

# Descartes' argument

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Descartes Argument on Trusting Our Senses Descartes tried to figure out the relationship between our senses, experiences, ideas, reason, and how we relate them to the outer world with the help of his arguments on trusting our senses. He discussed how human nature is prone to believe in its senses and act accordingly. Though our first experiences teach us about the ways to handle particular situations and we learn from nature and personal experiences; yet one cannot fully trust one's senses beyond a certain point. Senses can deceive us in our judgements and understanding of the world around us. We look at and feel the objects around us with our senses- thus our senses are the gateway to understand the phenomena of the world. However, our senses and perceptions are defined in different ways.

Sometimes we do not feel the same way about certain things at different times. As we grow from our infancy to adulthood and beyond, our perceptions change with time, our experiences, and learning. Therefore, we cannot depend upon our senses to comprehend or understand the nature of objects or the world itself.

Our senses give us a limited knowledge about other objects or ourselves. For instance, we can sense or feel physical or emotional pain through our senses; yet we cannot ascertain the duration of pain from our previous experiences. This is an everyday example that manifests the limitation of trusting our senses.

Descartes argued that passion led by reason can be trusted to a greater extent. This is because with each new experience, we learn something new about the way we perceive the world with our senses. If our reasoning faculty is in charge of our senses, we can broaden the areas where we can trust our senses.

The claim is that if, in any particular case, the teachings of nature were untrustworthy, then the veracious God would have given us the means to correct it... we can ... trust the teachings of nature and believe that our sensations proceed from bodies, in spite of the fact that our inclinations are not always trustworthy. But, when another faculty, reason, of course, gives us the means to correct the teachings of nature, then they must be rejected... In the end, Descartes uses sensation to establish the existence of bodies, he is very careful to claim that sensation, by itself, does not establish the nature of bodies. (Rorty, 106)

This is where other philosophers object to Descartes argument. He believes that senses do not belong to the material world as they keep changing with the change in objects; or sometimes convey incorrect perception of objects. In contrast, he trusts his reasoning faculty and deems his mind and body separate from each other. "... where God has given us no means to correct our natural inclination, we must trust it, and in this case we are entitled to believe that our sensory ideas are caused by an active faculty in bodies." (Garber, 72)

Descartes based his argument on his sensory perceptions and came to the conclusion that his senses can deceive him. The mind-body dualism theory is contradictory in a number of ways. The separation between mind and body does not establish a relationship between the main faculties of human beings- that is, our senses and reason.

Descartes argument of senses was a breakthrough in the history of philosophy and the objections that rose against it further developed man's understanding of his senses and its relationship to reason. Though Descartes overlooked the importance of empirical evidence to support reason, yet his <https://assignbuster.com/decartes-argument/>

argument proved to be a corner stone in metaphysical science and philosophy.

Work Cited

Garber, Daniel. Descartes' Metaphysical Physics. USA: University of Chicago Press, 1992. Print.

Rorty, Amelie. Essays on Descartes Meditations. USA: University of California Press, 1986. Print.