**Descartes’ fourth meditation: Truth and Falsity**

3rd Med. , an example of theodicy

* Theodicy is every argument that tries to justify God from the presence of evil in the World

Descartes uses consciously arguments that derive from Theology, like Acquinas used to justify God from the evil in the World

D. Uses all arguments from tradition and changed them completely. He used them for different scopes and arrives to different conclusions.

The end is not a complaint about the fact human beings cannot but make errors, the conclusion of this med. is that we have good instruments to always reach the truth.

If God is not a deceiver why the error exists?

If God is omnipotent, omniscient and good why does evil exists?

**God is not a Deceiver**

* To deceive = sign of imperfection. It is impossible that he deceives us because of his nature (not for his will)
* We are not so powerful as we think, people that lie are not powerful (are weak).

**My faculty of judgement is a good instrument**

* God is perfect so he made me in a perfect way so that I do not make mistakes. I am a good work from God’s POV.
* It is not because of something that I lack that I make mistake
* But if it is not God or the way I am.. If my faculties are good how can I err?

I err because I am limited

* Metaphysical Reason of the Evil
* From POV of the part of me that came from God, I cannot be wrong
* I am limited —> Finite Being (at a middle point between being and nothing).
* I err because I am limited —> not infinite as God

First Self Objection: error is not just the lack of something, but the lack of something that is due

* i.e. —> Fish has no wings, so there is a limitation in that case. But it isn’t something that is due to the fish.
* I.e. —> Man is Blind (has no eyes) —> lacks something that is due to the man
* D. Says this limitation is my nature —> when we talk about error = we miss something we have to have.
* D. Is saying —> are we sure that our nature is good? If god did not give us the proper instruments to acknowledge reality we would not be responsible for our error, it’s God’s fault. If god can be accused of not giving us those instruments, it’s not our fault.

I cannot know the ends of God

* We do not know what is God’s aim, plus he is powerful and goes beyond our comprehension
* We cannot absolutely investigate in the nature in general and look for the final causes. It is totally useless in physics

New Argument Pro-God: perfection is in the whole, not in the parts

* When we look at God’s job we shall opt to see for the bigger picture and not just at one small thing
* Since defects might be imperfect if they existed by their own, but their become perfect if meant to be part of a bigger system (like the universe)

(The nature of my) Error depends on the combination of intellect (faculty of knowledge) and will (faculty of choice/freedom)

* All intellect does is perceiving ideas

In itself intellect is good

* Intellect enables me to perceive the ideas which are subjects for possible judgements.
* Anyway countless things may exist without there being any corresponding ideas in me.. so I lack of them

In itself the will too is good, My faculty of understanding is finite, but my will is infinite like God’s

* Every time our “will” /desire gets satisfied, we will/desire something else again..
* First Definition: A faculty that is infinite as well as God. It Is the only property that can be defined as infinite.

The Nature of the Will is (Second Definition) and the two kinds of freedom

1. Freedom of Choice: To do or not to do something (to affirm or deny)
2. Spontaneity: It is not freedom of indifference, but as the absence of constriction/ bounds. We are not obliged to do what we are doing. For being free is sufficient that I am the cause of my actions.

The cause of error: the disproportion between the intellect and the will

* Judgement, I attribute one property to the subject —> i.e. the wall is yellow
* When I judge what is do is precisely this. This attribution is act of the will, not of the intellect, which simply receives an idea and connects

The meditations as an example

The right “epistemological” behavior

Why I am erring?

* When the content of my understanding is not a clear and distinct idea, but it is an obscure and difficult idea, of the essence of the body
* Wait for the ideas of the intellect to be clear enough = sure of not making errors
* If we rush through it = we err —> if don’t it is because we are lucky

I cannot accuse God for my faults = Theodicy

* Nature of the will
* I cannot pose limits to the will without destroying its nature

God could have made me better, but considered as a whole the universe is better with some defects

* I cannot protest against the role God gave me.

If I behave properly I cannot err

I have the instruments to reach for the truth and if I cant its my fault.

* When the content is clear and distinct I cannot deny it.