

I. The Background to Meditation III: What we know at the end of Meditation II (the Land of Seemings), and the Remaining Problem: How to get from the Cogito to Knowledge (Justified True Belief)?

II. Meditation III

--problem: can the mind actually know anything without imagination and senses?

1) Clear & Distinct Intuition ("perception")

--the law of intuition: $\text{Nec}(x) [(Cx \& Dx) \rightarrow Tx]$ = criterion of certainty = "lumen naturale" (natural light, i.e., reason)

--what is "intuition"?; what are C-ity and D-ness? 3 cases: neither C nor D; C but not D; C+D (D-ness entails C-ity).

--problem: metaphysical certainty vs. psychological certainty

--2 jobs: 1) prove that God exists (Meds III & V); 2) assuming God exists, prove that God is no deceiver.

2) Types of Ideas & Types of Reality (see Handout #1)

3) Analysis of the Proof for God's Existence from Ideas

--See Handout #2

I. What we know at end of Med. II:

a) I (thinking thing) exist.

What else?

b) The Land of Seemings:

Perceptual/Imaginal Seemings (sights, sounds, imagined sights, sounds, etc.)

Intellectual Seemings (ideas, judgments)

Problem: If Knowledge = Indubitable justified true belief, how can I get knowledge out of the Land of Seemings if I start only with knowledge of my existence as a thinking thing? That is, how can be certain that my beliefs about what I perceive, imagine, and think are justified and true if my existence as a thinker is all I can be sure of?

Descartes' Solution:

Not all seemings are created equal. Perceptual/imaginal seemings produce beliefs that the Evil Demon could make false (by making me "see" things which are not there).

Example: "The plate is blue" is true iff. there is a plate there and it is blue.

But if the Evil Demon has just produced a "seeming" in my conscious experience that looks like a blue plate, and there is no plate there really, then my belief is false.

What kind of seemings avoid this problem? Certain INTELLECTUAL SEEMINGS.

Example: Cogito argument. $Ti \rightarrow Ei$.

What makes this argument, and the associated belief ("I exist") true? RD's answer: the ideas involved are very clear (obvious) and distinct (cannot be confused with other ideas), and when I think about the argument, I cannot doubt that it is true.

Descartes' Leap:

Why not look for other beliefs which contain clear and distinct ideas that, when I think about them, seem inescapably true? If I can find some of these, maybe I can establish that my other common beliefs (perceptual/imaginal beliefs about the world) are trustworthy also.

Examples: $2+2=4$; triangles have three sides; God is a perfect being.

Let us call this test for whether a judgment/belief is indubitable the "clarity and distinctness criterion"

What Descartes does then:

RD takes this criterion and tries to prove, using only beliefs which satisfy that criterion, that God exists and is not a deceiver. If he can show this, he thinks he will have shown that our common perceptual beliefs about the world are also trustworthy.

Why? Because God created the Land of Seemings, and if He is not a deceiver, He would not permit me to have perceptual experiences that seem to be produced by objects outside myself, but which are not caused by such objects.

II. Meditation III

What are clarity & distinctness? RD says (elsewhere) clarity=obviousness, distinctness=can discriminate x from everything else.

Neither C nor D: Ieva's idea of quantum mechanics.

C but not D: Pain cases where pain is not distinguished from other pain states or experiences.

C&D: idea of triangle. Seems to involve ability to define (JP says D-ness entails C-ity in these cases, but I don't see it--ask him).

Problem: how to distinguish psychological certainty from metaphysical certainty? RD's reply: the part of mind here is reason, has to do with truth. Suppose everyone made a mistake of reason of a certain kind, there would have to be a design flaw in our being. Therefore, our creator must be flawed. So, RD says he can set aside this worry by proving 1) God exists, 2) God is not a deceiver or flaw maker. If he succeeds, then need not worry about a systematic error of reason.

2) Types of Ideas/Types of Reality

How does RD establish his C&D ideas are not just expressing psychological, rather than metaphysical, certainty? Shows that a) if he uses his reasonable faculty correctly and b) the creator of RD & this faculty is not a deceiver, then the products of the reasonable faculty cannot be doubted.

defns:

idea= a) mental content, i.e., an attribute of thinking substance, and b)
contains representational content (represents things in world)

adventitious idea: idea that enters mind from outside
and cannot be controlled by the will
(cannot be avoided, e.g.)

invented idea: idea produced by combining ad-
ventitious ideas--controllable by the
will.

innate idea: idea neither adventitious nor invented. Comes-
with-the-mind, "an original constituent of a mind".
RD's e.g.'s: logical ideas, idea of God, of Self, ideas
in mathematics.

RD thinks infinity and necessity are ideas we cannot acquire by any means
associated with everyday experience or via imagination.

formal reality= everyday, actual existence of any-
thing (esp'ly that can be given a
spatio-temporal description).

eminent reality: have all the reality of the formally
real plus causal power.

objective reality: the representational content of an
idea. If the idea does describe
something beyond it, it has material
truth. Any idea that purports to
represent a world object, but there is
no such object, is materially false.

formally true idea: this is possible bec. reality is a fact of
total complexity (objective intricacy)
for RD. Maximal obj. intricacy is
"infinity in all dimensions." That is
what perfection is for RD. The being
with maximal intricacy is God.

The Proof (see Handout #2).

Objections:

step 2: often enormous, complex effects arise from tiny, simple causes
(chaos phenomena or final straw cases).

reply: cannot isolate the last straw from all the others. Or so JP thinks
(correctly).

step 5: cases where you get more by way of idea than seems contained in
its cause (duck/rabbit, for e.g.): single cause, double content.

reply: total cause is existence of rabbits & ducks, not just the drawing.

