

The background features a detailed anatomical drawing of a human eye and brain in shades of blue. The eye is shown in profile, with various parts labeled with letters and numbers. A complex geometric diagram is overlaid on the eye, consisting of several lines forming a triangle and other shapes, with vertices labeled 'A', 'B', and 'C'. The brain is depicted below the eye, with a dotted pattern around it. The overall style is that of a scientific or philosophical illustration from a historical text.

Introduction to Philosophy

Descartes 4: Theodicy, Free Will
and the Ontological Argument

Jeremy Dunham

The Meditator at the end of Meditation 3

Believe	Doubt
<p>I exist</p> <p>I am a thinking thing</p> <p>Intellect priority</p> <p>Mind priority</p> <p>C and D propositions are true</p> <p>God exists</p> <p>God is not a deceiver</p> <p>Various metaphysical principles</p>	<p>All propositions of...</p> <p>Sensory Experience</p> <p>Physics</p> <p>Astronomy</p> <p>Medicine</p>

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3. God has no defects (see 1)
4. God cannot be a deceiver

Descartes' Theodicy

The Problem of Evil

- ▶ If **God** exists and is **omnibenevolent**, **omnipotent** and **omniscient**, why do **evil** and **suffering** exist?

Descartes' Epistemological Theodicy

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Descartes' Epistemological Theodicy

- ▶ If **God** exists (and is a non-deceiver) why am I prone to countless **errors**?

A Possible Problem for the Meditator

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A Possible Problem for the Meditator

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3. God is a non-deceiver
4. $p \rightarrow q, \neg q \vdash \neg p$

The Problem of Evil



Irenaeus (c.130-c.202)

- ▶ 'vale of soul-making'
- ▶ God is partially responsible the existence of evil

The Problem of Evil



Augustine (c.354-c.430)

- ▶ Evil is a 'Privation of Good'
- ▶ Free will is a supremely valuable capacity

The Problem of Evil

Descartes (1596-1650)



- ▶ Positive Idea of God and a Negative Idea of Nothingness

The Problem of Evil

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- ▶ The **Universal Scheme**

The Problem of Error

The Faculty of Knowledge (Intellect)

The Faculty of Freedom of the Will

The Problem of Error

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- ▶ Enables me to perceive the ideas which are subjects for possible judgments
- ▶ Finite

The Faculty of Freedom of the Will

The Problem of Error

The Faculty of Knowledge (Intellect)

- ▶ Enables me to perceive the ideas which are subjects for possible judgments
- ▶ Finite

The Faculty of Freedom of the Will

- ▶ Not restricted in any way
- ▶ 'I understand myself to bear in some way the image and likeness of God' (7: 57).

The Problem of Error

'From these considerations I perceive that the power of willing which I received from God is not, when considered in itself, the cause of my mistakes; for it is both extremely ample and also perfect of its kind. Nor is my power of understanding to blame; for since my understanding comes from God, everything that I understand I undoubtedly understand correctly, and any error here is impossible. So what then is the source of my mistakes? It must be simply this: the scope of my will is wider than that of the intellect; but instead of restricting it within the same limits, I extend its use to matters which I do not understand. Since the will is indifferent in such cases, it easily turns aside from what is true and good, and this is the source of my error and sin' (7: 58).

The Problem of Free Will



The Problem of Free Will



- ▶ 'The will simply consists in our ability to do or not do something... when the intellect puts something forward... we do not feel ourselves determined by any external force' (7: 57)

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- ▶ 2 conceptions of freedom?

The Problem of Free Will

Libertarianism

Hard Determinism

Compatibilism

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Compatibilism

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Compatibilism

- ▶ It is impossible to 'see and approve the better' and choose the worse.
- ▶ 'The indifference I feel when there is no reason pushing me in one direction rather than another is the lowest grade of freedom... if I always saw clearly what was true and good, I should never have to deliberate...' (7: 58).

The Problem of Free Will and the Problem of Error

1. Indifference - Leads to Error

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2. Guided by the 'Natural Light of Reason'
- Leads to Truth

The Problem of Free Will and the Problem of Error

(Wilson, M.D. 1978: 148)

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6. One can avoid error

Possible Problem:

The 'Constant Creation' Argument

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- ▶ The distinction between creation and preservation is only a conceptual one - the same power and action are needed to preserve anything at each individual moment.

Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia (1618-1680)



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- ▶ Reason leads the soul to a naturally happier state

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- ▶ Reason leads the soul to a naturally happier state
- ▶ 'The greater we deem the works of God to be, the better we observe the infinity of his power; and the better known this infinity is to us, the more certain we are that it extends even to the most particular actions of human beings' (AT IV 315: CSM III 273).

Free Will and the Correspondence with Elizabeth

1. When we pray to God 'we should (not) try to get him to change anything in the order established from all eternity by his providence' (AT IV 316: CSM III 273).

Free Will and the Correspondence with Elizabeth

1. When we pray to God 'we should (not) try to get him to change anything in the order established from all eternity by his providence' (AT IV 316: CSM III 273).
2. 'it involves a contradiction to say that God has created human beings of such a nature that the actions of their will do not depend on his... The independence which we experience and feel in ourselves, and which suffices to make our actions praiseworthy or blameworthy, is not incompatible with a dependence of quite another kind, whereby all things are subject to God' (AT IV 332-3: CSM III 277)

Free Will and the Correspondence with Elizabeth

1. Elizabeth - 'Something else I have to admit: although I don't understand the claim that (i) the independence of our will doesn't clash with (ii) our idea of God any more than the (iii) dependence of our will clashes with (iv) its freedom, I can't possibly reconcile these last two, because it's as impossible for the will to be at once (iv) free and (iii) attached to the decrees of Providence as for divine power to be at once infinite and limited. I don't see the compatibility between them of which you speak, or how this dependence of the will can be of 'quite another kind' from its freedom, unless you'll be so good as to teach this to me.'

Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia (1618-1680)



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Descartes' Response

- ▶ A king who has forbidden duels

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- ▶ Two levels of volition - 1) the king caused them to meet 2) He forbade duels

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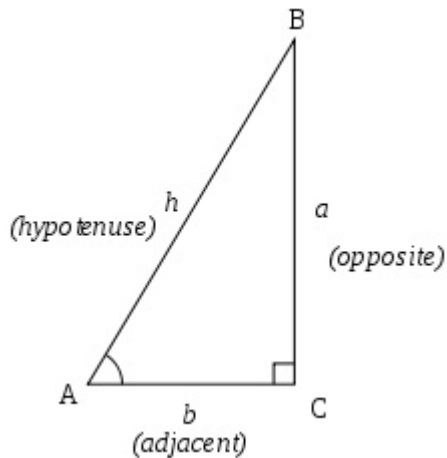
Descartes' Response

- ▶ A king who has forbidden duels
- ▶ Two levels of volition - 1) the king caused them to meet 2) He forbade duels
- ▶ God's absolute will and his Relative will

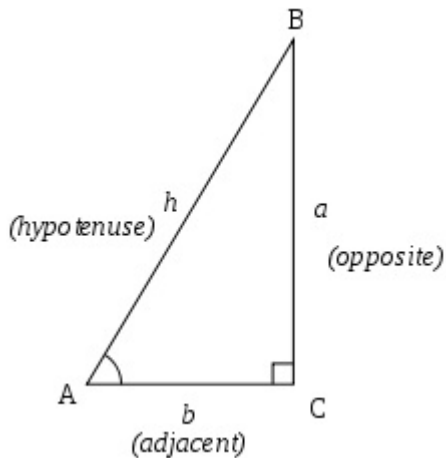
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Meditation 5: The Ontological Argument

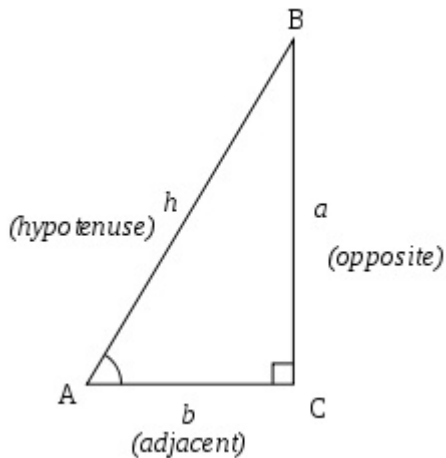


Meditation 5: The Ontological Argument



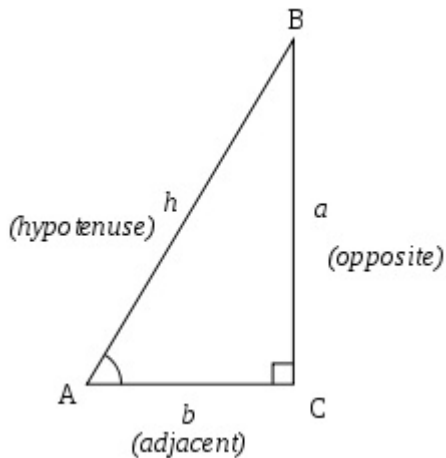
- ▶ True and Immutable Natures

Meditation 5: The Ontological Argument



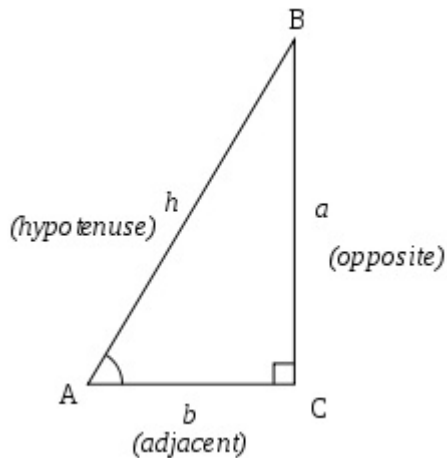
- ▶ True and Immutable Natures
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Meditation 5: The Ontological Argument



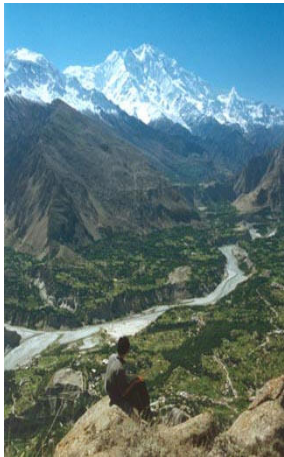
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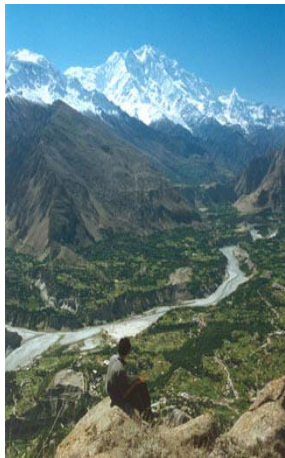


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- ▶ The Distinction between Essence and Existence

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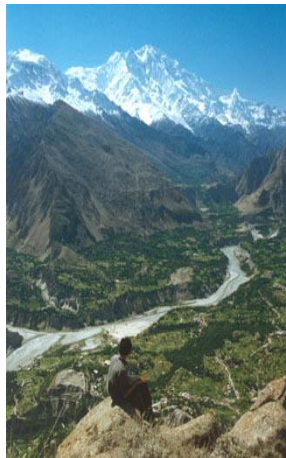


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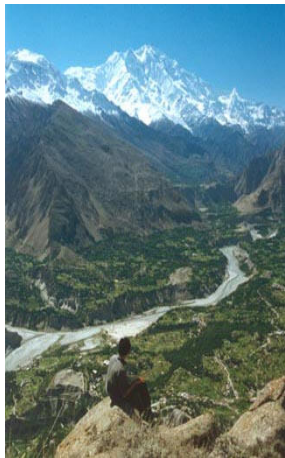
- ▶ Mountain without a Valley
- ▶ I am not free to think of God without Existence

Meditation 5: The Ontological Argument



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The Ontological Argument

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2. Existence is a predicate
3. God exists

The Ontological Argument

(AT VII 149-50: CSM II 106-7)

1. Whatever I clearly and distinctly perceive to belong to the nature or essence of a thing can be truly affirmed of that thing.

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2. I clearly and distinctly perceive that existence belongs to the nature or essence of a supremely perfect being.

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1. Whatever I clearly and distinctly perceive to belong to the nature or essence of a thing can be truly affirmed of that thing.
2. I clearly and distinctly perceive that existence belongs to the nature or essence of a supremely perfect being.
3. Existence can be truly affirmed of a supremely perfect being, i.e. the supremely perfect being exists.

The 'Proves too Much' Objection



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- ▶ Objection to **Anselm**'s earlier formulation
- ▶ Clearly and distinctly perceive that existence belongs to the nature or essence of a **most perfect island**
- ▶ The concept of **Island + Perfection**

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- ▶ Clearly and distinctly perceive that existence belongs to the nature or essence of a **most perfect island**
- ▶ The concept of **Island + Perfection**
- ▶ **Perfection** is not **added** to the concept of God, but included within it

Kant's Objection



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- ▶ Imagined coins contain no more predicates than real coins. We make no further addition to the concept when we claim that the thing *is*
- ▶ The difference between 'Tame Tigers Growl' and 'Tame Tigers Exist'
- ▶ The contrast between (a) describing a thing and (b) saying that a concept or a term applies to something.

Kant's Objection



'The attempt to establish the existence of a supreme being by means of the famous ontological argument of Descartes is therefore merely so much labour and effort lost; we can no more extend our stock of (theoretical) insight by mere ideas than a merchant can better his position by adding a few noughts to his cash account.' (A602/B630)

True

I exist

I am a thinking thing

Intellect priority

Mind priority

C and D propositions are true

God exists

God is not a deceiver

Various metaphysical principles

Restrain the Will!

Arithmetic and Geometry

Doubt

Corporeal Things

I have a body

Sensory Experience

Astronomy

Medicine

Physics

Reading

1. THIS WEEK: Descartes' *Meditations*
MEDITATIONS 4 and 5

Reading

1. THIS WEEK: Descartes' *Meditations*
MEDITATIONS 4 and 5
2. NEXT WEEK: Descartes' *Meditations*
MEDITATION 6