

Descartes fifth meditation existence of god philosophy essay



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In Descartes Fifth Meditation he speaks about the existence of God and why he believes that he can prove the existence of God. He talks about God being the most perfect being and also suggests that he can prove Gods existence with the fact that God gave him this idea that he exists since there is no possible way that he could have come up with this idea himself. Both of these explanations that are given by Descartes I believe are not very solid or sound arguments for the existence of God. In this paper I will argue against the idea that you cannot prove Gods existence with Descartes explanations of why he believes you can.

Descartes argument for the existence of God is quite prevalent in his Fifth Meditation. In this Meditation Descartes describes how God is the “ most perfect being” by saying that if he truly is perfect he lacks nothing. Therefore, if this God lacks nothing he cannot lack existence, so he must exist. As Descartes states, “ Hence it is just as much of a contradiction to think of God (that is, a supremely perfect being) lacking existence (that is, lacking a perfection), as it is to think of a mountain without a valley” (Descartes 203). He compares God to a mountain and his existence to a valley. He is simply stating that saying God does not exist is like saying a mountain does not have a valley. Since you cannot say a mountain does not have a valley, how could you say that God does not exist? He is saying that these two things, a mountain and a valley are inseparable, just as God and his existence are inseparable.

Descartes also suggests that it is not his thought that makes God exist, but the fact that the God exists that determines his thinking. “ It is not that my thought makes it so, or imposes any necessity on any thing; on the contrary, <https://assignbuster.com/descartes-fifth-meditation-existence-of-god-philosophy-essay/>

it is the necessity of the thing itself, namely the existence of God, which determines my thinking in this respect" (Descartes 203). He cannot come up with the idea that God exists. Descartes has this idea that God exists because God has an existence and allows him to have this idea of him existing. So it must be true that God exists if this "most perfect being" has given him the ability to produce such a thought.

There are however some contradictions you may run into when facing Descartes argument for the existence of God. "For my thought does not impose any necessity on things; and just as I may imagine a winged horse even though no horse has wings, so I may be able to attach existence to God even though no God exists" (Descartes 203). Here he is saying that you can imagine anything you want, but that does make it so. Just as you are free to think of a horse with wings, even though such a creature does not exist, you are free to think of a God of existing even though such a thing may not be true.

Another contradiction you may run into is what exactly does a "most perfect being" entitle? If we as humans are so imperfect how could we come up with such an idea of a "most perfect being"? Descartes would suggest that we cannot, that God has given us this idea of what perfection is. Even if God had given us the idea of a "most perfect being" how could it be possible for us to recognize the attributes of what a "most perfect being" entitles if we are so imperfect ourselves. It could also be possible that if we did recognize the attributes of what a "most perfect being" entitles, who is to say that different people would not have different ideas of what "perfect" means to them. There could be a million different things, which a million different

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people believe to be the attributes of a “ most perfect being”. So for example if two different people associate different descriptions of what a “ most perfect being” is, are they speaking of the same God that they believe exists or would it all come down to one ultimate God?

The argument for Gods existence that Descartes puts forth seems to have a few weaknesses and can also be argued against in multiple ways. I believe that Descartes does not bring a sufficient argument to the table about the existence of God. His arguments can be broken down and contradicted in the few ways that I have stated throughout my paper. This is an argument that has clearly gone on for a very long time and will continue to be a major debate throughout life. It is something I do not believe will every clearly be solved, but will always be talked about. Overall, I do not believe that Descartes thinking and explanations of why the existence of God is real are very valid. I have clearly only slightly began to break down Descartes thinking and it would be quite possible to go into even more depth about why his arguments are not very solid arguments in my opinion.