

Synopsis of Descartes' Meditations

Forms of Methodological Doubt:

1. Doubts some sensory experience: Sometimes senses are deceptive. Prudent for me to doubt what can at times be deceptive. Therefore, doubt sensory perceptions.
2. Doubt of external world: Perceptions during sleep are at times as distinct as perceptions when awake. All things perceived while awake can be perceived as clearly and distinctly as when asleep. Therefore, doubt the particulars of the external world.
3. Logical Doubt: No contradiction persists such that there cannot be an Evil Genius as malign in thought as in power that deceives me when I add $2+2=4$. Therefore, I have no certainty that mathematical propositions and all generalities (figure, extension, size) are known. All is in doubt.

Proof for Christian God (one of many)

1. The effect of something cannot be greater than its cause.
2. I have an idea of deity that is greater than me (all "omni" predicates associated with the Christian god).
3. The idea of deity, being greater than me, cannot be caused by me.
4. Therefore, the idea of deity is caused by God.

How Mind and Body are Distinct

1. All things clearly and distinctly perceived can be created by God as I apprehend them.
2. *A* (the mind) and *B* (the body) can be conceived as logically distinct unless there persists a contradiction.
3. Cannot be deceived by the Evil Genius that I exist when I engage in the act of thinking that I exist.
4. Only thinking things that exist can be deceived.
5. Deception presupposes thought.
6. Therefore, my essence consists solely in the fact that I am a substance whose nature is to think.
7. Therefore, while I may possess a body I know without a contradiction that I perceive myself as a thinking and unextended thing and of "my" body to be that of an extended and unthinking thing.

Another Argument for How Mind and Body are Distinct

1. The body, as an object of pure mathematics, is infinitely divisible.
2. Mind, by definition, is indivisible.
3. If two things do not share any one property (divisibility and indivisibility), then the two are said to have entirely different properties. (Principle of Mutual Exclusivity)
4. Two things with entirely different properties have a mutually exclusive existence.
5. Therefore, mind and body have entirely different properties.
6. Therefore, mind and body are mutually exclusive in existence.

How the Body Must Exist

1. I have an idea of sensory perception; i.e., I have an idea of the body.
2. The body is an object of pure mathematics.
3. The idea of the body is not in me because it does not presuppose thought. (The body is not subject to my will and all that is in me must presuppose thought. If in me, then Idealism is true.)
4. Therefore, the nature of sensory perception must exist in something other than me.
5. This other something is either (A) God or (B) the body or (C) some third thing.
6. Not (C).
7. Not (A) or God is a deceiver.
8. Therefore, the other substance must be corporeal reality.