

Chapter 6

Descartes, Fifth Meditation

6.1 Homework

Readings :

- Descartes, Meditation V
- Objections and Replies:
 - a) Fifth O and R: CSM II, 224, 262-3 (point 2)
 - b) First O and R: CSM II, 72, 83-5
 - c) Second O and R: CSM II, 89-90, 100-105 (thirdly)
 - d) Fourth O and R: CSM II, 150, 171.
- BGD 7 (Nolan and Nelson)
- Useful Reading: BDG 8 (Hatfield)

Study Questions :

1. How does Descartes recover the truths of pure and abstract mathematics?
2. How do you understand Descartes' claim that we are "not so much learning something new as remembering what [we] knew before" when we consider mathematical truths? Which ancient doctrine does this remind you of?
3. How do you understand Descartes' claim that mathematical truths are "immutable and eternal"? What is the argument that he provides in support of this claim?

4. What is Descartes' argument against the idea that we get our ideas of mathematical objects and of their properties from the senses?
5. Reconstruct Descartes' argument for the existence of God. What kind of proof is this? Do you find it convincing? Why, why not?

Text Analysis : *no text analysis this week due to the fact that you have the prospectus to turn in.*

6.2 Descartes: Fifth Meditations

Recovery of pure and abstract mathematics – Descartes' rationalism
Mathematical truths are eternal truths which are innate in us.

The Proof for the existence of God – Ontological argument

- A proof a priori (45):

- Objections and Replies:

1. Objection 1: essence vs existence

2. Objection 2: “my thought does not impose any necessity on things”

3. Objection 3: no need to presuppose that I have an idea of God as containing all perfection

The Cartesian Circle – “I see that the certainty of all other things depends on [the fact that a non deceitful God exists], so that without it nothing can ever be perfectly known”