

Handout 1
Meditation 3: Cartesian Reality

I. BEING/EXISTENCE

- A. Formal Being:** ordinary, garden-variety existence; what we might call real or actual existence (as opposed to the kind of existence fictional characters have); God, minds bodies, ideas & shapes all have it; Santa Claus, Zeus & unicorns do not
- B. Objective Being:** the existence of a thing *insofar as it is being thought of* or *insofar as it is being represented to the mind*; objective being is possessed only by ideas

II. REALITY does not simply mean *being* or *existence*. Being or existence, in both its formal and objective forms, is an all-or-none phenomenon: something has formal/objective being or it doesn't; my desk has formal being, a unicorn does not. Things that exist (formally or objectively) are ranked into different levels of reality. Roughly, reality is a measure of the amount of "thing-ness" something has. Here is a list of the three basic levels (or "grades" or "degrees") of reality something can have, running from greatest to least:

- A. infinite substance:** God
- B. finite substance**
1. minds
 2. bodies
- C. mode of substance**
1. thoughts or ideas: idea of my mom, fear of spiders, desire for chocolate
 2. sizes, shapes, etc.

III. IDEAS and only ideas have both **formal reality** (which is always the same: mode) and **objective reality** (which varies according to the amount of formal reality the object represented would have if it really, formally existed).

- A.** FR of $i(A)$ = FR of an idea (mode)
- B.** OR of $i(A)$ = FR of A if it were to exist

IV. EXAMPLES

FR: the sun	FR: unicorn
FR: size of the sun	FR: $i(\text{unicorn})$
FR: $i(\text{sun})$	OR: $i(\text{unicorn})$
FR: $i(\text{size of the sun})$	OR: unicorn
OR: $i(\text{sun})$	FR: $i[i(\text{sun})]$
OR: $i(\text{size of the sun})$	OR: $i[i(\text{sun})]$
OR: sun	OR: $i[i(\text{God})]$
OR: size of sun	OR: $i(\text{God})$

V. CAUSAL PRINCIPLES

- A.** There must be at least as much reality in the efficient & total cause of x as there is in x.
- B.** There must be at least as much FR in the cause of an idea as there is OR in the idea.