

# Yweah

Psychology



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Have you ever felt that you didn't know what your purpose was in this world? Or if you even exist at some times? Well by even questioning the idea of existence, by definition of Descartes and David Cunnig, you do exist. Descartes came up with this notion of " I am. I exist, " which means if you are doubt, ponder, think or judge then you exist (THC 224). Before we get too far into Descartes beliefs we need to understand his two conjectures of the res extensa and the res cogitans, which respectively means extended thing and the thinking thing (THC 223). Descartes believes that human nature is made up of two substances, one material and one spiritual: the extended thing which applies to everything organic or inorganic and the thinking thing, which according to Descartes, is only humans. He comes to the conclusion that only humans have minds because only humans can wonder and doubt things. David Cunnig explains that animals do in fact have brains but they do not have the mental processes that we humans possess, they merely have a brain that receives messages from sensors but no cognitive ability (Cunnig 123). Nina Rosenstand continues to add that there are two reasons why humans are the only ones with a mind. First, of the material and mental substances, only humans share in the mental side and secondly you need a mind to be self-aware. Pain is and awareness of a reaction to something so humans can be aware of pain because we have minds. She concludes that yes animals do have nerve reactions to stimuli that we humans would consider painful, but since animals have no minds, they experience no pain (226). Now that we know humans are the only ones with minds that can think we can look at Descartes's method of doubt. Even as a young man, as explained by Rosenstand, " Descartes felt that he was destined to change the course of science and philosophy. One night he had a

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persistent dream: he was going to invent a new science" (THC 223). He came up with six meditations of philosophy which is why we call him the "father of modern philosophy." Descartes applies his method of doubt to things we seem to be true and evident like senses and consciousness and even logic such as math. He plays the devil's advocate to show how his method works and to prove his point. Descartes asked "can I trust my senses? Not completely, because they have been known to mislead me sometimes, then can I ever trust them" (THC 223)? He states that since your senses have deceived you before then they can deceive you again therefore you can't trust your senses. Same goes with consciousness and your sense of reality and time and place. If you are sleeping there are no indicators that you are asleep so you can't trust if you are in a very real dream or actually reading this paper. Math has to be true right? According to Rosenstand, we could not be in control of our own mind. Some "evil demon" could be giving us false ideas and making you think they are true. "This demon might convince you that  $2+2=5$ , and nothing in your reality would contradict it because the demon has already fixed that!" (224). So know that we can't trust our senses and our consciousness and our logic of what we seem to be very clear and evident, Descartes asks us then we can believe in? His answer: our minds. He came up with this notion of "I am, I exist." He states that "I am, I exist, is necessarily true each time that I pronounce it, or mentally conceive it" (THC 224). Descartes says that our questioning makes our mind real, which in turn makes our body real, but we can't tell if the person standing in front of us is real or if this paper is real but we know that our mind is real. The movie The Matrix illustrates a Cartesian plot because Descartes method of doubt asks us not to trust our senses or even our logic because for one we

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could be dreaming, and two we could be tricked. The movie illustrates an evil demon plot where the subjects believe they are moving in a real 3D world but it is really their minds projecting that they are moving around in the matrix. In fact their bodies are locked in vats and hooked up to machines that draw the energy out of the humans to feed the robots who now control the world. It is a classic Cartesian concept that makes us think and wonder if we are actually alive or if we are locked in vats and being controlled by soupier beings. Descartes makes us wonder if our world is real and his theory has changes how people perceive their sense of being and put it into a constant state of question and disbelief. While we are stuck wondering and doubting we in fact exist. This theory of doubt has changed the way we think and has forever changed the face of philosophy. Works Cited Cunning, David. "Descartes on the Dubitability of the Existence of Self". *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 74. 1 (2007): 111-131. Web. 13 Apr. 2013. Rosenstand, Nina. *The Human Condition*. New York: McGraw, 2002. Print. Essay 2 Tyler Timmer Philosophy 107 16 April 2013 Option 3: Descartes method of doubt