Here D. proposes a COSMOLOGICAL PROOF (basically *a posteriori*)

He has to proceed from the EGO to the world in order to fulfill his purpose of rebuilding knowledge

* **Whatever I perceive with the same degree of certainty as my own EXISTENCE, must be true**, **and since I perceive my EXISTENCE CLEARLY AND DISTINCTLY, what I perceive in such a way must correspond to reality** (knowledge must be clear and distinct to be a real knowledge)
* For this to be true, I must refute the ‘’evil genius’’ argument of an overwhelmingly deceiving God. He starts from the I in order to get to know the world (find something other from the I)
* Thus I must demonstrate that: 1. God EXISTS (epistemological problem)

2. He is not a deceiver

* NB.: D. doesn’t want to convert us to the True Faith but he posits God as an epistemological necessity (so that we can be sure that our tools to discover the world are not fallacious)
* It follows that atheists cannot be sure their nature, their knowledge and their instruments to gain this are robust
* THE GENERAL RULE (OF KNOWLEDGE):

I am a thinking thing -> this notion is CLEAR AND DISTINCT -> A real knowledge has this feature

* **The Reason for doubting**, D. tries to prove this by contradiction: God is not a deceiver (not because of Goodness but because He’s Almighty), since for him it would be easy to deceive me in everything I am certain of, but I have proven he doesn’t
* So there’s no reason to doubt of Him not being a deceiver, but D. has yet to prove He exists

The Present Perception is not doubtful

* What is doubtful is memory
* What I can never be deceived about, is the fact I exist.

Removing the deceiving God hypothesis

* I do not know either if there is a God and if he is a deceiver but I need to examine this.
* If I do not get through this doubt I will not be able to go on with my research

The Starting Point

* My notion of God
* I cannot start from anything different than my thoughts because I do not know if something other than me exists

Two A Posteriori demonstrations

* From the idea of God to the existence of God
* From the existence of the I who has an idea of God to the existence of God
* CLASSIFICATION OF THOUGHTS
* IDEAS (they represent SUBSTANCES, Tamquam = they are like real images of things):
* INNATE, e.g. the Truth, what is a thing, etc.
* ADVENTITIOUS, coming from the outside; e.g. the Sun
* FICTITIOUS, i.e. invented by me
* VOLITIONS/ EMOTIONS and JUDGEMENT (in judgments there are things we can be wrong about)

Different amount of reality of ideas and The Principle of Cause and Effect

* They all have different **DEGREES OF REALITY**, with the CAUSE having equal or more D.o.R. than the EFFECT (since *ex nihilo nihil fit*); [Cd >Ed] E It cannot have a higher degree of reality than C because, where would that degree come from?  
  “So it is clear to me... That the ideas in me are like images which can easily fall short of the perfection of the things from which they are taken, but which cannot contain anything greater or more perfect”
* Even IDEAS need a CAUSE and are subject to this PRINCIPLE OF CAUSE & EFFECT, as at a certain point of the chain of IDEAS we necessarily arrive at a real thing, that has at least the same FORMAL REALITY than our IDEA has OBJECTIVE REALITY
* Ideas that represent substances to me amount to something more/ contain within themselves more objective reality than ideas which merely represents modes or accidents. I.e the idea of the Lion (objective reality) has a certain amount of reality, while **the actual lion has a formal reality** (the reality of things outside our mind)
* Degree of Reality > Higher > Closer to perfection > God = Perfect

According to D., the IDEA of a perfect Supreme God contains more OBJECTIVE REALITY than any other IDEAS

* This is because to be more perfect than something means to be more real, since IDEAS ≈ PICTURES (which comes from NATURAL LIGHT, the part of the human mind grasping the 1st Philosophy through undoubtable axioms, as they are the very means through which we reason)
* Natural Light is an expression used to underscore the principles we cannot doubt. They do not correspond to reality but they are true even if nothing exists outside my mind, they are just inside our mind and they are not subjected to doubt.

**From ideas to reality (from objective reality to formal reality)**

Mind that in D. OBJECTIVE REALITY = reality of the object of the IDEA,

while FORMAL REALITY = reality of the things outside my mind

* Although the reality which I am considering in my ideas is merely an objective  
  reality, there must be a formal reality from which my ideas come from and in  
  which are found the causes of my ideas.
* However at this point we still have to find a FORMAL REALITY that is the cause

of every IDEA, otherwise we’ll be tangled in an infinite regression

* The EGO couldn’t be the cause of each one of my IDEAS, because I am finite

And yet I can think of something infinite and nothing infinite things prevents

them from being generated by something else

Different ideas and different possible causes.

- Other than the idea of myself, there are many other ideas (including the idea of God)

- If I look at my ideas of corporeal things I can legitimately say that they can be originated from me.

3 Ideas that I find within myself:

1. The idea of myself (I = finite substance)
2. The idea of corporeal things (idea of finite substances)
3. The idea of God (idea of the infinite)

**Only the idea of God cannot derive from myself or from the combination of different ideas (1st Demonstration of God’s existence)**

Thus The IDEA of God cannot be generated by me, as He is the SUBSTANCE that is INFINITE, ALMIGHTY, etc. (all attributes that could not have been originated from me alone) and neither I nor the other finite things are. But D. says we can understand “infinite” since it is positive.

Premise: infinite precedes finite.

1. I cannot think the conception of infinite as deriving from the negation of the conception of finite (like in Medieval Philosohpy). “I clearly understand that there is more reality in an infinite substance than in a finite one, hence that my perception of the infinite (God) is in some way prior to my perception of the finite (myself). The idea of a infinite being that I have in myself can only be caused by the formal reality of an inifinte being
2. Since I can desire something (I lack of something), I am not wholly perfect. But I could not doubt my perfection without having the idea of a more perfect being in myself that helped me recognize my defects.

Idea of God > Infinite quantity of reality > I cannot be the cause > An infinite being is the cause > God exists

The idea of God is “The Truest and Most Clear and Distinct”

* He is the most CLEAR AND DISTINCT IDEA I can conceive though I can’t grasp Him completely because of my finite nature (only His ESSENCE is fully known, as D. would demonstrate in the Vth Med.). Plus all the attributes that imply perfection are present in God either formally or eminently, this is enough to make the idea that I have of God the “most clear and distinct of all my ideas”.
* I (a finite being) could be the cause of something INFINITE, but the latter precedes the finite, so only God could be the cause of the IDEA of God, so God exists

**2nd DEMONSTRATION: THE CAUSE OF THE EXISTENCE OF AN “I” WHO HAS THE IDEA OF GOD**

* From whom would I derive my existence? Surely from beings that are less perfect than God. In fact, if I derived my existence from myself I should not lack anything at all, from the moment that I would have given myself all the perfections of which I have any idea (becoming like God).

Eternity is not an objection

* Maybe I am eternal, I have no cause and I was always here
* Time is not contiguous, it’s a distinct series of moments; each one need a cause. So I need to find a cause of my persistence here.
* It is not possible for me to sustain reality at every time, while there is certainly a reason that continuously creates the world and sustains it so that it doesn’t collapse.
* Since creation is in every moment, God chooses to sustain the world, otherwise it would collapse
* If I were the cause of myself I am the cause of a SUBSTANCE subject to modifications, and all my IDEAS are modifications of my thought, so it would seem as if I can create SUBSTANCES (I can also think of an INFINITE SUBSTANCE)

Since my IDEA of God includes a variety of attributes that I lack, I cannot be the cause of myself, otherwise I would have given to me all of God’s attributes.

The formal cause: The definition of the essence of God is the reason of the existence of God

Neither my parents or other causes less perfect than God can have produced me.

* Since there must be at least as much in the cause as in the effect. So what caused me, must be itself a thinking things that possesses the idea of all the perfections which I attribute to God

If the cause of my existence can exist by itself is God; if it is not, we cannot regress to infinity and finally we would arrive to God. We may enquiry where existence derives from:

* **God**: Since God is powerful it can exist by itself and also have the power to posses all the perfections which I conceive to be in God. On the other hand, if we keep looking for another answer we will regress to infinity until we reach the ultimate cause which is always God

The infinite regress is impossible

* In fact we cannot regress to infinity since it is impossible: we are not dealing with the cause that produced me in the past, but also with the cause that preserves me at the present moment.
* There is nothing that has not a cause, but self-causation is contradictory (something exists before existing) even if God is CAUSA SUI

Exclusion of the “parents” solution, only God can have cause my existence

* My parents certainly did not make me, nor they preserve me now. So I must exclude them as a cause from the start
* I must conclude that the mere fact that I exist and have within me an idea of a most perfect being (God) provides a very clear proof that God indeed exists

The origin of the idea of God: it is innate

* What’s left is proving how I received this idea from God
* It surely did not arrive to me through my senses. It was not invented by me either since “I am plainly unable either to take away anything from it or to add anything to it”.
* The only remaining alternative is that it is innate in me, just as the idea of myself is.

**God is not a deceiver**

* I could exist by myself with the finite nature that I have. I exist
* **It could be impossible for me to have the idea of God in the case he did not existed.**
* Since God is perfect and a perfect being does not miss anything for definition, HE CANNOT A DECEIVER. It is not because he does not want to be a deceiver.

Wikipedia does this better…