

A critique of the cartesian doubt philosophy essay



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“ Men have been taught either that knowledge is impossible (skepticism) or that it is available without effort (mysticism.) These two positions appear to be antagonist, but are in fact, two variants on the same theme, two sides of the same fraudulent coin: the attempt to escape the responsibility of rational cognition and the absolutism of reality— the attempt to assert the primacy of consciousness over existence.”

-Ayn Rand-

Several philosophers had attempted to answer such question: “ How do we acquire knowledge?” Each having their own stands; some making it complicated and leaves people on a hanging condition and some attaching the idea of faith an reason to justify such claim. With all of these, man had been in conquest of certainty and the validity of knowledge. Among them, there exist one who tried to use the method of doubt; Rene Descartes. Rene Descartes had presented his idea of a radical doubt. He wanted to dismantle the edifice of knowledge through pushing himself towards the motto: de omnibus dubitandum (Everything is to be Doubted,) until he will be able to reach an indubitable aspect. He wanted to point out an absolute certain knowledge out of this method; unfortunately this method, I argue, had failed to him to achieve certain knowledge for his ideas are simply leading to an aporia.

But before moving with such, a definition of Aporia would be necessary.

What is aporia? Waterfield defined aporia as a seemingly insoluble impasse in an inquiry. Such case can be explained by mentioning the Socratic way of dwelling with arguments while having a conversation in the Platonic

Dialogues. Socrates in the dialogues continually refutes and returns a question which serves as his summoning of a premise that would come from the one he is talking to, thus making him contradict himself, that would lead the person into a total feeling of having doubt into his ideas himself, thus stocking him towards the mentality of ignorance and self uncertainty. It can also denote the state of being confused, or at a loss.

An example would be from the Dialogue Meno:

Meno was curious whether man acquires excellence through learning or is it natural and innate to man. He asked Socrates rather Socrates returned the question and admitted that he wouldn't know himself for he himself doesn't know what virtue is. Meno confused provided examples and each example had been refuted by Socrates, reaching nothing Meno appeared to be confused and complained of being numbed by the insanity of Socrates leading him to confusion in every argument that he provided as if he is already doubting whatever he is going to say.

In addition, this according to Waterfield aporia often arises as a result of equally plausible yet inconsistent premises, when the two sides negotiates the sides are unable to meet a certain agreement and become stocked in the box of uncertainty and no connection at all happened. Hence, due to inconsistent premises confusion emerges between the idea and confusion garbs the idea, making the arguments reach nothing but questions.

The Cartesian doubt is simply not grounded on merely believable grounds. Following the Cartesian way, one must doubt everything. We can then say that he could have doubted his doubt the very first place, but isn't it that you
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cannot doubt the very idea that you are in a doubt? In addition to this, he even neglected the reason why experiments are made: to verify whether such theories and events would be true and would happen in the same circumstance. But since he doubted everything then he must have doubted even the experiment and simply affixed it with the attribute of an illusion programmed into his mind.

But another question follows how can we doubt if we are programmed? Not unless you say that we are programmed to doubt. But if we are programmed to doubt, then there still might be a reason. Then this doubt must be a guide to reason. Hence, we can say that Descartes can also be correct.

Assuming but not conceding that doubt would be the method, then how can we start from having certain knowledge? If we are going to follow him, then we would doubt until eternity. Thus making it simply pointless and not even grasping a single output. Descartes then said that there is one thing that he cannot doubt and that it would be the idea that he thinks. This I find contradictory, for he is not following his very idea, how was he able that he is really certain about the mind? He did not provide any believable arguments, instead just said that He cannot doubt the very idea that he thinks. But where are the proofs? That is the question. How did he become certain that thinking is no longer doubtable or that the very idea that you're very idea of thinking is no longer doubtable? This way would be the inconsistency of Descartes. He premised his method from doubting everything until you reach and indubitable aspect. But the very idea that thinking cannot be doubted still is not true, for he did not provide how and what makes it indubitable, no rational and logical explanations were given by Descartes. What he gave us <https://assignbuster.com/a-critique-of-the-cartesian-doubt-philosophy-essay/>

is that it is crazy to doubt the mind and the mere ideas that we are in. Other than that, no more rational aspects were given to prove his point.

Hence, Descartes was going in circles if he would be following his first step. And if not then we can see that Descartes haven't prove anything for he lacked purely believable support for his claim that the mind can no longer doubted. It's as if he just believed that the mind can no longer be doubted but did not provide any string arguments. What I'm trying to point here is that how can you believe a thing without even understanding it and just simply accepting it as it is? Descartes is simply trying to connect lines of ideas without rational basis. Just simply a lineage of what he thinks is; which I find simply not a good way of providing good and believable points.

Such an argument if ever Descartes would be providing would seem circular. For in the very first case one would entail doubts about the premise as well. The premises themselves need justification. Doing so would sound as if you are doing infinite regress. Or in a simple sense we can call it aporia, just like how Waterfield defined aporia, something that would lead towards an insoluble impasse.

Descartes started by providing to us his very goal of finding something that is certain. He then gave his very idea that to do this then one must doubt everything until you reach a point that is indubitable. Then there it is He would doubt everything even the singlest tiny little entity. But here's the case, did he doubted the very start of his premise? No. What he did is presumed that it would be an insane thing to do? Thus he never followed his very idea. He did not provide proofs that would make us firm and believe his

very idea, thus making himself be subjected to doubt for not following his very premise.

Now rises the question on why is How was he able to say that the mind cannot be doubted, with an idea that he forgot to doubt the doubt itself and provide support for the idea that We must doubt everything. Thus in the very first place Descartes had been stocked in his first step. Descartes remained boxed by his own agenda. Only that it seems not for he have neglected this angle. Instead he proceeded without any more justifying each and every presupposition that he gave. But infact to doubt the very doubt would make it circular, hence Descartes is really trapped. He himself cannot agree with himself if he knew so; thus making him stop in void, due to doubting would make a void end.

Descartes was not able to achieve his goal of certain knowledge. He was able to achieve it by self declaration but not in the real sense, for following his method we can see the very idea that He is inconsistent and was not able to justify every line of his thought, and instead just made them appear believable and connected. Hence we can say that he hasn't been able to achieve the certain knowledge.

Following this his line of thought would only be leading to an aporia. In this scenario of Descartes, one can say that you yourself would disagree with you ideas until nothing. Thus you will not be able to reach your goal. Thus you're stuck in infinite regress. Thus you are in the state of loss—- aporia.

Now we can say that Descartes himself is loss and just left a question unanswered. He's contribution is mainly left stock and unanswered;

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appearing believable because of his system of writing but circular and infinite by reality. Hence we can conclude that he was not able to achieve his goal and that his method will only reach an aporia.