

Descartes vs camus essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Camus and Descartes both have something to say about life, its happenings and the reason why things are the way they are. Camus believes in the absurd while Descartes believes in rationalism. These two ways of thinking are very different indeed and completely clash against one another. Those of the logical mind will generally agree with Descartes yet Camus has an argument on the absurd that will make most logical thinkers stop and possibly be speechless or contemplate an answer in response.

Descartes views show that there is an answer for everything if one would only stop and find the rationalization in the matter. His ultimate view on rationalization comes in the form of priori. Priori means that it is not based on sensory information. I for one disagree with this view simply by the absurd reasoning of experiencing physical blindness. Camus's belief in the absurd is quoted as, (Camus 1955)

“ Absurd,” for Camus, was a philosophical term for the fundamental lack of reasonableness and coherence in human existence. It expounded no thesis or ideology and viewed its task as essentially metaphysical. It existed because it did: man was a bewildered being in an incomprehensible universe.”

In easier terms, an infinite deity incarnating himself and undergoing suffering for human beings was so irrational that no one would invent such a story; therefore, it must have been true. I believe because it is absurd. Tertullian (160-230 A. D.)

Descartes view of rationalization, when thinking of the priori definition, how can he rationalize a blind person “ seeing” a rock for the first time?

Descartes doesn't believe in the sensory information because it lacks rationalization. A blind person cannot base their first impression, their first sight on anything other than the senses. A blind person, not knowing what they will be touching, relies on the sense of touch first and initially and is unable to rationalize a rock is a rock until the initial touch is felt. After the sense of touch then the thought process of "this is a rock" can be thought. In Camus's and Tertullian's views, the blind person would believe it is a rock because he was told it was a rock and this falls directly in line with the absurd theory. That blind person would believe it was a ball of hardened drywall if he hadn't experienced the sensation of that.

Descartes belief in "the metaphor of building knowledge up on firm foundations relies on a mathematical model (the foundations are like the axioms of a mathematical system; building up the rest of knowledge is like proving theorems)" (Curtis Brown 2001), doesn't seem to rationalize the story of the blind person and how is a mathematical equation even related?

Descartes "I think, therefore I am" example as used to prove the existence of God and humans, believing that if one thinks in this way, then they are that way. I think I am human therefore I am. I think I am God therefore I am; is very contradictory to how people view this today. Some may call this a god complex.

Camus on the other hand relies much on the emotional factors of life and the decisions that those emotions can bring. While people claim that he shows little emotion, his written words are full of emotion and describe the choices

that those emotions bring. Camus's belief is that humans are constantly trying to find meaning to their lives and he is correct.

People searching for answers either determines that they find no answers thus making a path towards concluding that their life is meaningless and with that comes forth the empty feelings and suicidal tendencies. Others find a way to make meaning in life whether it is because of the beauty in nature they see or the acceptance of the circumstance they are in. This is a simple logic and in contradiction to the belief of Descartes. Camus definitely shows an action based upon emotion whereas Descartes shows action based upon rationalized thought with no emotion as Descartes rationalizes that there is no emotion before rationalization.

How are we to form a rationalization before emotion when it is well documented that we have emotions and emotions are what sets a person in a direction whether it be action or thought and it is then that the thought of rationalizing something comes forward. We rationalize that we have to be to work on time. Humans fear that if they are not then they will lose their job, possibly be unable to pay their bills and so forth. It is that fear that forces us to rationalize in this instance. Descartes theory seems to force a conundrum of thought upon a person. The riddle being how to rationalize before you feel emotion.

It is plain to see where these two philosophers differ on aspects of reality and how reality is approached. It should also be apparent that Descartes nihilistic approach to nothing can be known is but skepticism as to all knowledge and reality. Camus' theory lends a reality approach to humanity,

a humanity that we see and feel everyday. Other philosophers have accused Camus of being part of nihilism way of thought. Camus though can't be as in the world of psychiatry, nihilism is considered as a delusion that one doesn't exist by way of mind or self. This is totally opposite of Camus and right on track with Descartes.

So knowing this, can it be said that Descartes should be institutionalized and then asked to please rationalize as to why Descartes is where he is at that time and would that rationalization become accepted as a reason or would he sound confused and irrational? Could a person you know today rationalize this scenario without emotion or would emotion be too quick to be able to stop all thoughts so that one could rationalize. That sounds crazy and maybe it is, maybe it isn't but this is what Descartes believed in direct contrast to what the majority of people today would believe.