

Let's Review



1. What does Descartes doubt first?

Senses

2. Why would he be called crazy if he doubted his senses?

Because he would be doubting his existence.

3. What can he do that madmen cannot do?

Reason

4. Explain being awake and dreaming.

✧ How does Descartes justify being awake *in the beginning of this argument?*

he can use his senses to know he is awake; he is making conscious decisions

✧ Why is this reason not enough? Hint: When I am _____, I have visions like madmen when they are ____.

He does the same thing in his dreams, so there is no way to know if he is awake or asleep

✧ What does Descartes think dreams are?

Copies/pictures/visions of real things

5. According to Descartes, things that are **simple and universal** are sound, or certain, while things that are **complex** are doubtful. What examples does he give for each of these?

arithmetic/geometry; physics, astronomy, medicine



Woo Woo Woo... Wait... What?

“**However**, I have for many years been sure that there is an all-powerful God who made me to be the sort of creature that I am. **How do I know** that he hasn’t brought it about that there is no earth, no sky...while making sure that all these things appear to me to exist?”

However = sign of doubt

I have for many years = foundational belief

How do I know... = doubting his belief in what he thinks is certain = $2+3$, sides of a square

appear to me to exist = is he dreaming? Is all this just an illusion?

“Anyway, I sometimes think **others go wrong** even when they think they have the most **perfect knowledge**; So **how do I know** that I myself don’t go wrong every time I add two and three or count the sides of a square?”

others go wrong = are wrong

perfect knowledge = highly educated

I sometimes think...they think... = If I think some highly educated people are wrong sometimes, even if *they* think they have perfect knowledge, how can I be certain that I am correct, now? (Descartes would also be a highly educated person)



Well, you might say, God would not let me be deceived like that, because he is said to be supremely good.

you might say = introducing “they say”

God would not let me deceived = deception not possible bc God is supremely good

But, I reply, if God’s goodness would stop him from letting me be deceived all the time, you would expect it to stop him from allowing me to be deceived even occasionally;

But, I reply = transition to “I say”

...even occasionally = if that were true (God’s goodness), then I wouldn’t be deceived EVER

yet clearly I sometimes am deceived.

yet = transition to conclusion of rebuttal

sometimes am deceived = if it happens once, then it is doubttable



Some people would deny the existence of...God rather than believe that everything else is uncertain. Let us grant them...that there is no God...

Some people = another “they say”

Let us grant them = presenting what “their” argument

On their view, then, I am a product of fate or chance or a long chain of causes and effects. But the less powerful they make my original cause, the *more* likely it is that I am so imperfect as to be deceived all the time – because deception and error seem to be imperfections.

On their view = transition, presenting “their” argument

fate, chance = a result of something just happening; not planned

cause/effect = because of X, Y happens



Let's take this a step further...

Something that is perfect is not tainted. It has no error, there is only clarity and truth, no deception.

- **IF God created me**, I am created in his image.
 - God is perfect. I am a copy of that perfection.
- **IF fate, chance, or cause/effect created me**, then I am a result of many variables.
 - Many variables change the original picture.
 - The further away from the original source, the more distorted the picture becomes and the interpretation may change.
- **IF I am imperfect**, I am capable of being deceived, or seeing things in an altered manner.
 - Deception/error = imperfections.
 - If I am made of imperfections, I am more likely to be deceived than if God created me.

Original Starry Night

















Meat...





Conclusion

Challenging God's existence = method is possible!

“withhold my assent from these former beliefs..”

So what is he *really* going to do?

1. forget everything until have reason to believe
2. demon is tricking him (not God)

Nothing is real...

Essay Prompt



- “However far I go in my distrustful attitude, no actual harm will come of it, because my project won’t affect how I act, but only how I go about acquiring knowledge.”
 - Descartes believes his plan is not harmful. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Could his method of doubt actually be harmful to others around him, or even to himself?
 - State your argument and provide evidence. You may use opinion-based evidence, but they must be **STRONG** examples that make your argument sound.