Dualism

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What is dualism?

• Dualism is a metaphysical thesis
  – It states that there are two underlying principles to explain the reality as a whole and as such
• For instance, *Mind* and *matter* are regarded as two *substances*

  – Substance Dualism
Substance Dualism

- Rene Descartes substance is something that necessarily exists and its existence must have these features
  - Simple
  - Clear
  - Distinct
How do we have the knowledge of substance?

• Descartes epistemological concern

• Knowledge
  – certain and indubitable

  – Descartes introduced the **method of doubt**
Cartesian Skepticism

• Descartes in Meditations on first philosophy discusses about the certainty of the external world.

• Does the external world exist?
• What kind of belief it is?
• Is it the case that nothing is real?
Hypothesis

• Dream hypothesis
• Demon hypothesis

• Descartes writes,
  – “how often, asleep at night, am I convinced of such familiar events... that I am here in my dressing-gown, sitting by fire, ....when in fact I am lying undressed in bed.”
Dream hypothesis

• It is hard to distinguish the real experience from the unreal experience

• What I am really doing now ... might not be really doing...
Demon hypothesis

- “Is there a deceiver, simply powerful and cunning, whose aim is to see that I am always deceived…”

- Fantasy and illusion
- Sense experiences do not always give right knowledge
  - Illusions and hallucinations
Rationalist Epistemology

• Reason can give us highest and pure knowledge

• Certainty is based on reason rather than pure experience

• Descartes does not contend that pre-theoretical beliefs are not true...e.g. the body

• He talks about the innate ideas as well.
Methodological Skepticism

• Descartes felt that it is epistemologically necessary to doubt everything in order to examine their certainty.
  – to get clear and distinct knowledge

• Universal doubt
  – Sense experience, reasoning, testimony, etc.
Epistemological priority

• Descartes skepticism had an end
  – Certainty and clarity
  – The body, the soul and the God.

• Descartes was interested to know the ground of these knowledge
Three important questions:

• Who is the author of my thoughts?

• Is there a God who puts thoughts into me?

• Am I so bound by my body and to sense that I cannot exist without them?
Can doubt be doubted?

- What sort of activity doubting is?
- Does it not different from walking?

- *Ambulo ergo sum* – I walk therefore I am
- *Dubito ergo cogito ergo sum*
- I doubt therefore I *think, therefore I am.*
I am

• I think I am
• I am something that must exist

• Is ‘I am’ same as ‘the body’?
Nature of Body

• Bound by a shape and occupies space

• Perceived by touch, sight, hearing, taste and smell.

• Nutrition
• Self movement
• Sensation
What is I?

• Descartes says

• “I judged that the power of self-movement, of sensing, and of thinking did not belong to the nature of physical objects, and in fact I am marveled that there were some physical object in which these powers could be found.”
What can be attributed to physical object?

• The **body** which *I have*.

• Sensation
• Nutrition
• Self movement

• The biological abilities of the organism.
I or the self

• Thinking – thought and thought alone cannot be taken away from me.

• I am, I exist

• If I completed stopped thinking, I would completely cease to exist.

• *I am a thinking thing.*
  - Doubts, understands, affirms, desires, wills, refuses and also senses the mental images.
Reality of the self

• *I refers* to a mind, soul, understanding, or *reason*.

• *I know that I am real*

• *None of these physical thing exists till I am something.*

• *I as the self*

• *Has the ability to sense – represent my sensations, feelings, thoughts, ideas, etc.*
Am I not dreaming now?

• I seem to see…
• This seeming cannot be unreal, what is properly called sensing…
• Sensing is just thinking…

• How distinctly this is sensed?
Example of Wax

• The ability to comprehend things distinctly.
• **Wax from honeycomb**
• After **heating** the wax
• Carefully attending to the change of features … see what is being left.

• **Extension** – essential feature of the body.
Mental inspection can be at once imperfect and confused

• Mind is prone to error

• “Even when I think to myself non-verbaly, language stands in my way, and common usage close to deceiving me.”

• Looking and knowing things through pure eye-sight
• Knowing through mental inspection

• “Thus I comprehend my judgment, which is in my mind, objects that I once believed myself to see with my eyes.”
Revisiting the Wax

• Undressing wax from its external forms I view it naked
• and it is grasped by human mind.
• Grasping is purely mental inspection
• The power of thought
• Having mental image
  – Triangle and chiliagon (thousand sides are logically possible)
  – Understanding is an ability of the mind.