

MODERN PHILOSOPHY: FOURTH AND FIFTH MEDITATION

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1 Fourth Meditation

1.1 God can't be a deceiver

Deception: X deceives S if:

1. X provides misleading evidence E to S .
2. X believes that E is false.
3. X presents E to S with the purpose of making S form a false belief.
4. S forms a false belief on the basis of E .

God can never satisfy DECEPTION because it would be inconsistent with him being benevolent and the source of truth.

More specifically: the error in deception is a kind of *privation*:

Privation: A property, Φ is a privation for a substance, S iff (1) Φ is a property S should have but (2) S does not have Φ .

Error is a privation, because rational substances (i.e. thinking things) are supposed to have knowledge, not false beliefs.

However, finite subjects are prone to all sorts of false beliefs/lack of knowledge (privations). What, then, is the source of this error? Are these false beliefs the final step in a process of deception, or due to something else?

1.2 The Faculty of Judgment Analyzed

Intellect: The faculty of the mind that is ultimately the source of perception (both clear and distinct and non-clear and distinct, i.e. obscure and confused).

Will: The faculty of the mind that is responsible for affirming or denying the perceptions supplied by the intellect.

Scope Difference: The scope of the will intellect is finite, whereas the scope of the will is infinite: the intellect can only perceive a limited number of things, whereas the will can affirm or deny any perception that is put before it.

Judgment: A judgment obtains when the will affirms or denies some perception supplied by the intellect.

1.3 The Source of Error and Truth

Error: A false judgment obtains when a subject, *S*, affirms a perception that is not clear and distinct.

Truth: A true (and certain) judgment obtains when a subject, *S*, affirms a CDP.

Truth Rule: A subject, *S*, should not judge that *p* unless *S* has an **occurrent** CDP that *p*.

A first stab at defining CDP

CDP: A perception *P* is clear and distinct *iff*:

1. *P* is **clear**: what it represents is present and accessible.
2. *P* is **distinct**: its representational content is sharply separated from all other representational content, i.e. only the *essence* of the thing represented is included in *P* + its representational content does not involve contradictions ($p \ \& \ \neg p$).

CDP Possession: A subject, *S* possesses perception *P* that is a CDP *iff* *S*'s will is compelled to affirm *P*.

2 Fifth Meditation

Conceptual Distinction: X and Y are conceptually distinct *iff* a subject, S cannot clearly and distinctly perceive X without Y and cannot clearly and distinctly perceive Y without X .

The metaphysical implication of a conceptual distinction between X and Y is that X and Y are **identical**, i.e. not numerically distinct and sharing all the same properties.

Ontological “Argument”: When a subject, S , has a CDP of God, S sees that God has the attribute of necessary existence, and “thus” S intuits that God *necessarily* exists.