Metaphysics Exercise 8

Phil. 100B, Winter 2010  Due Thurs., Feb. 11.

1. Which of the following former beliefs of the Meditator turn out (according to Descartes) to have been correct?
   a. My body contains “spirit”: that is, “something tenuous, like a wind or fire or ether, which permeate[s] my more solid parts” (p. 81).
   b. God is supremely good and would never deceive me.
   c. Some bodies — namely, living bodies — have a faculty (power) of moving themselves.
   d. There is something similar to my sense perceptions in external bodies.
   e. (a) and (b).
   f. (b) and (c).

2. Which of the following characterize the relationship between the soul and the body, according to Descartes?
   a. My body is able to react to (what I perceive as) painful and pleasant stimuli only because it has a soul.
   b. My will is moved by (what I perceive as) painful and pleasant stimuli because I have a body.
   c. I can now that I have a body because every finite soul must have a body.
   d. Imagination and dreams are like sense perception, but they occur inside my soul with no involvement of the body.
   e. (a), (c) and (d).
   f. (e) and (d).

3. How, according to Descartes, can I know that there are really bodies around me (e.g., a fire, a dressing gown, a piece of wax)?
   a. I can’t ever know this. The only things I can ever know for sure is that I exist and that God exists.
   b. When a body affect my sense organ, an impulse travels up a nerve to my brain, which in turn moves my soul to experience sense perceptions. So, under normal circumstances, I can take such sense perceptions as evidence that an external body is present.
   c. Nature teaches me to believe that such nearby bodies exist. That is, I perceive them clearly and distinctly (by the natural light).
   d. What we call “bodies” are really just collections of sense perceptions, together with the (confused) thought that there is something there that causes them. Once
I eliminate the confusion, I see that what is true in bodies (the sense perceptions) definitely does exist.
e. Because I know that I am a finite — that is, limited — soul, I know that there are other souls besides me. But these souls also must have bodies. So I know that there are bodies other than my own.
f. (b) and (c).