

## Re: Existence as predicate

**Source:** <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.logic/2004-08/3725.html>

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**From:** The Sophist (*sophist\_at\_brown.edu*)

**Date:** 08/30/04

Date: Mon, 30 Aug 2004 08:19:35 -0400

Keynes wrote:

> *On Sun, 29 Aug 2004 13:17:01 -0400, The Sophist <sophist@brown.edu> wrote:*

>

>

>> *Terry Firma wrote:*

>>

>>> *This is an attempt at refuting Kant's claim that a thing's existence can't*

>>> *be a predicate:*

>>>

>>> *Since everything is connected ("hangs together") – there are no absolute  
>>> dividing lines / there is no empty space – everything must have a \*common  
>>> denominator\*; this common denominator must be necessary (since everything is  
>>> necessary / has at least one cause); therefore general existence must have a  
>>> necessary component/aspect in order to exist (therefore existence is a  
>>> quality/predicate).*

>>

>> *Let's see. David Lewis denied that everything is connected, and while*

>> *his view may be false, I know of no conclusive arguments to that effect.*

>> *I am not sure what you mean when you say that there is no empty space.*

>> *However, even if everything were connected, this would not entail the*

>> *existence of a common denominator. Even if we assume that things must*

>> *share something in common to be connected, object 1 might be connected*

>> *to object 2 by sharing A, and object 2 might be connected to object 3 by*

>> *sharing B, and objects 1 and 3 might then be connected without sharing*

>> *anything in common. You seem to assume that things which are not*

>> *necessary must have causes, which seems not to be the case (popular*

>> *interpretations of present quantum theory deny this). Finally, even if*

>> *everything that existed needed to have a component in common, that would*

>> *not entail that this common component would be existence.*

>>

>> *Rather a stunning amount of mistakes for such a short argument, I must say.*

>

>

> *What is disconnected must be free of the web of causation.*

Well, presumably. Causation would be a kind of connection.

- > *Causal connections of the past are considered necessary to*
- > *produce the present.*

By who?

- > *The past is all about necessity.*

What does that even mean?

- > *We consider the future to be conditional and the past to*
- > *be unconditional.*

You should be careful about using the pronoun "we."

- > *This must be a flaw in our concept of time,*
- > *because we suppose the future to be of a different nature than*
- > *the past, and at the same time accept the past as a fossilization*
- > *of the future (of past 'times')..*

Perhaps this is indeed a flaw in your conception of time.

--

Aaron Boyden

The main division between the so-called Continental and Analytic traditions has been disputes over whether the task of being unclear should be carried out in natural language or in a formal system.