

## Candidate 2 evidence

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1.	<p>Descartes project to establish rational certainty for his beliefs has reached something of an obstacle at the end of Meditation 2 - while he has found one claim he believes to be undoubtable, the cogito, it is unclear to the reader how, or even whether, Descartes can rise or grow from this to build up a wider range of certainties as he claims he can. With this in mind, Descartes says he will take stock, as best as he can, of what he does know for sure, and attempt to discover any knowledge which can be built on its back. He does this by shutting his eyes and stopping his ears so that all he perceives are his ideas - and he considers that he knows for certain that he exists, his nature is that of a thinking thing, and that he has clearly perceived ideas.</p> <p>Descartes' approach to gathering his store of knowledge is to consider what it is that he is certain of the cogito. By analysing the thought in his mind, he decides that the reason for his conviction</p>	

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	<p>that the deceiving God could not trick him about this one <del>clearly</del> certainty is that he can so clearly and distinctly perceive the whole of the idea in his mind - 'I think; I exist' and is at the same time convinced of its truth, that he claims the God could not possibly make him mistaken about what he sees so clearly and distinctly. Therefore, he says, he can lay it down as a general rule that what he perceives clearly and distinctly is certain, since if it was not enough for certainty it wouldn't be sufficient for his certainty of the cogito.</p>	
	<p>What Descartes means by clear, is present and accessible to the attentive mind, and by distinct he means so sharply separated from other ideas that it only contains what is clear. He claims that what is C+D is certain. He then deals with the counter-examples which he himself is immediately led to consider - the many things he previously thought were C+D but now doubts such as the size of the sun. He rejects</p>	



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	<p>Descartes' claim is that it is revealed to him by natural light that no object can come to exist except by coming from what contains all that is to be found in the object, and in the same way, no idea can come about unless it came from what had at least that idea's reality. The obvious question for Descartes, then, is whether he has any ideas containing more reality, or perfection, than himself.</p>	
	<p>Of course, he does - he has an idea, which he claims to perceive 'utterly' clearly and distinctly, of God. Descartes rapidly rejects the notion that he could be God, since he evidently is not perfect. At that, it seems evident to him that the idea of God is that of a perfect being, and thus containing infinite perfection and reality. Descartes considers that he could, of course, have sourced many of his ideas from within himself, but since he is imperfect, by the causal adequacy principle there must be an</p>	

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	<p>external, perfect source for this idea, outside himself, and this neatly demonstrates, he claims, the existence of a perfect being - God.</p>
	<p>Descartes' Meditation Three has for a long time been an excellent and much-criticised argument for the existence of God.</p>
	<p>The first criticism to level at his clear and distinct rule is to argue that C&amp;D perception is by no means the reason for which the cogito is believed to be true. It could be argued that, in fact, it is true because it appears to be a unique kind of statement which, in its proposition, considers its truth.</p>
	<p>Descartes would likely reply that it is clearly and distinctly perceived, by the meditator, that the cogito is self-authenticating claim. By this I think he just about avoids this criticism, although it does cast into doubt the parallel he draws between the cogito's certainty and that of, say,</p>

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	<p>the causal adequacy principle, which has as clearly + distinctly perceived mechanism to show its certainty.</p>
	<p>Another criticism could be to argue that Descartes actually abandons his position of believing only what is certain in his establishing of the C&amp;D rule. A critic could claim that Descartes actually uses a logical argument to arrive at this rule, structured something like:</p> <p>P1: <del>The</del> cogito is certain because it is C&amp;D</p> <p>P2: If being C&amp;D was not enough for certainty, the cogito would not be certain as a result of being C&amp;D</p> <p>C: Being C&amp;D is enough for certainty.</p> <p>This is, of course, highly problematic for Descartes since he has proposed the deceiving God argument - he has suggested logical certainty can be doubted.</p> <p>Descartes would likely reply that this is a natural light-revealed certainty rather than logical inference.</p> <p>However, this is a weak response since it doesn't seem that every person is somehow inducted by <del>some</del> the natural light into</p>

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This certainty; and if no-one else has it revealed to them, it seems like this is not really a natural truth.

Descartes may also say that, while he holds such an inference in his mind the deceiving God cannot deceive him about it.

However, this I would contest since I have had the experience of repeatedly thinking  $6+8$  was 12, so it seems it could not be much of a stretch from an everyday error occurring with little thought, to a considered logical step being led astray by an all-powerful God.

Overall, Descartes' clear and distinct rule is grounded on logical inference which he has already shown to be fallible, and it is therefore clear that the entire structure of Meditation 3 comes crashing down on initial probing at the foundations.

Descartes' arguments do not end there, though, so I will consider strengths and weaknesses of the broader argument. First, the idea of degrees of reality. Without

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	<p>this, not only is the argument flawed, it simply makes no sense.</p>
	<p>A criticism of this would be to simply claim that reality is binary - real or non-real - and therefore cannot be used in Descartes' approach as is.</p>
	<p>His reply would be to claim that he knows about degrees of reality clearly and distinctly. Of course, his clear and distinct idea is nonsense, though.</p>
	<p>Nonetheless, on this subject I don't accept a binary view of reality since there must be a difference in reality between a person and the memory of them; and again between that and an idea of a person which hasn't yet been conceived. That said, Descartes fails completely to relate formal and objective reality properly. He seems to think that infinite objective reality is of the same degree as infinite formal reality; but to me, it is clear that infinite <u>idea</u> of God is still less real than a finite person.</p>



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	<p>As for the causal adequacy principle, I think this is reasonably strong if Descartes view of reality is accepted. A critic might claim that we see examples as in the relevant heat and side burn wood that <del>subjects can be produced</del> which <del>don't contain</del> effects can be produced by causes which don't contain them. However, this misses two points - first, that the effect can be contained imminently, as in the fact that energy is stored in wood. Secondly, that both log and heat contain the same degree of formal reality. Overall, Descartes claim that a perfect, infinite cause cannot come from a finite source is fair.</p> <p>However, the argument is damned by circularity. This is because Descartes, at the end of meditation 3, says that God is no deceiver since <del>the</del> deception is an imperfection; therefore, he would not let us be systematically deceived, so what we can perceive clearly and distinctly is <del>is</del> certain.</p>

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	<p>The critic can immediately point out that Descartes uses the C+D rule to prove God exists and then uses God's existence to prove the C+D rule, which makes for a circular argument assuming what it sets out to prove.</p>
	<p>Descartes would reply that the C+D rule is already established since it is revealed by natural light. However, as already discussed, this objection falls through rapidly.</p>
	<p>Overall, Descartes claims to have proven that God exists in Meditation 3 is not convincing at all. This is because, frankly, even having the cogito as certainty, there is nothing else he can establish as a certainty, and he is condemned to know no more than he did at the beginning of this meditation; his establishment of the C+D rule uses logic, or an arbitrarily claimed natural light revelation; the idea of degrees of reality doesn't succeed in comparing a finite, non-idea source to infinite idea; the causal adequacy principle, while</p>



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	<p>moral decisions, therefore, is to attempt to establish which course of action will lead to the greatest happiness for the greatest number and follow that course.</p> <p>However, there is another school of Utilitarian thinking to the 'Act Utilitarian' model above. Partly influenced by the criticism of difficulty of application, the 'Rule Utilitarians' advocate the establishment of general rules which will tend to the greatest happiness, and following these.</p> <p>The Act Util. model is applied on the spot as a new situation arises. Bentham established a 'hedonic calculus' intended to remind the agent of all aspects to consider when deciding which action will lead to most happiness. For each action they should consider the: intensity, duration, extent, <del>extent</del> (number experiencing), certainty, purity (production of pain), proximity (nearness) and secondarity (tendency to generate further opportunities for pleasure) of the pleasure produced. They <del>are still</del> should take the course of action which, considering all the above, will generate most happiness.</p> <p>The Rule Util. Model is intended to be worked out before situations arise. The rule</p>

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	<p>utilitarian establishes a set of general rules which will tend to lead to the greatest happiness. When a moral decision arises, the rule utilitarian should act in accordance with these rules. Hard rule utilitarians will advocate never breaking these rules, whereas soft rule utilitarians advocate breaking them when following would clearly lead to violating the GHP.</p>
	<p>This comment essentially expresses the criticism that Utilitarianism necessitates a detailed and accurate prediction of consequences of actions and that this is difficult to achieve. The first part of the criticism claims that Utilitarianism relies on the prediction of consequences. This is certainly the case, and no Utilitarian would deny it - the consequentialist principle is a key part of their theory and they could likely add it as a strength. That said, there is a difference in the reliance on prediction of consequences between rule and act Utilitarianism - an act Utilitarian has to weigh out the consequences of any action, but a rule Utilitarian need only establish general rules</p>

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	<p>once and may then apply these forever. To me, it seems that in this sense, the second part of the criticism's claim, that it is too difficult to predict the consequences Utilitarianism demands, does not really apply to rule Utilitarianism. I think that it seems more than possible to establish, over a short period of time, a set of rules to live by which tend to the GHP. Therefore, rule Utilitarianism can't have this criticism applied to it. Nonetheless, rule Utilitarianism comes with its own, extensive problems. Since, however, these do not relate to the difficulty of predicting consequences, I will now on to discuss this criticism as applied to act util.</p>
	<p>In the case of this version of util., the criticism definitely applies, since it is undeniably difficult to predict consequences with such accuracy and detail that you can always be sure that the action you take is the right one. However, a Utilitarian could respond by claiming that, while it is not easy to always predict consequences, there is a very</p>

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	<p>reasonable degree of accuracy in fleaujority  of situations an agent could be likely to encounter  for instance, I can predict with a high  degree of certainty that if I were to cause  a disturbance in the exam hall, it would  produce more pain than pleasure. Therefore, a  Utilitarian would urge me to continue to  sit still and silently. The opposite to this is  that many more scenarios are not so binary-  that is, are open-ended and <del>more</del> complex. An  example which emerges gives is the question  of what to do with your life? In this  case, there are a myriad of complex, difficult  to predict consequences of the myriad possible  courses and it seems a Utilitarian would be  stumped to provide a clear answer.</p> <p>However, a Utilitarian could come back  by arguing that, nonetheless, their theory is  able to distinguish roughly between various  options; and undeniably, the casual glance sees  that a life of charity work would grant greater  happiness than a life of sloth, even if the  single best course is not established</p> <p>A response of the critic could be to</p>

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	<p>suggest that, in such a complex, chaotic universe, and with <del>an</del> an incomprehensible length of time in the future, the consequences of an action will be felt in totally unpredictable ways for the rest of time, which will destroy any intended and predicted effects and make a 'good' action on average almost indistinguishable from a 'bad'.</p> <p>The Utilitarian could reply that, nonetheless, if a person always acted in accordance with the GHP, they would be more likely to generate a greater happiness; if everyone did, always, then the universe for all time could certainly have more happiness than if people acted not in accordance.</p> <p>Therefore it seems very clear that an act utilitarian is presented with an undeniably difficult task in terms of their attempt to establish what action is right. The question, then, is whether this difficulty presents a problem for Utilitarianism.</p> <p>The critic, of course, could argue that it does, pointing to examples of road luck, when</p>



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	<p><del>of</del> intended consequences are replaced, unexpectedly, by other, unpredicted consequences. They say Utilitarianism would have to say that a murderer who killed Hitler, arbitrarily, before WW2, was one of the most heroic people ever, despite their bad intentions, or someone who set off a chaotic chain reaction sparking a war, through no predictable mechanism, one of the worst.</p> <p>The Utilitarian reply is simply that the morality of an action does not directly represent the morality of the agent. They separate actor and action, and typically, a Utilitarian will judge an actor by their intended consequences.</p> <p>The critic can further claim that since it is impossible to know the consequences of an intent, it is impossible to judge, and a Utilitarian would be forced to concede that this is the case, although by knowing what action was taken in what situation, inferences can be made about intentions. For instance, someone returned a wallet to a police station and didn't give their name or expect reward, their intentions would be</p>

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	<p>ingured to be good (although the example is problematic since, if you can tell that they had good intentions, making you think this could be a sufficient, non-moral virtue)</p>
	<p>The critic, returning to a point about how uncertain consequences can be, may contend that Utilitarianism fails to help the agent act, <del>is</del> completely, in split-second or sudden decisions which must be made fairly frequently; or that it does not guarantee you to be able to act morally; or that different individuals could make different judgments of the consequences and do different things, both being right by their own reckoning of the same theory.</p>
	<p>A utilitarian would respond to this by arguing, finally, that there is a fundamental flaw in the criticism, which is that it does not follow from <del>criticism</del> <sup>a theory's</sup> difficulty to establish moral judgments, to its insufficiency. What I mean by this is that, just because you don't know what the Utilitarian right thing to do is, it does not mean that it isn't the right</p>

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	<p>thing to do; it does not mean that you shouldn't attempt to do it with whatever efforts you can based on finite ability to predict consequences. You would not decide that quantum physics must be thrown out because it can only give you probabilities of particles, and replace it with a theory which said exactly where they are, but was usually wrong, and in the same way you shouldn't abandon Utilitarianism simply because it can only tell you what is probably right, to replace it with a deterministic theory which contradicts the GHP, unless you can show that the GHP is wrong.</p>	
	<p>In conclusion, this is not a <del>good</del> criticism of Utilitarianism, while it is a <u>good point</u> about the theory, the claim doesn't really attack the theory since it merely says, 'it is difficult to know what the right thing to do <del>is</del>, according to Utilitarianism, is'. From this, it in no way follows that what the right thing to do, according to Utilitarianism, is not the</p>	



