

Mittelbaukolloquium, 23.5.2018

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Skepticism about Transcendental Arguments and the Claim to Objectivity

Abstract

As standardly presented, world-directed transcendental arguments (TAs) are faced with a dilemma raised by Barry Stroud: either the most TAs can show is the necessity of holding some belief or they must presuppose a form of idealism which renders them superfluous.

In this talk, I take stock of the options available for justifying Stroud's objection as well as possible responses to it. I show, first, that Stroud's dilemma crucially relies on a specific conception of objectivity. Departing from this result, I then show that Stroud's objection faces a dilemma of its own with respect to its justification: it must either (i) present a successful concept-directed TA and thus grant this type of TA to be warranted or (ii) the conception of objectivity it relies on can be regarded as optional.

Both horns of the dilemma offer options for replying to Stroud which provide evidence that, although world-directed TAs cannot be defended in their standard form, there are still prospects for justifying their transcendental claims.