

# History of philosophy: modern phil 3010 mr. potter topics critical thinking examp...

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



## **Why Descartes provided the theory of nature of human error**

The aim of the Descartes fourth meditation is to deal with a problem that arises within him because of his conception of God as perfect and hence as all-good. The problem is how to explain why a perfect, all-good God allows error. There is no explicit reference to what is usually called the “ problem of evil” in the society-how God tolerates evil and allows people to damn themselves-it is obvious that the problem of evil that Descartes addresses is of major concern to the any given society.

According to Descartes, many people believe that making mistakes is just of their control. They find it easier to put the blame On God for allowing circumstances to overpower them. But without free will, and so without the responsibility of willingly doing wrong, people could not earn salvation by their righteous choices, good works, and willful avoidance of wrong doing. If human beings are so mortal agents, one of the most important aspects that they should have is free will to enhance them to conduct themselves according to their preferences. they Though he adds an ingenious element, Descartes argues that it’s in the nature of man to err especially due to the gift of free will.

The question arises why our wills prompt hasty judgments. It is not out rightly clear if it is a dysfunction of our will that causes us to make mistakes. If the will were the cause of our errors, would man blame God for the failure to give him the ability to conduct himself with perfection? However, it is important to understand that God created us with all the faculties that we would need to avoid making mistakes. Therefore, man’s nature to err can

only be a subject of his own will. It is we who exercise our wills, who judge rashly, because we are driven by our interests and desires. We wrong because of our inability to use our sense properly especially in the rational analysis of our actions. For instance, when one is afraid of the outcomes of a certain action, however right it might be, he/she would prefer to do something different just to avoid the anticipated negative impact. The two most important aspects that God gave man as instruments for judging between what is right and what is wrong are the will and intellect. However, our inability to exercise our control over the two is our self-centered mindedness-we only want things to happen the way we want them and not necessarily in the most appropriate way. The fault for error is ours, not our Creator's.

### **The theory**

The theory asserts that everything that is within man comes from God. As far as the ability to choose between right and wrong is concerned, God gave man the faculty of judgment. Owing to His very nature, he would not give man something that would mislead or rather misguide him an aspect that Descartes uses as depicted in his fourth meditation. He believes that God did not give anything to man that would cause him to disappoint him e. g. by being deceptive.

Since all faculties in the human nature are received from God, it follows that man should always be focused on things of God to avoid veering off his course. He should seek to fulfill the will of God irrespective of the circumstances that one might encounter. The source of error thus occurs

when man does not remain focused on the will of God in his life. Mistakes arise when tries to maneuver his own way tin what Descartes terms as ' nothingness'. This makes one to lose his/her reference to the will of God. However, unless one fully understands the will of God, they will continue to do mistakes. God is a supreme being and no human mind has been able to contain the nature of God as well as his will. Due to the limitation of human nature to do so, man ends up doing things that are out of God's will unknowingly.

According to Descartes' theory, man cannot rely on his intellect alone in drawing the line between right and wrong. When ideas are presented to the mind, in most instances the judgments drawn from such ideas are based on one's natural understanding of the matter at hand rather than allowing the will to establish the judgment. Judgments are, after all, facts and as such, they require volition to be performed. Error arises because our free will prompts hasty judgments; precipitous assent or rejection of ideas of deficient bias. Additionally, the will sometimes prompts assent rejection of ideas that we do not even understand. Error then is due to rash judgments prompted by unlimited wills.

### **Descartes view about the nature of God and my argument about it**

In my opinion, Descartes' theory and the nature of God as far as human nature is concerned is wanting. He does not acknowledge the position of the two God-given instruments which when used well can make man error free: the will and intellect. Therefore, he should not seek to justify why man is constantly repeating same mistakes in the society since God already gave

him what is required to overcome such.

In any event, this much-that since God, the author of one's nature is not a deceiver, when one recognizes that they are not subject to error-could be arrived at quickly on the basis of what Descartes takes himself to have established through his meditation. Although this result is nontrivial, it is very abstract; it still remains to work this result out more concretely. 'Cognizing well', "Judging" and "error" function as placeholders. To enhance a better understanding of his theory, one would require a detailed account of the next level of detail e. g. what judging is (and what the will is), to explain, in the context of judging, what cognizing well and cognizing poorly are as well as. Additionally, one would need a detailed account of what judging well and judging poorly interact with perceiving clearly and distinctly and, along with that, to explain what counts as misuse of one's faculties (and so how error enters the picture). Cognizing well (in the context of judging) turns out to be affirming or denying where one has clearly and distinctly perceived and withholding judgment where he/she has not, and cognizing poorly turns to be affirming or denying where one has not clearly and distinctively perceived. The objects of faculties bring with them a certain normative dimension (in one sense of "normative"), standards, success and failure. Since seeking truth is built into what an intellect is, an intellect succeeds when it achieves truth and fails when it is in error, just as seeking good is built into what a will is, so that a will succeeds when it realizes good and fails when it does not. One might note that since, on this conception, the intellect has the same sort of internal relation to the truth as the will does to good, there is no room for the question: Why judge in accordance with the truth? (Why not instead

judge e. g., so as to maximize some sort of psychic comfort?), any more than there is room for the question: Why want good? This is what an intellect (or faculty of judgment) is, a faculty oriented toward truth, in a way that will is a faculty oriented toward good.

It would appear that the errors that we make in assenting to nonrepresentational or distorted areas and in taking properties like colors to be things themselves, as Descartes implies are caused by the failure of our Creator to put the tools we would require in their most efficient way.

Theologians would argue that this aspect seeks to lower the capability of God both in his power in creation but also the ability to control the work of His hands-man. God either intended to create us better but could not do so because of limited power. It would imply that God missed out on some of the aspects that we would require to please Him which is ultimately not the case. On the contrary, man has failed to recognize his purpose and the things that God has given him to fulfill that purpose.

Since the fourth meditation has seemingly reduced the power and purpose of God in life, Descartes is obliged to explain the possibility of error in order to impugn either God's omnipotence or infinite goodness. Descartes cannot let his arguments in the first three mediations imply that God is somehow responsible for our mistakes; he should explain error in a way that does not impugn either God's power or benevolence.

Given that Descartes' argument is supposed to establish the existence of a perfect, omnipotent, omniscient all-good God, and God created us with free will, Descartes' fourth meditation seems to imply that God was under no obligation from beneficence to create us with perfect intellects. From

everything that we know about God, He did not create man with inadequacies as far as his ability to make good choices and decisions is concerned. Man should strive to live an error free life as it is the only way that proves the existence of a perfect God . However, it is important to mention that there might be differences in how people handle different situations. This is based on the fact human beings are distinct. When faced with a similar situation that requires them to think rationally and respond, different people may have different responses. However, it does not necessarily mean that their response should be erroneous. For instance, one's culture would have a great impact on how he/she reacts to a certain situation. With the many cultures around the globe, it would not be justifiable to term one's response as erroneous because of differing with someone else's opinion. We should learn to appreciate the diversity of human character i. e. the difference in personalities while at the same time embracing the universality of the will of God.

The reason the identification of falsity and error sounds odd today is that we often think of truth and falsity as primarily attaching to propositions, thoughts, perceptions, or some sort of representations. The idea of a proposition's (thought's, perception's) having a 'truth value' comes first and making a true judgment comes out to be something like the assigning of the correct 'truth value' to a proposition. On this conception, to be in error is to assign an incorrect truth-value to a proposition (perception or thought), either the value 'false' to a true proposition or the value 'true' to a false proposition. In conclusion, Descartes theory the nature of human error is based on the nature of God and that everything that the innate man has comes from God.

It holds that God is a supreme being who is righteous and incapable of leading people to falsity. Wickedness is one of the key aspects that could lead someone to make errors in certain areas of his/her life. God is perfect and requires such perfection from people therefore he cannot possibly deposit wickedness in the hearts of men. However, Descartes implies that one of the reasons that man has not been able to be as perfect as God is that God did not give him all the full measure of both the will and intellect required to make sound judgments. According to him, this has caused the inability of man to choose between good and bad especially in cases where there is a 'conflict' between the actual situation and what he/she wants. Additionally, he depicts that natural instincts at times override his intellect an aspect that he blames God for. I do not agree with Descartes theory since it fails to acknowledge that it is the duty of man to make sound judgments. He has all he needs to avoid making mistakes-he has both intellect and self will.