

Department of Philosophy: Graduate Talk Series

Michael Frank

HIB 55

1.30.26

3:00pm - 5:00pm

Kant on the Illusion of Traditional Metaphysics

Abstract: The assertions of rational cosmology, psychology, and theology all rest on what Kant defines as transcendental illusion. Transcendental illusion is an illusion concerning the valid use of principles of pure reason. Further, Kant contends that this type of illusion is an irremediable tendency of human reason.

An analysis of transcendental illusion clarifies Kant's conception of reason as a capacity and how this capacity results in the human predisposition to ask metaphysical questions about explanation and grounding.

I propose a reading of Kant's transcendental illusion which sheds light on the positive aims of his critical philosophy. In particular, reason's Supreme Principle has a valid regulative use whereby the natural tendency of reason to fall into transcendental illusion can be corrected and, in fact, used to further reason's aims