

1. Examine Descartes' argument, in the Sixth Meditation, for the distinction between mind and body. What objections can you conceive being raised against the argument? How would you attempt to defend the argument against those objections?

'If X and Y can exist apart from each other (whether or not they do) then they are distinct. '
(Descartes 'Sixth Meditation')

To argue against Descartes's above statement, something may be able to be thought about as separate, despite actually coming from the same source. When I think about the meaning of home, the picture of my beloved family comes to mind. Each individual person in my family is in this picture. I also see the happiness on all of their faces. Am I seeing the house in this picture? No, I'm not. The place doesn't exist in this picture. On the other hand, I am able to think about home as the empty house without anybody living in it. To defend Descartes's argument, I may say that, because when we think about home and house separately, we think about it by having the picture of the underlying connection between the two. We may or may not notice this connection. Does God make these two things exist apart from each other? No, this is not the case. God may only create the house, but we develop the idea of home by ourselves, later.

Another objection to Descartes's argument is that it is possible that we can misunderstand or be deceived by our own senses. For example, our eyes can deceive us when we try to identify any clear and distinct object that we are sure is separate. I can stand on the hill and look at a train. In front of this whole one long train is a building. The building stays in the middle of the train. For my perspective from the hill, I only can see the first half or the head of the train and only see the second half or the tail of the train. I can't see the whole train as one. So, from the information that I can perceive from my eyes, it is possible that I may misunderstand it. I may see this one long train as two short trains that stay behind the building. God may make this train only one object, but I perceive it as two distinct objects instead.

The history of an object can separate the object as two units in our mind. When I think about the big tree that stands in my neighbourhood, I can see the picture of one whole tree (with root, body, and leaves), but I also can think about this tree as only a small seed. My neighbour brought this seed to his house and prepared to plant it, ten years ago. I can have these two objects clearly separate in my mind but it is still the same object for me. To defend Descartes' argument from above objection, when we think about a current big tree and the seed in the past, we may think about it as two clear separate things, but we can see the image of connection that binds these two objects together as well. So, we can say that it is not two different things.

When I read a book, I may enjoy the story, when the book tries to illustrate the situation and the environment in order to make it real for me. We may try to create the picture of this environment in our mind. If the book tries to explain about the tree, we may create the picture of the one big green tree as one clear distinct object. We may also look into the wording 'tree' that was written in the book and, suddenly, have the picture of that word, 't-r-e-e', in our mind as well.

The book may also be used to write about a character that we love to follow. For example, Mr.X. We always create the picture of Mr.X as a person, as one clear distinct object in our mind. We also may read the name of Mr.X that wrote in the book as the wording 'M-r-.X' and create another object as a picture of this word in our mind as well. So, in our mind, we have both a picture of the wording 'Mr.X', and the picture of the person as individual, 'Mr.X', at the same time. Are these two objects two distinctly separate things for me? I can answer this directly as 'Yes'. The picture of a man and the picture of a word in my mind. It seems to be two separate objects to me. I understand the root of these two objects. They originally come from the same root, but this fact can't make them become one object for me.