

Handout 1
Meditation 3: Cartesian Reality

I. BEING/EXISTENCE

- A. Formal Being:** ordinary, garden-variety existence; what we might call real or actual existence (as opposed to the kind of existence fictional characters have); God, minds bodies, ideas & shapes all have it; Santa Claus, Zeus & unicorns do not
- B. Objective Being:** the existence of a thing *insofar as it is being thought of* or *insofar as it is being represented to the mind*; objective being is possessed only by ideas

II. REALITY does not simply mean *being* or *existence*. Being or existence, in both its formal and objective forms, is an all-or-none phenomenon: something has formal/objective being or it doesn't; my desk has formal being, a unicorn does not. Things that exist (formally or objectively) are ranked into different levels of reality. Roughly, reality is a measure of the amount of "thing-ness" something has. Here is a list of the three basic levels (or "grades" or "degrees") of reality something can have, running from greatest to least:

A. infinite substance: God

B. finite substance

- 1. minds
- 2. bodies

C. mode of substance

- 1. thoughts or ideas: idea of my mom, fear of spiders, desire for chocolate
- 2. sizes, shapes, etc.

III. IDEAS and only ideas have both **formal reality** (which is always the same: mode) and **objective reality** (which varies according to the amount of formal reality the object represented would have if it really, formally existed).

A. FR of $i(A)$ = FR of an idea (mode)

B. OR of $i(A)$ = FR of A if it were to exist

IV. EXAMPLES

FR: the sun

FR: size of the sun

FR: $i(\text{sun})$

FR: $i(\text{size of the sun})$

OR: $i(\text{sun})$

OR: $i(\text{size of the sun})$

OR: sun

OR: size of sun

FR: unicorn

FR: $i(\text{unicorn})$

OR: $i(\text{unicorn})$

OR: unicorn

FR: $i[i(\text{sun})]$

OR: $i[i(\text{sun})]$

OR: $i[i(\text{God})]$

OR: $i(\text{God})$

V. CAUSAL PRINCIPLES

A. There must be at least as much reality in the efficient & total cause of x as there is in x.

B. There must be at least as much FR in the cause of an idea as there is OR in the idea.