

### Descartes' First Proof of the Existence of God in Meditation III:

*Axiom:* There is at least as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in the effect of that cause.

*Axiom:* Something cannot arise from nothing.

*Axiom:* What is more perfect cannot arise from what is less perfect.

*Definition:* The nature of an idea is such that, of itself, it requires no formal reality except what it derives from my thought.

*Definition:* Objective mode of being belongs to ideas by their nature; formal mode of being belongs to the causes of ideas.

*Definition:* God is a substance that is infinite, independent, omniscient, omnipotent...

- (1) In order for a given idea to contain such and such objective reality, it must surely derive it from some cause which contains at least as much formal reality as there is objective reality in the idea.
- (2) There must be a cause which contains formally all the reality which is present objectively in the idea.
- (3) If the objective reality of an idea cannot come from me, it must come from something else.
- (4) The attributes of God are such that they could not have come from me.
- (5) They must have come from God; therefore, God exists.

### Descartes' Second Proof of the existence of God:

*Axiom:* The same power and action are needed to preserve something as would be needed to create something anew.

*Axiom:* There must be at least as much reality in the cause as in the effect.

- (1) Do I have enough power to preserve my own existence?
- (2) No – for I am simply a thinking thing; and if I had that power, I would know it. It must be a power outside me.
- (3) Since I am a thinking thing, what created me must also be a thinking thing and possess all the ideas of perfections of God.
- (4) Parents can't be responsible for creating and preserving me.
- (5) It must be God who created me and gave me the ideas of a perfect God.

### Descartes' Argument in Meditation V (The Ontological Argument):

- (1) The essence of God is to be a perfect being. (That is, I cannot conceive of God as not being a perfect being.)
- (2) Existence is a perfection.
- (3) Therefore, God exists. (Or I cannot conceive of God as not existing.)

### The 'Cartesian Circle':

- (1) Whatever I clearly and distinctly perceive is true.
- (2) I clearly and distinctly perceive that God is omnipotent, benevolent, and veracious.
- (3) Therefore, (God has created me in such a way that) everything that I clearly and distinctly perceive is true.

Another version of the problem:

Descartes is committed to the following two claims:

- (1) I can know (be certain) that ( $p$ ) whatever I perceive clearly and distinctly is true only if I first know (am certain) that ( $q$ ) God exists and is not a deceiver.
- (2) I can know (be certain) that ( $q$ ) God exists and is not a deceiver only if I first know (am certain) that ( $p$ ) whatever I perceive clearly and distinctly is true.

If (1) and (2) are both true, I can never be certain of either  $p$  or  $q$ .

### The Distinction of Mind and Body:

Version 1:

- (1) Whatever I clearly and distinctly understand is capable of being created by God so as to correspond exactly with my understanding of it.
- (2) I have a clear and distinct idea of my mind as a thinking thing and nothing else.
- (3) I have a clear and distinct idea of my body as an extended thing.
- (4) Therefore, mind and body can exist independently.

Version 2:

- (1) If  $A$  can exist apart from  $B$ , and vice versa,  $A$  is really distinct from  $B$ , and  $B$  from  $A$ .
- (2) Whatever I clearly and distinctly understand to be possible can be brought about by God.
- (3) If I clearly and distinctly understand the possibility that  $A$  exists apart from  $B$ , and  $B$  apart from  $A$ , then God can bring it about that  $A$  and  $B$  exist in separation.
- (4) If God can bring it about that  $A$  and  $B$  exist in separation, then  $A$  and  $B$  can exist apart and hence, by (1), they are distinct.
- (5) I can clearly and distinctly understand the possibility of  $A$  and  $B$  existing apart from each other, if: there are attributes  $\phi$  and  $\psi$ , such that I clearly and distinctly understand  $\phi$  belongs to the nature of  $A$ , and  $\psi$  belongs to the nature of  $B$  (and that  $\phi \neq \psi$ ), and I clearly and distinctly understand that something can be a complete thing if it has  $\phi$  even if it lacks  $\psi$  (or has  $\psi$  and lacks  $\phi$ ).
- (6) Where  $A$  is myself and  $B$  is my body, thought and extension satisfy the conditions of  $\phi$  and  $\theta$  respectively.
- (7) Therefore, I am really distinct from my body and can exist without it.