

Metaphysics Exercise 8

Phil. 100B, Winter 2011. Due Thurs., Feb. 10.

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. What can be said about the causes of dreams, according to Descartes (i.e., according to the Meditator's final conclusions)?
 - a. There is no way of knowing about them, because we can't even tell the difference between being awake and dreaming.
 - b. There is no point in knowing them, because there is no real difference between being awake and dreaming: what we call waking experience is just a more connected and coherent dream.
 - c. To understand fully what causes dreams, we would need detailed information about the functioning of the brain.
 - d. To understand fully what causes dreams, we would need detailed information about God's impenetrable purposes. Since dreams are inherently deceptive, there must some reason, beyond our human understanding, that it is more perfect for God to be a deceiver in this case.
 - e. Dreams are caused by a malicious demon.
 - f. None of the above.

2. Which of the following former beliefs of the Meditator turn out (according to Descartes) to have been correct?
 - a. My senses at times deceive me: for example, lead me naturally to infer the presence of a round tower when what is actually present is a square one.
 - b. My senses at times deceive me: for example, lead me naturally to seek something which will actually harm me.
 - c. A corpse is exactly like a living body, except that a living body contains a soul.
 - d. A living body contains "spirit": that is, "something tenuous, like a wind or fire or ether, which permeate[s] [the] more solid parts" (p. 81).
 - e. (a), (b), and (c).
 - f. (a), (b), and (d).

3. Which of the following characterize the relationship between the soul and the body, according to Descartes?
 - a. My soul knows about particular external things via the medium of the body: these external things stimulate my sense organs, and impulses then travel up my nerves to my brain, where in turn they affect my soul.
 - b. The only body of which my soul has a clear and distinct perception is my own body.

- c. I know all about my soul, but can know nothing about my body. Since dreams are indistinguishable from waking experience, there's no good reason not to suppose, as a so-called madman might, that my head is a pumpkin or is made of glass.
- d. My soul is immaterial and hence can never be affected by anything which happens to my body.
- e. (a) and (b).
- f. None of the above.