

Metaphysics Exercise 7

Phil. 100B, Winter 2011. Due Tues., Feb. 8.

Note this is to be done on-line via Question Cloud if possible. However, if this proves impossible for some reason, please hand this in as a hard copy or e-mail your answers to your TA.

1. The existence of error is a problem for the Meditator because:
 - a. She can't understand why God, who is not a deceiver, would allow error. But she has an idea of God, so she should understand everything about him.
 - b. If she were really essentially a thinking thing, as demonstrated in the Second Meditation, then whatever she thinks would be true.
 - c. According to her old opinions, the senses, in their deceptiveness, were the source of all errors. But she has shown that we do not know the world by our senses.
 - d. If she is to establish anything that is certain and likely to last in the sciences, she must learn how to avoid error.
 - e. According to the Bible, error is due to demons. So if she sometimes commits errors, there must be an evil demon at work, after all.
 - f. None of the above.

2. It makes a difference whether error is due to a "pure negation," rather than a "privation" (as those are defined on p. 100), because, according to Descartes:
 - a. A pure negation is a substance; a privation is an essence.
 - b. Every finite thing is, by definition, subject to pure negations. So even God could not make a finite substance not subject to imperfection in that sense.
 - c. A privation is an imperfection in a true (objective) sense, but a pure negation is imperfect only in an eminent sense.
 - d. If there are any privations at all, then the world as a whole is imperfect. Therefore it cannot contain a perfect being. But this would be inconsistent with the conclusion of the Third Meditation, that God exists.
 - e. (a) and (c).
 - f. (b) and (d).

3. The Meditator says that she has an absolutely free will, and that the exercise of that will sometimes leads to error and sin. But she also says (on p. 104) that God could have made her such that she would never go wrong about anything. She explains that this makes sense because:
 - a. God could have made her free will better, such that it would always freely choose the right thing.
 - b. God could have failed to preserve her free will on every occasion where it

would otherwise have led to error. Nothing can continue in existence even for an instant without being constantly preserved by God.

c. God could have arranged her other faculties (in particular, her attention and memory) in a way which would allow them to correct her free will.

d. God could have ensured that she would never encounter the type of situation in which her free potentially leads to error.

e. (a), (b) and (c).

f. (b), (c) and (d).