

1. Quoting from the text, explain in your own words Descartes' trademark argument for Gods existence.

The trademark argument (also known as the causal argument) tries to prove Gods existence through the fact that we have an idea of him. This argument rests on Descartes' definition of cause and effect, which he considers a priori.

This idea, that God is an infinite being, he reasons is innate left on our brain as his stamp or trademark much like a potter leaves on his pots. *"God, at my creation, implanted this idea in me, that it might serve, as it were, for the mark of the workman impressed on his work"*

This idea of infinity must be innate because a finite thing like a human cannot come up with the idea of something infinite *'just as stone can only be produced by something which contains stone'*. If we have an idea of a perfect being then it must exist. A cause, he argues also, must have as much reality as its effect. It cannot be less than the idea of an infinite being because this would be like a baby fighting a lion and winning.

Mr Right, the perfect man who appears in your dreams then, by this logic, must exist. So where is he and what is his number? Your idea of a perfect man is based upon or inspired the qualities or people you see around you, he does not exist. The idea of God being infinite however cannot be gained through our senses. There is nothing from which we can get the idea of infinity thus it must be innate. It is only logical therefore for God to have left this idea imprinted on our brain.

2. Explain and illustrate with an example the causal adequacy principle. What does it have to do with the trademark argument?

Causal Adequacy Principle means that any object must have as its cause something that contains at least all the traits of the object if not more. Descartes uses the example of a stone, saying that it cannot be produced by anything that does not contain everything to be found in the stone. Similarly, heat cannot be produced by anything that does not contain the same order of perfection as the heat. The purpose of this premise is to reinforce the saying that nothing comes from nothing (Latin: ex nihilo nihil fit).

I have an idea of a perfect being; it must contain in reality all the features that are contained merely objectively in my idea. He cannot think of a being perfect because he is an imperfect being or can the idea have come from a union of various other ideas that he has, for there would have to be an infinite regress that would in any event trace back to an original cause of the idea. Thus, the ultimate cause of Descartes' idea of God must possess all the traits that Descartes sees it to have, and therefore it can be concluded that God necessarily exists.

Its flaw is that it suggests that there can be no cases of objects being "greater than the sum of their parts." For example, the strength inherent in a bridge must, be contained in the girders and rivets that make it up. If the bridge did not get its strength from these basic parts,

then it seems that they came from nowhere. We can also say that helium, which is caused by the fusion of hydrogen atoms, possesses properties that were not present in the helium atoms. There are many things which possess properties that were not present in their ingredients.

3. Explain one criticism we have studied and comment on whether you think it means the argument does not work

“Existence is not a predicate,” this is saying its not descriptive like fluffy. Kant was one of the first to use this criticism. By saying that “white sheep exist”, existence is not being attributed to our concept of white sheep in the way “white sheep are fluffy” does. It might be said that white sheep do not solely live in the imagination, hence they can be said to exist, but this is to misconstrue the argument. The concept of white sheep remains the same, whether or not they actually exist. Likewise, the concept of God, part of which is his existence, is not actually reduced by asserting that He does not exist. That a supremely perfect being would have as his essence existence, yet there is no supremely perfect being is not contradictory. It would only be contradictory to assign two predicates to an object that conflict with each other: to say that a triangle has four sides, for instance, would be an example of this. Likewise, Moore pointed out that to say “All tame tigers exist” can be negated in a way, which “Some tame tigers exist”, cannot. This also seems to suggest that the verb “to exist” does operate in a different manner to normal predicates. Of course, it could be argued that “some tame tigers exist in fiction” allows a negation of the original, but this involves using a different interpretation of the verb than the one currently used.

When the verb is used in this context, it is certain that existence in reality is meant, not existence in the understanding, or in fiction, etc. Thus despite Descartes’ claims to have a clear and distinct idea of God, in which his essence entails his existence, the ontological argument can be said to be less than convincing. Descartes’ clear and distinct idea of God is just that: clear and distinct in his understanding. Although this has been already touched on above, it is worth repeating: it can be effectively argued that Descartes’ understanding of God does not mean He actually exists. There may not be any winged horses, but the concept can be grasped, likewise there may not be a God, but the concept can be grasped. The ontological argument consistently appears to be defining Him into existence, even though its supporters, Descartes among them, claim that this is not the case.