

1 External objects

Descartes thinks he has already shown that God exists and is not a deceiver, and therefore that his senses do not deceive him. But he has yet to show specifically that what we sense are externally existing objects.

An argument (p.62):

1. I imagine.
2. The ability to imagine is not part of my essence.
3. Therefore my ability to imagine depends on something external to me.
4. If I had a body to which my mind was intimately conjoined, then it could be by means of this body that I imagine.
5. Therefore an external body exists.

Imagination vs. the understanding

- Thinking about geometrical figures
- "... this mode of thinking may differ from pure intellection only in the sense that the mind, when it understands, in a sense turns toward itself and looks at one of the ideas that are in it; whereas when it imagines, it turns toward the body, and intuits in the body something that conforms to an idea either understood by the mind or perceived by sense." (p.62)
- Descartes immediately starts to doubt that this sort of argument will get us a conclusion that is certain.

Another argument (p.63)

1. The ideas I perceive by sense are more vivid and explicit than those I form deliberately or recall from memory.
2. These ideas cannot come from myself.
3. Therefore they must come from something external to me.
4. Therefore an external body exists.

Descartes notes that his belief that he has a body etc. seems to be driven "by nature."

- What does he mean by this?
- Two general sources of doubt:
 - Dream argument
 - "Ignorance of origin"

3 The nature of mind and body

Cartesian metaphysics so far:

- A substance is a thing that depends on nothing else for existence (excepting God).
- A mode is a property of a substance, like redness.
- A principal attribute is a defining property of a substance.

Mind-body dualism: The mind is a substance whose principal attribute is thought, and body is a substance whose principal attribute is extension.

When it comes to metaphysics, we need a rule for deciding when we have two things rather than one.

Real distinction: Between two substances or two properties of different substances.

Modal distinction: Between two different modes of the same substance, or between a substance and its modes.

Conceptual distinction (distinction of reason): Between substances and their attributes, or between attributes.

What we *fully* clearly and distinctly perceive to belong to substance must constitute its essence.

- From the Synopsis: "... one ought to conclude that all the things we clearly and distinctly conceive as different substances truly are substances that are really distinct from one another. (This, for example, is how mind and body are conceived.)" (p.39)
- For Descartes, there is a mere conceptual distinction between substance and its essence.
 - Recall Meditation V and the third argument for God: "... it is obvious to anyone who pays close attention that existence can no more be separated from God's essence than its having three angles equal to two right angles can be separated from the essence of a triangle, or than the idea of a valley can be separated from the idea of a mountain." (p.59)

Argument for the distinctness of mind and body:

"For this reason, from the fact that I know that I exist, and that at the same time I judge that obviously nothing else belongs to my nature or essence except that I am a thinking thing, I rightly conclude that my essence consists entirely in my being a thinking thing. And although perhaps ... I have a body that is very closely joined to me, nevertheless, because on the one hand I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, insofar as I am merely a thinking thing and not an extended thing, and because on the other hand I have a distinct idea of a body, insofar as it is merely an extended thing and not a thinking thing, it is certain that I am really distinct from my body, and can exist without it." (p.64)

Fourth Objections, Arnauld:

- Arnauld objects that Descartes cannot claim to know clearly and distinctly that *only* extension belongs to body and *only* thought belongs to mind; why might he think this?
- "[For this argument] to be true, its topic must not be any kind of knowledge of a thing, or even vivid and clear knowledge, but rather knowledge that is adequate. For Descartes admits in his reply to Caterus that for one thing to be conceived distinctly and separately from another they don't have to be really distinct – i.e. to be two things rather than one – and that all that is needed is for them to be 'formally distinct, which can be achieved 'by an abstraction of the intellect that conceives the thing inadequately'."

Another argument (p.64):

1. I have an idea of a body.
2. The cause my idea must have at least as much reality as the idea.
3. This cannot be me, as I have only thought essentially.
4. Therefore the cause must be an external body or God.
5. God is not a deceiver.
6. Therefore the cause is an external body, so an external body exists.