Kant writes that the determination "enlarges" the subject concept, all he means is that the determination is not one of the marks analytically contained in the subject concept. But this is not the only sense in which a predicate might be said to "enlarge" the subject concept of a judgment. A predicate might also enlarge a concept by enlarging its *content* and rendering that contept more determinate by restricting the range of objects that can fall under it. I propose, then, the following interpretation of Kant's technical term 'determination':

concept

(*Defn.*)   A concept *P determines* a concept *C* if and only if it is possible that there is an object that instantiates *C* and *P* and it is possible that there is an object that instantiates *C* but not *P*.[109, 110]

(*Defn.*)   A predicate *P* is a *determination* if and only if *P* determines at least one concept.[111]

One concept can determine another, in the sense of specifying the nature of the objects falling under the concept. <Scalene> determines the concept <triangle>, but <having interior angles that sum to 180 degrees> does not. It does not add any new specification to the concept <triangle>, even though it is not analytically contained in

[108] Forgie (2007) argues that Kant's claim that existence is a second-order predicate should not be conflated with Gassendi's claim that existence is not a property but the precondition for having properties in the first place. My point is that Kant's attempt to refute ontotheism requires him to make a version of Gassendi's claim: there cannot be objects that do not exist.

[109] Cf. *Pöl.RT* (Ak. 28: 1027), *Volck.RT* (Ak. 28: 1176), and *Danz.RT* (Ak. 28: 1258), as well as the texts from Kant's metaphysics lectures on '*determinieren*' cited below.

[110] This interpretation is similar to that of Van Cleve (1999), 188 and Hanna (2001), 133.

[111] I am assuming that existence, in virtue of being a logical predicate, is a concept.

that concept.[112] Thus, on my definition, all determinations are synthetic predicates, but not every synthetic predicate of an object is a determination.

This interpretation also preserves the natural reading of the passage: "the determination is a predicate, which goes beyond the concept of the subject and enlarges it [the concept]. It must therefore not be contained in the subject concept [*sie muß also nicht in ihm schon enthalten sein*]" (A598/B626—my emphasis). On my reading, the second sentence is a consequence of the first, but is not identical to it: because a determination enlarges the subject concept in the sense of adding further content to it, the determination cannot be analytically contained in the subject concept. On the 'synthetic predicate' reading, the second sentence merely restates the first sentence.[113]

In addition to respecting the natural reading of this passage, this interpretation has at least five other advantages. First, it allows us to escape the inconsistent triad of views; just because *<exists>* does not determine any subject concept, it does not follow that existence is not a synthetic predicate. This is because:

(1)   For any concept C, necessarily anything that falls under C falls under *<exists>*; *<exists>* is not a determination

is compatible with:

(2)   No judgments of the form *there exists a C* are analytic; existence is not a mark of any concept.[114]

The second advantage to this reading is that it allows us to explain *why <exists>* is not a determination: it does not 'enlarge' or further specify any concept, because it is the concept that every object falls under. If *<exists>* were a determination of some concept C, it would follow that it is possible for there to be objects that fall under C but not *<exists>*; it would follow that it is possible for there to be non-existent objects.

This point connects directly to our earlier discussion of the quantificational theory of existence. As a predicate of objects, *<exists>* is a determination just in case there is some concept C such that:

(3) $\Diamond \exists x(Cx \ \& \ \neg\text{exists}(x))$

from which it follows that:

(4) $\Diamond \exists x(\neg\text{exists}(x))$.

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[112] Because for Kant, the judgment that every triangle has internal angles that sum to two right angles is synthetic, not analytic.

[113] Similarly, when Kant defines 'determination' in the Mrongovius metaphysics lectures, he says "the logical predicate can be analytic, but determination is always synthetic" (Ak. 29: 819). He notably does *not* claim that all and only synthetic predicates are determinations.

[114] The compatibility of these two claims follows from Kant's acceptance of synthetic *a priori* judgments, which, by definition, are necessarily true and not analytic. See B4 and Ak. 8: 235.

If the object-predicate *<exists>* is a determination, it follows that it is possible for
there to be a non-existent object. But notice that, conversely, if (4) is true, it follows
that *<exists>* is a determination; (4) entails that *<exists>* determines the trivial
concept *<x=x>*, the concept under which all objects necessarily fall. So existence is
a determination if and only if (4) is true.

The natural way of defining the existence predicate *for objects* is by using the
quantifier '∃' (which is equivalent to the definition in terms of the universal quan-
tifier, given in brackets):

(5)   exists(x) $=_{\text{def}} \exists y\ (y=x)\ [\leftrightarrow \neg(y)(y\neq x)]$.

Applying this to 'exists' in (4), we get:

(6) $\Diamond\exists x\neg\exists y(y=x)$

which is a logical falsehood. There cannot be an object such that there is no object to
which it is identical. The definition of existence using the quantifier '∃' (claim (5))
entails that *<exists>* is not a determination. If we interpret 'determination' as I have
argued we should, Kant's claim that existence is not a determination, while not
philosophically uncontroversial, is highly plausible. This is the third advantage of my
reading. Kant's claim that existence is not a determination is equivalent to defining
the object-level existence predicate in the natural way, using the quantifier '∃'. It is
equivalent to claiming that the quantifier expression 'there is' ranges only over
existing objects, that is, that there are no non-existent objects. On such a theory of
existence, it is appropriate to call the quantifier '∃' the *existential* quantifier. This also
shows that, although the *fundamental* sense of existence for Kant may be given by the
existential quantifier '∃', he also has the resources to define an existence predicate for
objects, as in (5). Furthermore, if the existence predicate for objects, *<exists>*, is
defined in terms of the quantifier '∃' then we can translate unproblematically between
them. Henceforth, when I talk about *<exists>*, I will always have the object-predicate
in mind; when I mean the second-order predicate of concepts (what is now called a
quantifier), I will use '∃'.

One might well wonder, then, if the fundamental meaning of existence is a
quantifier, why does Kant bother discussing an existence predicate for objects? To
refute the ontotheist, of course! As I argued earlier, the ontotheist can accept that
existence is a quantifier, but then the real issue becomes: is the existential quantifier a
restriction of the wider quantifier 'there is'? On my interpretation, by denying that
existence *as a predicate of objects* is a determination, Kant is answering this question
in the negative. This is equivalent to denying that there are (or could be) non-existent
objects, which, as we saw in section 5, would be devastating to the metaphysics of
ontotheism in general, and, I will argue in Chapter 2, the specific ontological argu-
ments given by Kant's specific opponents (Descartes, Leibniz, etc.). So the fourth
advantage of my reading is that Kant's claim that *<exists>* is not a determination, if
true, spells serious trouble for ontotheism.

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Fifthly, and finally, this interpretation of what it is to 'determine' a concept is well supported by Kant's lectures on metaphysics. For example:

The principle that, of two contradictorily opposed predicates, one pertains to the object is called the 'principle of excluded middle among two contradictories.' This is called determining [*determinieren*] for various objects are left indeterminate by the concepts we have of them. For example, the concept of human [*der Begriff des Menschen*] is indeterminate. [A human] can be learned or not, can be a man or a woman, etc. If I then say that one of the two must pertain to [an object], and I posit one of them, [the object] is determinate; indeterminate means determinate only in respect of what we think through our concept. For example, the concept of an angle is indeterminate, for it can be obtuse or acute. (*MV*, 28: 410)[115]

To determine [*determinieren*][116] a concept is to predicate one of two contradictorily opposed concepts, each of which is a possible way that the original concept can be specified; e.g., <*acute*> determines <*angle*> because it is possible for angles to be acute, and possible for them to be obtuse. We can say that <*acute*> and <*obtuse*> possibly divide the extension of <*angle*>. To say that <*exists*> does not determine any concept means therefore that <*existence*> and <*non-existence*> do not possibly divide the extension of any concept. The extension of *no* concept divides into existing and non-existing instances of that concept because there are *no* non-existent objects.[117]

If Kant is right that existence is not a determination, and I am right that ontotheism—the doctrine that God exists in virtue of his essence—entails that existence is a determination, then Kant has refuted ontotheism *as such*. The generality of Kant's objection entails that there can be no being, not even God, that exists in virtue of its essence. Since logicism, combined with the traditional doctrine that God necessarily exists, entails that God exists in virtue of his essence, this also refutes logicism. If existence is not a determination, then there is at least one necessary truth, that God exists, that is not a logically necessary consequence of the essences of possible beings. In the next chapter I reconstruct in detail Kant's arguments that existence is not a determination.

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[115] Cf. *MH* (Ak. 28: 14, 19, 24–5, 843, 845), *MM* (Ak. 29: 818), *MvS* (Ak. 28: 491), and *ML$_2$* (Ak. 28: 551–2).

[116] These passages typically use the Latinate phrase '*determinieren*' but we have seen that in *Beweisgrund* '*Determination*' is also Kant's term for what he will later refer to as a '*Bestimmung*' or 'real predicate' (Ak. 2: 72).

[117] Crusius's technical notion of *Determination* in *Ent*. §23 is quite similar; it is likely that Kant is using the Crusian notion of determination, rather than Baumgarten's.