

Essay

The Meditations on First Philosophy

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Due date

In Rene Descartes' "Meditations on First Philosophy", he presents several arguments regarding the existence of God. The arguments include the causal argument, the ontological argument, and the argument from the idea of a perfect supreme being. This essay shall explain and critically evaluate the trademark argument (found in Meditation II) and the ontological argument (found in Meditation V) and further discuss whether it is possible to prove the existence of God in philosophy.

Descartes based his trademark argument on the idea that for one to doubt or think about anything, it must be intrinsically real. This argument highlights that something, including thoughts, cannot come from nothing and are therefore part of a greater origin. Even though this argument does not directly provide proof regarding the existence of God, it serves as a basic foundation for his subsequent arguments. He, therefore, acknowledges that God exists since there is a concept of "GOD". He expounds his notion by arguing that the concept of "God" is innate in humans and acts as a trademark that was stamped in people's minds by their creator (Descartes, 2002).

The major merit of the trademark argument is the use of logic and reason to come up with conclusions regarding God's existence. Moreover, this argument provides a framework for understanding the relationship between the mind, body, and external world. This way, humans have an opportunity to deeply create a connection with their origin (who is assumed to be GOD). However, this argument over relies on an abstract concept and assumptions that are not founded on reality. It strongly depends on intuition and a strong belief that our minds are intrinsically linked to a greater being with no tangible evidence. Overall, the trademark argument is convincing, and influential and partially explains why humans are aware of the concept of "God". Its flaws are however subject to massive debate and criticism.

The ontological argument on the other hand seeks to prove the existence of God through an argument based on the concept of a perfect supreme being. This argument has three parts; humans, the idea of God as a perfect being, and the idea that it is more perfect to exist than not to exist and therefore God must exist (Descartes, 2002). Descartes argues that God exists to be in possession of all the perfections that are needed by the world. This argument presents the existence and supremacy of God as a necessity to humans, and not as a debatable concept.

A major merit of this argument is the pure use of gradual logic to come up with a final conclusion. Instead of providing several distinct explanations regarding God's existence, this argument provides successive logical explanations all proving the existence of God. Additionally, this argument does not rely on external factors and views the existence of God (his supremacy and perfection) as an innate need of humans. This argument however has various deficiencies such as the overdependence on the assumption that the world needs a supreme perfect creature. Also, the need for a supremely perfect being does not automatically assure its existence. Besides, this argument relies on priori reasoning which does not reflect the reality of nature (Descartes, 2002). Generally, this argument provides a valuable contribution to universal arguments regarding God's existence. Its validity is however doubtful and prone to a myriad of critics.

God plays a big role in Descartes' philosophy and acts as the center of his conceptual thinking and arguments. He argues that God is an essential being who guarantees the truth of distinct and clear perceptions, and can therefore be used as a foundation of certainty and knowledge. This way, the idea of a supreme being serves as the necessary component of Descartes's philosophical system, providing a framework for understanding the true nature of humans, their minds, reality, and certainty (Descartes, 2022).

Despite Descartes' attempts to prove the existence of God, the topic of whether it is possible to prove the existence of a supreme being is a subject of debate among philosophers. The existence of God cannot be proven due to limited human knowledge and reason. Moreover, the concept of God is also ambiguous and complex since it differs among different races and nations. Different people have different ideas of who God is and the role He plays in the universe. It is therefore difficult to come up with a unified concept of God that can be proved to exist.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding the existence of God, we do not necessarily need to prove the existence of God to be certain about anything. While some philosophers might argue that the belief in God is necessary to provide knowledge and certainty, knowledge can be obtained by empirical observation, logical reasoning, and scientific research (Nagasawa, 2011). We can easily be certain about the existence of the things we see, experience, and feel without basing them on a supernatural being.

Regardless of one's religious beliefs, it is a good idea to ground philosophy and science on a metaphysical supposition concerning God's existence and goodness. Such grounding can provide a foundation for objective moral values, meaning, and purpose in life. Additionally, it can provide a consistent and coherent worldview that is familiar and consistent with human experience. This way, people around the world, despite their background, can follow basic life principles and universal guidelines that do not necessarily follow supernatural teachings but uphold respect to human rights and humanity.

References

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