

MEDITATION THREE LECTURE

THE MAJOR ARGUMENTS FOR GOD

I. WHAT'S UP WITH THE WAX

A. The argument is a refutation of the viability of the senses as a method of gathering knowledge, not support of it.

B. The Argument

1. There is this wax and I sense X features of it, but lo and behold
2. When I bring it near the fire many of these features change
3. So what of it have I grasped clearly and distinctly?

a) **NOTHING THAT I SENSED**

b) **EXTENSION, FLEXIBILITY & MUTABILITY (CHANGEABILITY)**

4. What Part of me has grasped this clearly and distinctly.

a) **NOT MY IMAGINATION**

(1) Can imagination the number of ways it could change,

(2) cannot imagine the extent of its possible extension

b) **NOT MY SENSES**

(1) The things I saw, heard, etc were fleeting mutable.

(2) I see men right

(3) But how do I know they're men, not from what I see

(4) From what I see, they could be automata (Bladerunner, Mannequins)

c) **IT'S WITH MY FACULTY OF JUDGEMENT THAT I GAIN KNOWLEDGE.**

C. It is with the mind that I most clearly and distinctly perceive and it is the mind of which I have the clearest and most distinct perception.

1. Empiricists—the mind is that of which I have the least knowledge.
2. I cannot examine with my senses.

II. WHERE WE ARE IN THE ARGUMENT

A. The senses are untrustworthy

B. I exist

C. But what follows from this

1. Not much

D. My Existence Matters

1. I clearly and distinctly perceive it

a) **REASON FORCES THE BELIEF ON ME**

b) **EVERYTHING I CLEARLY AND DISTINCTLY PERCEIVE IS TRUE**

2. But other existences are not so clearly and distinctly perceived

a) **SO WE NEED TO REMOVE SOME OBSTACLES**

- b) **S**
IMPLE LOGIC

I think
∴ I am

3. Logically compelling
- a) **IF YOU ACCEPT THE PREMISE YOU CAN'T DENY THE CONCLUSION**
 - b) **AND THE PREMISE IS INDUBITABLE**
 - c) **SIMPLE : CAN HAVE THE WHOLE THING IN MIND AT ONCE**
4. Clear and distinct perception
- a) **TO PERCEIVE CLEARLY AND DISTINCTLY IS TO HAVE A LOGICALLY COMPELLING ARGUMENT FOR TRUTH**
 - b) **THE COGITO PROVIDES THE PARADIGM EXAMPLE OF CLEAR AND DISTINCT PERCEPTION**
- E. Surely in this first instance of knowledge, there is nothing but a certain clear and distinct perception of what I affirm. Yet this would hardly be enough to render me certain of the truth of a thing, if it could ever happen that something that I perceived so clearly and distinctly were false. And thus I now seem able to posit as a general rule that everything I clearly and distinctly perceive is true. (24)**
- F. The most powerful skeptical ploy is the evil demon**
- 1. The evil genius interferes with our ability to perceive clearly and distinctly
 - 2. Is there really an omnipotent being?
- G. Can such a being be a deceiver?**
- 1. If the answer to either question is no we have removed an obstacle to clear and distinct perception

III. THE TAXONOMY OF THOUGHTS

- A. Ideas or images of things**
- 1. Ideas not true or false in themselves but only when referred to something else
 - 2. The nature of ideas
 - 3. Formal reality
 - a) **THEIR EXISTENCE AS MENTAL ITEMS**
 - b) **E.G. THE FORMAL REALITY OF A PAINTING IS THE PAINT ON THE CANVAS**
 - 4. Objective reality
 - a) **WHAT THE IDEA STANDS FOR**
 - b) **E.G. WHAT IT IS A PICTURE OF**
 - 5. Judgements
 - a) **GO BEYOND MERE IDEAS IN OFFERING AN AFFIRMATION OF TRUTH OR FALSITY**
- B. The light of nature vs. natural impulses**
- 1. The light of nature
 - a) **MY RATIONAL FACULTIES**
 - b) **WHAT REASON FORCES ME TO BELIEVE**

c) N

NOTHING REVEALED BY THE LIGHT OF NATURE CAN BE DOUBTED

d) **BECAUSE NOTHING IS TRUSTED MORE THAN THE LIGHT OF NATURE**

2. Reason can't be undermined by anything else

a) **COULD REASON UNDERMINE ITSELF?**

3. Natural impulse

a) **THE BELIEFS I GET WITHOUT REFLECTION**

b) **MY HABITS OF THOUGHT**

C. Do some ideas resemble external things?

1. They do not depend on our will

2. Not an adequate reason

a) **MIGHT BE SOME OTHER CAUSE**

b) **I MIGHT BE THE CAUSE**

3. Only natural impulse leads me to belief that things outside of me sent these ideas

IV. THE CAUSAL PRINCIPLE

A. Something can't come from nothing

1. Taught by reason

B. The more perfect can't come from the less perfect

1. What does perfect mean?

a) **THE CONSERVATION OF REALITY**

b) **NOW IT IS INDEED EVIDENT BY THE LIGHT OF NATURE THAT THERE MUST BE AT LEAST AS MUCH [REALITY] IN THE EFFICIENT AND TOTAL CAUSE AS THERE IS IN THE EFFECT OF THAT SAME CAUSE. (18)**

C. The causal principle applies to objective reality as well

1. The cause of the idea must be as perfect as what the idea is about

2. So my idea of a stone must be caused by something at least as real as the stone

3. But that a particular idea contains this as opposed to that objective reality is surely owing to some cause in which there is at least as much formal reality as there is objective reality contained in the idea. For if we assume that something is found in the idea that was not in its cause, then the idea gets that something from nothing. (18)

D. The causal principle again

1. Formal reality causes objective reality

2. Idea of a fish

a) **MUST BE AS MUCH REALITY IN CAUSE OF IDEA AS THERE IS IN A FISH**

3. Idea of God

a) **MUST BE AS MUCH REALITY IN THE CAUSE OF THIS IDEA AS THERE IS IN GOD**

V. DESCARTES' STRATEGY

A. Use causal principle to go from idea to thing

1. I can
 know what ideas I have
2. But what exists other than me and my ideas

B. What is the cause of my idea?

1. In particular, can I be the cause of my ideas?
2. Do I have enough reality (perfection) to cause the idea in question?

C. The kinds of ideas

1. Ideas of corporeal things , i.e. Ideas of fish, chairs, planets
2. Ideas of spiritual things , i.e. Ideas of myself, angels, God

D. Modes vs. substances

1. Which of these ideas could I cause in myself?
 - a) **CORPOREAL THINGS**
 - b) **I HAVE IDEAS OF VARIOUS CORPOREAL THINGS**
2. Could I be the cause of these ideas?
 - a) **COLOR,ODOR, SOUND, OBSCURE AND MATERIALLY FALSE**
 - b) **VERY LITTLE PERFECTION REQUIRED TO CAUSE**
 - c) **DURATION PRESENT IN ME**
3. If I have a property I can cause ideas about that property
4. Descartes' muddle about space
 - a) **AS THINKING THING I HAVE NO SPATIAL PROPERTIES**
 - (1) Ideas of extended things
 - (2) Extended things have spatial properties
 - b) **HOW CAN I CAUSE AN IDEA OF SOMETHING HAVING A PROPERTY I DON'T HAVE?**
 - (1) I am a substance however
 - (2) And so can cause ideas of substance
5. Spiritual things
 - a) **MYSELF**
 - (1) Of course my idea of myself can be caused by myself
 - b) **OTHER PEOPLE**
 - (1) My idea of other people could be derived from myself
 - c) **ANGELS**
 - (1) Just like me only more so
 - (2) So idea could be caused by me
6. No certainty of existence
 - a) **MY IDEAS OF ALL THESE THINGS COULD DERIVE FROM MYSELF**
 - b) **THUS, THE CAUSAL PRINCIPLE DOES NOT REQUIRE THESE THINGS TO EXIST**
 - c) **SO I STILL CAN'T BE CERTAIN OF THEIR EXISTENCE**
 - d) **WHAT ABOUT MY IDEA OF GOD?**

E. The idea of God

1. The divine attributes
 - a) **OMNISCIENCE –KNOWS EVERYTHING**

- b) **O**
MNIPOTENCE –CAN DO ANYTHING
 - c) **AND EVERY OTHER PERFECTION**
 - d) **AND NOTHING ELSE–NOTHING FROM THE BIBLE OR OTHER TEXTS**
 - e) **I UNDERSTAND BY THE NAME "GOD" A CERTAIN SUBSTANCE THAT IS INFINITE, INDEPENDENT, SUPREMELY INTELLIGENT AND SUPREMELY POWERFUL, AND THAT CREATED ME ALONG WITH EVERYTHING ELSE THAT EXISTS—IF ANYTHING ELSE EXISTS. (30)**
2. What causes my idea of God?
- a) **NOT MYSELF**
 - (1) I'm finite and God's attributes are infinite
 - (2) The infinite objective reality cannot come from my finite formal reality
 - (3) Moreover even if I'm potentially infinite God is actually infinite
 - b) **HAS TO BE GOD**
 - c) **INDEED ALL THESE ARE SUCH THAT, THE MORE CAREFULLY I FOCUS MY ATTENTION ON THEM, THE LESS POSSIBLE IT SEEMS THEY COULD HAVE ARISEN FROM MYSELF ALONE. THUS, FROM WHAT HAS BEEN SAID, I MUST CONCLUDE THAT GOD NECESSARILY EXISTS. (30-31)**

VI. REVIEW OF THE ARGUMENT

- 1. **There must be as much formal reality in the cause as objective reality in the idea**
- 2. **My idea of God is objectively infinitely perfect in every way**
- 3. **Only God is formally infinitely perfect in every way**
- ∴ **God must cause my idea of God**
- ∴ **God exists**

A. Some objections

- 1. Can a finite creature really have an idea of an infinite thing?
 - a) **INFINITY REQUIRED FOR RECOGNITION OF IMPERFECTION**
- 2. Is the idea of God materially false?
 - a) **IT IS THE MOST CLEAR AND DISTINCT IDEA WE HAVE**
 - b) **BECAUSE IT IS MOST PERFECT**

B. Another argument

- 1. What is the cause of my existence?
 - a) **NOT MY IDEA OF ANYTHING BUT MY EXISTENCE**
- 2. I didn't cause my own existence
- 3. I would have given myself more perfection
- 4. Some other being caused me
 - a) **WHAT CAUSED THAT BEING**
 - b) **ETC, ETC.**
- 5. The only self-caused being must be perfect, i.e. God

C. Summing up: God exists