Metaphysics (or Epistemology) Exercise 4


Note this is to be done on-line via Question Cloud if possible. However, if this proves impossible for some reason, please hand this in as a hard copy or e-mail your answers to your TA.

1. Descartes (or his fictional representative, the Meditator) sets out to find real reasons for doubting all his previous opinions. He does this because:
   a. He thinks good science depends on always doubting one's results a little bit and keeping an open mind.
   b. He has discovered that some of his existing opinions are inconsistent with one another, implying that at least some of them are false.
   c. He has discovered that his existing opinions came about by way of unreliable methods.
   d. He feels dizzy, and this only serves to increase the suspicion that he may be dreaming.
   e. (a) and (b).
   f. (b) and (c).

2. Descartes (or the Meditator) first mentions dreaming because:
   a. Since there is no difference between dreaming and being awake, there is no reason to believe in waking opinions more than in dreaming opinions.
   b. Since dreams are inconsistent, he concludes that he cannot trust any of the opinions he has formed on the basis of dreams.
   c. He suspects that evil demons may be keeping him asleep and dreaming for their own purposes.
   d. Since he acknowledges that he believes crazy things while he dreams, there is can’t be anything crazy about likening himself to madmen.
   e. (a), (b) and (d).
   f. None of the above.

3. In the ninth paragraph of the First Meditation (middle of p. 78 in our book), Descartes (or the Meditator) mentions that he has a firmly rooted and long-standing belief in the existence of God. He says this because:
   a. Although he set out to doubt everything, he is too religious to notice that the existence of God should also be doubted.
   b. He realizes that many of his old opinions are based only on his unjustified belief (faith) in the existence of God.
   c. He is afraid that God may actually be evil and deceptive.
   d. He knows that his audience expects him to prove the existence of God.
   e. This is misleading: Descartes is a rationalist; what he means by “God” is just whatever chance evolutionary process might have led to his existence.
   f. None of the above.