

Question 3: Is there a better solution to Meno's paradox than the theory of recollection?

There is a better solution to Meno's paradox than the theory of recollection, and I will attempt to prove that this is the fallacy of equivocation. This essay will firstly discuss Meno's paradox and why it is a problem, and then Socrates' proposed solution of the theory of recollection. I will then present objections to this theory that, for me, show that it fails to solve the paradox, and merely pushes it further backwards in time. I will then introduce the fallacy of equivocation as a more successful solution to the paradox and conclude that it succeeds in proving it false, so that inquiry is, in fact, possible.

Meno says:

'And how will you search for something, Socrates, if you don't know at all what it is? What sort of thing from among those you don't know will you make the target of your search? Or even if you were to hit upon it with complete success, how will you know that this is the thing you didn't know?'

What Meno has attempted to show is that it is impossible to search for new knowledge. He thinks that if you do not know something, you cannot know what to look for, and would not know that whatever you chose was correct, and so cannot inquire about it. But if you do know something, there is no need to inquire about it. Meno assumes that the only two states we can be in regarding knowledge are knowing and not knowing, and consequently concludes that it is impossible to inquire about new knowledge. Formally, then:

1. If you know what you're looking for, inquiry is unnecessary.
2. If you don't know what you're looking for, inquiry is impossible.
3. You can only either know something or not know it
4. Therefore, inquiry is either impossible or unnecessary

This is Meno's response to his puzzlement about what virtue is. He says that in the past he was so sure of virtue that he described it and discussed it with many people, but Socrates has now made him realise that he cannot even define it except in the terms of other virtues; he cannot extract its essence. Out of frustration, then, he presents his paradox, arguing that since he cannot define virtue, and does not know what it is, it is impossible to search for this definition at all.

This is where Socrates presents his argument for recollection by disputing premise 3. Socrates argues that there is a third option besides just knowing or not. He says that we all have knowledge innate in our souls, whether this be actual propositions such as geometric proofs, or concepts such as virtue. Plato's conception of the soul was an immortal 'essence' that existed before our physical body, and will exist after it. This soul contains innate knowledge from its previous experience in past lives. This knowledge is not 'known' in the traditional sense, as we are not consciously aware of it, but it will be apparent to us if we are presented with the appropriate stimulus; questioning.

To illustrate this more clearly, Socrates takes a slave boy with no previous knowledge of geometry, and asks him to double the area of a square. The slave boy responds that you double the length of its sides; much like Meno, he thought he already possessed the knowledge. But he is wrong. Socrates shows him that this would actually make the square four times as large. Socrates then asks the slave boy a series of leading questions until he comes up with the correct answer; that you take the diagonal of the existing square as the side length for the new one.

The point of this experiment is to demonstrate recollection in action. Socrates shows that the slave boy initially does not, at least consciously, know how to double the area of a square. But by the end of the discussion, he does know. Socrates claims that no teaching occurs in this time, because Socrates only asks questions without giving any new information. He argues that since no new knowledge was imparted, it had to have come from somewhere within the boy himself. So Socrates concludes that the slave boy must have had some unconscious, innate knowledge of geometry that Socrates' questioning encouraged him to recollect.

This then is his solution to Meno's paradox. Premise 3 is false, because there is a way to know something but also not know it, so the disjunction is not exhaustive. Premise 1 may be true, in that if you truly have no knowledge, conscious or unconscious, about something, then inquiry is impossible. But the falsity of premise 3 allows this to very rarely be the case; in most instances, we have innate knowledge in our souls of the things we don't consciously know, and as such are able to inquire about them using recollection.

However, this solution has its flaws. For one thing, there is no proof that we have a soul, or if we do that it is immortal, or even if it is, that it has lived previous lives from which it has gained this knowledge. But since this is unprovable either way, there are more serious objections to consider.

The objection that I find most convincing is that even if the soul has learned things in past lives, and so that is how we inquire about them now, that does not explain how they were originally learned. Presumably in the beginning of this chain of knowledge, there was a past life in which the slave boy's soul had to learn for the first time the geometric proof that he presently recollects. But this was not recollection, because his soul at this point did not have innate knowledge of the answer. Without that, it seems that premise 3 stands; he could only either know it, or not. If he truly did not know it, then he couldn't have inquired about it. So Meno's paradox still applies, it has just been pushed backwards. Eventually, inquiry without recollection must occur, and therefore recollection cannot be the solution.

It could be argued that his objection assumes all learning is inquiry. Meno's paradox only applies when you don't know the answer and have to *search* for it, but we can also learn simply by being told the answers. What this means is that someone else could have *told* the slave boy in a past life that the diagonal of a square is the side length for a square twice its area. His soul would then have the innate knowledge to enable him to inquire about it now. Since the boy was just told the answer there was no need for initial inquiry without recollection, and so recollection *can* solve Meno's paradox because there is no example where it does not apply.

But I would argue that the original teacher also must have, in this or a previous life, been told. The same goes for whoever told him, creating an infinite regress of the transfer of knowledge, without explaining how we acquired it in the first place. Inquiry is the only way knowledge could initially be acquired, but this means that at some stage there *was* inquiry without innate knowledge, and in this case there could have been no recollection.

Recollection, therefore, is a weak response to Meno's paradox. But the fallacy of equivocation presents a stronger response by examining how we understand Meno's argument. Take these two premises:

1. If you know what you're looking for, inquiry is unnecessary.
2. If you don't know what you're looking for, inquiry is impossible..

Meno assumes that 'you know what you're looking for' means the same thing in both sentences, meaning that he has ruled out inquiry because of *Tertium non datur*; whether we know something or not, inquiry is impossible either way, so inquiry must be impossible. But there are two ways to know something; you can know the actual fact, or you can know the question concerning the fact. Take the following example: Abby knows that the holiday is booked for the 24th of June. Ben knows that Abby knows when the holiday is booked, but doesn't know that it is booked on the 24th of June. So we can say of Ben that he knows what Abby knows- he knows Abby knows when the holiday is booked- but he also doesn't know what Abby knows- he doesn't know when the holiday is booked. These are both true, Ben does both know and not know, because the word concerns different knowledge in each sentence.

We can apply this to Meno's paradox. The first premise concerns knowledge of the actual fact, for instance, the geometric proof. But the second does not use 'know' in the same way; instead, it concerns knowledge *of knowledge*; like knowing whether or not *you know* the geometric proof. The contradiction is therefore solved, because the slave boy does not at first know the fact, but he does know the question- as in he knows what he doesn't know. This solves Meno's paradox because the only type of knowledge needed for inquiry is knowledge of the question. If you know what you're looking for, but not what the knowledge itself is, you can still ask about it, look for it and recognise it, and therefore inquiry is possible after all.

This presents a better solution to Meno's paradox than the theory of recollection in two ways. Firstly, it is based on the premise that we can know things in different ways, which is just true, rather than being based on things like the soul or past lives, which we cannot prove are real. Secondly, it prevents an infinite regress because the method of inquiry is simply knowing what you wish to inquire about, and so any inquiry you can conceive is already possible because as soon as you think of a question, you have sufficient knowledge to inquire about it. Critics may ask how we have knowledge of the questions we want answered, and attempt to rest the paradox here instead, by arguing that there is again a regress. In order to become aware of what we don't know, this must itself require some kind of inquiry, which again would require knowing we are searching for the knowledge of knowledge, and this knowing needs further explanation. But I would argue that this is not how we learn- we see things in the world that we don't understand, or are given questions to answer, and this is how we come to have knowledge of what to inquire about without that knowledge itself being inspired by inquiry. It instead simply becomes apparent whenever we look at things that we do not understand. Therefore, the fallacy of equivocation remains a strong solution to Meno's paradox.

In conclusion, the fallacy of equivocation is a better solution to Meno's paradox than the theory of recollection. The theory of recollection fails because it relies upon the recollection of truths learned in past lives, and therefore simply pushes back the paradox because there must be some 'beginning' to this knowledge where it was originally learned without any previous experience of it, and in these 'beginnings' inquiry would again become impossible, due to the absence of the ability to recollect. The fallacy of equivocation can avoid this objection, because instead of positing a third type of knowledge as 'innate' it separates two different senses of 'knowledge', and argues that Meno commits the fallacy of equivocation when he uses both senses to mean knowledge of particular facts, when inquiry really only requires knowledge of questions. Therefore, Meno's paradox is resolved, because you can inquire about things you have no factual knowledge of, because all that is needed is knowledge of the inquiry itself.

Word count: 1962

Question 6: 'And, when someone says, I am thinking, therefore I am, or exist, he is not deducing existence from thought by means of a syllogism, but recognises it as known directly by a simple intuition of the mind.' (DESCARTES) Discuss.

Descartes is wrong to think that he has solved the problems presented by a syllogistic understanding of the cogito with his assertion that it is instead a 'simple intuition of the mind', because both of these interpretations are ultimately insufficient to prove our own existence due to their reliance upon arguments that beg the question. This essay will first give some context of where the statement exists in the meditations and what objections Descartes is attempting to reply to. It will then show why the syllogistic argument fails, because the presupposition of existence is present in the assertion of 'I think', and therefore the argument begs the question. It will then show how, despite Descartes' claim that the intuitionistic approach avoids this objection, it actually falls short in a similar way, because whilst our intuitions may be non-circular proof of propositions, there is no non-circular way to prove the accuracy of our intuitions. I will therefore conclude that this statement of Descartes' is unsuccessful in his defence of the cogito.

Firstly, answering this question requires an unpicking of the statement. What Descartes is referring to is the idea that 'I think, therefore I am' that Descartes comes to believe when employing radical doubt, concluding that the only thing he cannot doubt is his own existence. In the statement above, he is asserting that this is not an argument; 'I think' is not a premise that entails the conclusion 'I exist'. Rather, it is a 'simple intuition of the mind', referring to his conception of 'clear and distinct ideas'; things that when we think of them, they just appear so undeniably true that we must accept them as fact. The statement, then, is simply Descartes' explanation that his cogito is meant as an intuition rather than an inference.

He is asserting this in response to an objection from the replies to the second meditation that 'I think, therefore I am' begs the question, because our understanding of 'I think' presupposes existence, in that we cannot conceive of thought without it. There is no way to think 'I think' without this proposition including the hidden information 'I exist' as a part of its meaning. This means that, understood as an argument, by including the premise 'I think' we effectively presuppose 'I exist' as a hidden premise, and therefore the conclusion is contained within the premises and the argument is question begging.

The cogito as an argument already contains a hidden premise known as the general principle 'Whatever thinks, exists'. With that in mind, the syllogistic form of the cogito can be represented as follows:

1. I think
2. Whatever thinks, exists
3. Therefore, I exist.

Premises 1 and 2 necessitate the truth of premise 3, so it is a valid argument. But I agree that it is question begging; this has been argued more recently by scholars such as Hintikka and Wilson. Wilson formalises the argument for why the cogito begs the question as follows:

4. 'I think' can only be true if 'I exist' is true
5. To know 'I think', we must believe 'I exist'
6. Therefore, 'I exist' is a hidden premise
7. I exist is also the conclusion

8. Therefore, the cogito begs the question because the conclusion is included in the premises.

This is not just another way of saying the general principle 'whatever thinks exists', because in order to know that we think at all, we must already believe that we exist- it is not that 'whatever thinks exists', it is that by saying 'I think' we are already showing belief that we exist. This means the cogito is actually:

1. I exist
2. I think
3. Whatever thinks, exists,
4. Therefore, I exist

This means that the cogito can never be a successful syllogistic argument, as it begs the question. But Descartes argues that that is irrelevant, because this is not how it was intended to be understood anyway. Instead, it is meant to be 'known directly by a simple intuition of the mind', and this is the intuitionistic understanding. Descartes thinks that first you recognise your own existence as a clear and distinct perception, and then you afterwards understand that the method you used to recognise this was thought. 'I think' is retroactively necessary, because thought was required to come to believe in our own existence, but we do not need to consciously assert 'I think' to use this faculty. This avoids question begging not only because there is no argument, and so there are no premises for the conclusion to be included in, but also because you no longer need to consciously believe 'I think' and therefore subconsciously assume existence. It is not the truth of 'I think' as a proposition that is argued to bring about knowledge of our existence, it is instead the action of thought itself. In this way, Descartes makes it clear that he understands 'I exist' to itself be a clear and distinct perception, meaning one discovered through thought of such a nature that its truth is certain. Our thought is a God-given faculty, and some things appear to our intellect as being so incapable of being false that they must be true, because God is not a deceiver. As such, Descartes avoids criticism of his cogito for logical fallacy by asserting that there is no logical reasoning at all; it is instead just an intuition of a sort that necessitates its own truth.

But the intuitionist understanding of the cogito is also presented with challenges, because his 'clear and distinct ideas' themselves rely on a circular argument for their legitimacy. Descartes' argument for clear and distinct ideas is that God is not a deceiver, and so would not allow us to be mistaken about what we clearly and distinctly perceive. He admits that people do, in fact, make mistakes, but argues that this is not the fault of our reason, but instead occurs only when our free will extends *past* our intellect and we attempt to make judgements about things that we do not clearly and distinctly perceive. But anything that does belong to this most certain part of our knowledge just is certain, because God as a just and benevolent entity would not allow us to be mistaken in such fundamental ways, and has provided us with the faculty to discern truth, if we use it correctly.

This argument has been dubbed the 'Cartesian circle', because it uses circular reasoning and ultimately begs the question, opening Descartes' intuitionistic view up to the same challenges as the syllogistic interpretation. Descartes' perception of God as existing and not being a deceiver is itself not a certain fact. Descartes himself doubts it when he begins his process of radical doubt, saying that God could actually be malicious and deceiving, and simply have convinced us that He is good and honest. Descartes' argument for God actually being good is that we clearly and distinctly perceive his perfection. We know that God exists and is not a deceiver because we have a clear idea of God as a perfect, non-deceiving entity. A being that exists is better than a being that does not exist, and an honest being is better than a deceitful one, so God must exist and must not be a deceiver because he is perfect. We know that He is perfect because we clearly and distinctly perceive

it. So we know God would not deceive us because we clearly and distinctly perceive it. This means that we are not deceived in our clear and distinct perception that we exist.

But this means that Descartes can only justify the infallibility of his clear and distinct ideas by using clear and distinct ideas to prove God's honesty, and God's honesty to justify clear and distinct ideas. He argues that our clear and distinct ideas must be accurate, because God would not deceive us. But He also argues that God would not deceive us, because we have a clear and distinct perception of his benevolence. This makes his argument circular, as he cannot prove the truth of clear and distinct perceptions without God, and he cannot prove God without clear and distinct ideas. We can better show the circularity by formalising this problem as a question begging argument similar to the inferential fallacy:

1. I have a clear and distinct idea that God exists and is not a deceiver
2. Clear and distinct ideas are accurate
3. Therefore, God exists and is not a deceiver
4. If God exists and is not a deceiver, then my clear and distinct ideas are accurate
5. Therefore, my clear and distinct ideas are accurate

In order to get 5, we need 3 and 4. But to get 3, we need 1 and 2. 2 is the same as 5. Therefore, the conclusion is contained in the premises, and fails to be any sort of proof at all that our clear and distinct perception of our own existence has any weight when evaluating whether the claim is true.

This means that when we understand the cogito as a 'simple intuition of the mind', we open it up to accusations of falsity. Our clear and distinct perceptions may well be false, since Descartes has no non-circular argument to prove their reliability. This means that just because we clearly and distinctly perceive that 'I exist' is true when we think it, that does not mean that this is accurate; it could be that an evil, deceiving God has given us a faculty of intuition that gives us wrong information. This would mean that things like 'triangles have three sides' or ' $A = A$ ' could be false, and the only reason they appear to us as so obviously correct is that we are deceived. Therefore, despite the seeming logical absurdity of the assertion 'I exist' occurring without actual existence, it is a possibility, just one we are incapable of conceiving.

This shows that both interpretations of the cogito at some level rely upon logical fallacies. The inferential interpretation begs the question, because it includes 'I exist' as a hidden premise whilst it is also the conclusion. The intuitionistic interpretation says that 'I exist' is a clear and distinct idea, and therefore must be true, because clear and distinct ideas are infallible. Yet the argument for their infallibility also begs the question, by including the premise 'my clear and distinct ideas are accurate' as a hidden premise to prove God's reliability in His giving us the clear and distinct idea of our existence. Because of this, Descartes' statement in response to the objection voiced in the replies is insufficient and does not prove his claim of 'I exist' to be true.

In conclusion, Descartes' insistence that the cogito is not a syllogism, but is instead a 'simple intuition of the mind', is not as helpful as he intends it to be. As a syllogism, it is true that the cogito fails, because in order to use 'I think' as a premise, whoever asserts it must already believe that they exist, and as such the argument is question begging. But what Descartes has perhaps not seen is that the understanding of 'I exist' as clearly and distinctly perceived is open to the same accusation, because in order to prove the validity of our mind's clear and distinct perceptions, we have to use another circular argument; that we trust our clear and distinct perceptions because of God, and we trust God because of our clear and distinct perceptions. Therefore, this statement's presentation of the cogito ultimately fails to provide sufficient evidence for its truth.

Word count: 1934

Question 5: 'I see plainly that there are never any sure signs by means of which being awake can be distinguished from being asleep.' (DESCARTES) How does Descartes try to distinguish being awake from being asleep? Is he successful?

Descartes successfully refutes his argument from dreaming (that there is no way to tell whether we are awake or asleep) by showing how since he clearly and distinctly perceives that a non-deceiving God would not give us strong evidence for a proposition unless it were true, and we have strong evidence to believe that we are awake, then we can know that we are awake. This essay will first present the dreaming argument, and possible criteria to distinguish being awake from being asleep. I will then present Descartes' selection of criteria that distinguish the two. Next, I will discuss objections that say that we cannot rely on our reason's deduction of proof of our being awake, because we could simply be dreaming that this proof is successful, but conclude that since Descartes replies to these with his stipulation that reason persists when both awake and asleep, he is in fact successful in distinguishing the two.

Descartes initially presents his argument from dreaming to prove that there is no way to distinguish being awake from being asleep. He says that he has had dreams in the past where, whilst having them, he thought that he was awake. He concludes that it is possible for dreams to possess all the criteria that real sensations do, as listed by Humber:

1. They picture physical properties
2. They are unwilling, meaning they arise without conscious permission
3. They are 'lively' 'clear' and 'distinct'
4. They are connectable in the memory, so that we can remember their sequence and how each led to the next in a logical way

He says that not all dreams possess 3, as many appear nonsensical, abstract and malleable. But some dreams, at least, do appear to be so vivid as to be real. Furthermore, whilst 4 may not apply to any dreams yet experienced, it is perfectly possible that it could, so this alone is also an insufficient criterion to distinguish dreaming from reality. It is a fact, according to Descartes, that dreams are not connectable, but it is perfectly conceivable that we could dream that connectedness existed where none actually did. For example I could dream that I was American, and dream that I have memories of growing up there, but no such connectedness would really exist. This would just happen to be a perfectly possible, if rather unusually intricate, type of dream. Therefore, there are no criteria that enable you to tell whether you were asleep when you thought you were awake.

This is Descartes argument for radical doubt- to doubt absolutely everything he knows because, in this case, it could all be a dream. But he is only employing radical doubt in order to establish things with certainty, so he attempts to find a way that we could tell that we are, in fact, awake, and hence that objects we perceive are real. To do this, he argues that there needs to be some kind of logically certain distinctive criteria. Descartes wanted to find a way to be *certain* that we are awake, and that requires a necessary criterion of the one that is necessarily not included in the other.

To illustrate his argument for how we can distinguish dreams from reality, let us first consider his similar account of how we can know that physical objects are real, rather than being some sort of imagined experience. He says that it may well be possible for our perceptions of objects to be caused by some internal stimuli, rather than real existent objects, but we have overwhelming evidence to the contrary. We perceive our faculty of perception as distinct from the objects of this perception, and the most logical explanation of this is that external objects do exist. This is how we are strongly

inclined to believe the world works, and Descartes says that since God is not a deceiver, God would not give us such strong evidence of something unless it was true. In the same way, it may be possible for dreams to be completely connected just like waking experience is, but we know that connectability (and to an extent, vividity and liveliness as well) are signs from God that we are awake. Consequently, it seems as though if God is not a deceiver, the appearance that something is connectable is evidence that it really is, and true connectability can only occur when we are awake. Whilst dreams can *appear* connectable, they cannot actually *be* connectable. As such, if something appears connectable then our belief in a non-deceiving God entails that it really is, and if something is connectable, then it must be a real, awake experience.

Descartes' argument can be formalised as follows:

1. There are certain characteristics of experience that give strong evidence for us being awake
2. These characteristics are liveliness of experience, and connectedness to our other memories.
3. God exists and is not a deceiver
4. A non-deceiving God would not give us strong evidence for a false proposition
5. Therefore, these characteristics are sufficient criteria to prove that you are awake

However many would argue that this argument is unsuccessful, because ultimately there is no way for us to ever be certain about reasoning that we do in dreams. First of all, even if we accept premise 2, that the lively connectability of an experience is a good criterion of being awake, it doesn't seem like Descartes has sufficiently explained why this criterion could not be mistakenly applied. He accepts that it is possible for us to dream that an experience is lively and that it is connectable. Descartes says that our strong intuition that lively connected experiences are real, combined with God not being a deceiver, entails that such experiences have to be had whilst awake. But there doesn't seem to be any certainty here. The certainty Descartes insists upon lies in his belief that we clearly and distinctly perceive that a non-deceiving God would not present such strong evidence for a falsity. But even a non-deceiving God would have to allow us to make mistakes.

Nakhtnikian presents this argument, saying that a non-deceiving God does not give us infallible reason, just some faculty capable of correcting false opinions. We have an idea of the possibility of our being dreaming, and as such the capability to believe that we are dreaming if we choose. So, if we were in fact dreaming, we could choose to accept this, and correct the false opinion that we are awake. This is all that a non-deceiving God has to grant, and as such it being apparent to us that we are awake is insufficient to prove that we really are. Descartes himself accounts for human mistakes in a similar way; he says that we have a faculty of infallible intellect- our clear and distinct perceptions- but that we often extend our thought beyond this and try to judge about things that we cannot know. This happens because our will is infinite but our intellect is finite, and in these cases, we make mistakes. So Nakhtnikian is simply arguing that our perception that God would not give us such strong evidence that we are awake if we were not is actually just our will extending past what our intellect has provided. It is not a clear and distinct perception, but is instead just a guess, and may very well be wrong. However, Descartes does insist that this being a clear and distinct perception is crucial to his argument. When we have clear and distinct perceptions, this is our pure God-given intellect that makes them so distinct, and consequently he would argue that although we can make mistakes, we are not mistaken in this instance.

However, when we consider that the premise of this debate is that we could be dreaming, it becomes possible that we could be mistaken that this is a clear and distinct perception at all, and this

means that it could still be false. Descartes gives no way to tell whether something really is a clear and distinct perception other than our own intuition, which could very easily be dreamt. If we were dreaming, we could dream that we clearly and distinctly perceived that such strong evidence for being awake combined with an honest God entails that we really are awake. There is no way to apply reason in dreams, because we could simply dream that we apply it, when really we do not. So we could dream that we clearly and distinctly perceived that we were awake, but this clear and distinct perception would not be real.

Descartes' conception of how dreams work, however, refutes this. He thinks that some things, like our desires, our emotions, and our reason, are real whether you are dreaming or awake. There does certainly seem to be truth in this; if someone has a nightmare, and wakes up screaming and sweating, it seems that they are really afraid, not just dreaming that they are. In the same way, if you dreamt, for instance, that two apples and three bananas were handed to you, your reason would deduce that you were holding five pieces of fruit. The fruit would not exist, but the maths would still be correct. In this way, there are certain mental faculties that persist whether we are dreaming or waking, and Descartes argues that our clear and distinct perceptions are one of them. This means that when we clearly and distinctly perceive that a deceiving God would not give us strong evidence that we were awake when we were not, then this perception is true whether we are dreaming or awake, because we cannot 'dream' clear and distinct perceptions- our faculty of intellect persists in the same way in the dream state. This means that if we experience something lively and remember how it fits in with previous events and is connected to them, and reason that these provide strong evidence for it our being awake, then a non-deceiving God would only give us this evidence if this were true. This means that we can know we are awake whenever there is strong evidence to suggest it.

Descartes argument for the distinguishability of being awake and asleep then is as follows:

6. There are certain characteristics of experience that give strong evidence for us being awake
7. These characteristics are liveliness of experience, and connectedness to our other memories.
8. God exists and is not a deceiver
9. We clearly and distinctly perceive that a non-deceiving God would not give us strong evidence for a false proposition
10. This faculty of clear and distinct perception is true whether awake or asleep
11. Therefore, these characteristics are sufficient criteria to prove that you are awake

With the addition of premise 10, Descartes argument works, and he successfully introduces criteria that allow him to distinguish being awake from being asleep.

In conclusion, this essay has attempted to give reasons to support Descartes' refutation of the dreaming hypothesis, based on the assumption that you accept Cartesian metaphysics, and consequently that clear and distinct perceptions are infallible and that God exists and is not a deceiver. Descartes proves that our intuition that God would not give us such strong evidence that we are awake unless we really were is true, because this clear and distinct perception is infallible whether awake or asleep, and in this way we are able to judge that we are awake whenever we have strong evidence for it; which this essay has taken to be liveliness or vividity of objects and connectedness to a chain of memory (although these criteria exactly are not essential to the proof, others may work just as well). Descartes therefore successfully vindicates the intuitive distinction we draw between waking and sleeping by providing a criterion that separates the two.

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