Metaphysics Exercise 12


1. About which of the following would Descartes and Spinoza disagree?
   a. If I perceive something clearly and distinctly, I can be certain it is true, because God would not deceive me (insofar as my mind is a perfection).
   b. Perceptions of events are different from, and more trustworthy than, dreams or hallucinations of similar events only because and insofar I am able to connect the perceived events, by clear chains of causes, to the other events of my life.
   c. Dreams and madness do not represent the mind somehow acting on its own without the body: on the contrary, they go along with disturbed motions of the fluids in the brain.
   d. In sense perception, an external body acts on my body, causing affections in it; in turn, my body acts on my soul, causing affections in it.
   e. All of the above.
   f. None of the above.

2. Which of the following is an explanation for error put forward by Spinoza which would be rejected by Descartes?
   a. The difference between true and false judgment is relative to the judger: the very same judgment can be both true and false, considered different ways.
   b. The difference between (what Descartes calls) pure negation and (what Descartes calls) privation is relative to cause: the very same defect can be both a pure negation and a privation, considered different ways.
   c. The difference between what is true and what is false is relative to the judger: what is false for me may be true for someone else (e.g., for God).
   d. Because the body has many complicated parts, it can be internally affected, in some ways, just as it would be by a sense perception, even when the perceived object is not (or is no longer) present.
   e. (a) and (c).
   f. (b), (c) and (d).

3. Why is Descartes’s method of doubt not workable, according to Spinoza?
a. We do not find, in general, that we can doubt the truth of what we seem to perceive when we are dreaming.
b. It is not true that, for example, I can entertain a real doubt as to whether my body exists, or whether God exists.
c. An evil demon might convince us that we exist even if we do not.
d. Descartes put too much trust in the authority of the Bible, and therefore failed to realize that the existence of God should also be doubted.
e. (a) and (b).
f. All of the above.