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Intro to Philosophy

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<center>Epistemology paper</center>

The Philosopher I will be using for my paper is Descartes. Descartes believed that a strong and
unshakeable basis for knowledge was to question any and everything that could be
questioned and if it could be questioned, perceive it as false until one can arrive at
something that is infallible and unquestionably true. One way in which Descartes used
this method of obtaining knowledge was by giving the example he gives of this is by
stating that if he can question if he has a body or memories, then these things must be
falsehoods him to question if his existence itself is a lie but this in itself is disproved
when he states that he thinks and can convince himself of things. Therefore, he must exist
and from this, he can reasonably say that this is something that is indisputable and his
line of thoughts up to this point are a perfect example of it. Now in regards of the
applicability of Descartes's approach, I agree with about eighty percent of it in that
questioning everything is good in the pursuit of knowledge, but I feel that perceiving
everything as false in the pursuit of more knowledge is a bit extreme. I say this because
some things could just be contemplated for a bit longer instead of seeing it as false. I feel
I can understand Descartes's way of thinking with this philosophy as a few years ago, I
had struggled to come to terms with my own existence with a way of thinking not too
dissimilar to what Descartes was thinking. I became disillusioned with the idea of the

existence of anyone else's mind and began to question if I was real and if I myself am real, what does that mean for everyone else? My mind began to spiral down a rabbit hole of what ifs since I began to question the validity of the individuality of the people around me if I was unable to perceive their thoughts. Fearing the loss of my own sanity, I quickly locked these thoughts away and distracted myself with activities the second they started to rear their head again. I was, however, able to find security in my own mind and existence through my beliefs in my creator, God. Even though I questioned the validity of the existence of those around me, I was still able to keep God in my worldview as I asked myself these questions and I came to the conclusion that If God created me, then he must have also created every other human being and even if I cannot sense their thoughts, I can still communicate with them through other ways. While I relate with this part of Descartes's philosophy, the main point of it is to question everything until one can arrive at an unshakeable truth such as the idea that if I think, therefore I must be. Regarding the final part of Descartes's theory as well as how he arrived at it, I do not completely agree with this philosophy as there are some holes in it such as questioning emotions from loved ones or family members. Some questions are not able to be answered right away or maybe even at all. Descartes is a prime example of this when he says he was struck by the large number of falsehoods he had accepted as true in his childhood. In one's childhood, our thought processes are very malleable. There's a reason the Bible says to train up a child in the way he should go. In childhood, our understandings and belief systems are formed, and we tend to believe a lot of things, but I don't think that this is the fault of the child. Note that he didn't specifically say of what nature the things he had believed as a child were. Whether they were of academic importance or emotional

importance. If Descartes's philosophy for epistemology were implemented among the youth for the next 5 or 10 years or so, there would probably be a shift in how most of that generation sees the world compared to the previous one since they questioned everything until they were able to arrive at an infallible truth. In the information age, where news could be spread across the globe in a matter of minutes, there is a lot of information that must be sifted through to arrive at a proper truth with so many news outlets doing opinion pieces and only a few being unbiased in their reporting as compared to earlier reporters who did their work before the start of the digital age. While this is all well and good, like I said earlier there are things that cannot always be answered in a straightforward answer like why do my parents treat me the way that they do or why do my relatives act a certain way around each other? For me personally, I think the amount of questioning done especially at a young age should be confined to a specific area such as questioning academic topics they are being taught and as they get older, they can then start to be bolder and ask questions befitting their age. You wouldn't want to ask a 10-year-old why it is that their family kept moving constantly as its above most of their understanding and you would not want to ask a 17 year old why their favorite color is blue as that question is below their current age. Given this however, I do agree with Descartes's conclusion as I felt it was very similar to the one I arrived at. He says that deep in his mind, he continues to have the belief that there is an all-powerful God who made him the type of creature he is today and from this, he questions how he does not know that God has made it so that all of the things he can perceive and interact with are falsehoods while at the same time making the things he perceives to exist as they seem to him at the same time? He states that this goes against God's nature as he does not deceive anyone but at the

same time, it would also be a contradiction if God allowed him to be deceived even occasionally. He then arrives at the conclusion that Satan, the deceiver, must be the one tricking him in all these things and while Satan is indeed a deceiver, I think it would be closer to say that Satan is the one who caused us to start questioning these things as it is much easier than tricking someone with physical things than it is to simply make the person doubt it themselves. I feel I have experienced this myself especially with the thoughts I mentioned before of wondering if anyone else was truly real aside from me and while I don't know for sure if those questioning thoughts came from the devil, I don't think God would send me into such a state of inner turmoil like that or if he did, it would be for my good in the end as God is himself, good.

To conclude, I can definitely understand Descartes philosophy on Epistemology as I had similar thoughts in my youth that I had to come to terms with. However, I don't think his philosophy is suitable for all ages but rather, should be implemented bit by bit as one gets older so as not to drive them into a state of peril as I experienced. Once they are older and understand the world more as well as their beliefs, then it would be optimal for them to implement the technique of questioning anything and everything until they arrive at an infallible truth. I believe faith in God is the ultimate destination one arrives upon from questioning one's own existence and while others may disagree with me, for me, God's existence and love is the infallible truth I have come to believe for all things I understand.