

# Descartes' doubt

Philosophy



Descartes' doubt Descartes' doubt Introduction Descartes starts his meditations by asserting that all sciences require an absolute truth. Descartes believes that absolute truth can only be gained by doubting ones beliefs and senses about the truth (Aune, 2013). Descartes asserts that senses are illusionary and hinder the knowledge of the truth. Descartes postulates the cogito by pure thinking and claims that human beings should accept it as the truth. Descartes argues that people discover physical objects by analyzing their own concept of a physical object and not through sense experience (Broughton & Carriero, 2010). Descartes suggests that human beings have experiences that produce involuntary ideas (without ones contribution) and include feelings and sensations (Aune, 2013). Descartes recognises that sensations are involuntary thus some external world exists. Descartes attributes sensations to corporeal substance or some other created substance. He tries to explain that all beliefs about the external world are doubtful since they come through senses (Aune, 2013). Exposition Descartes starts his first meditation by doubting all falsehoods he has believed as truth during his life. He acknowledges that he has learned through senses and senses can be deceiving. Descartes also claims that things that seem perfect like geometry and arithmetic may be mistaken since an evil genius deceives us (Aune, 2013). In the second meditation, Descartes explores the truth about the of nature of human mind and body. Descartes makes the argument of cogito ergo sum. His truth is that ' I am thinking, therefore I exist'. Descartes claims that this truth does not emerge from any sensory perceptions or any realities in the external world (Aune, 2013). Descartes claims he would exist even when deceived since omnipresent god cannot cause the deception to be truth at the same time.

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Descartes draws his indubitable truth by claiming that none of his human body has been involved in understanding self (Aune, 2013). Accordingly, he claims that his thoughts are inseparable from conceiving, willing and doubting and he would not exist if he stopped thinking. In his wax analogy, describes the qualities such as size and after melts it and observes the changes that happen (Broughton & Carriero, 2010). He surely observes the same wax remains, but questions the substance of the wax. He concludes by asserting that the perception of wax is not on the basis of touching or imagining, but purely inspection on the part of reason and mind (Aune, 2013). Analysis Descartes is not justified at arriving at his indubitable truth. Descartes tries to challenge Aristotelian claim that senses and perceptions lead to truth. Descartes does not offer a logical argument in his philosophical knowledge of truth through meditation. Descartes agrees claims only some sense experiences are mistaken, but he does not offer a method of differentiating the correct and mistaken sense experiences. According to his argument, if we doubt that we truly doubt, it follows that we will be making an assumption that the world exists thus his indubitable principle is doomed. Secondly, his claims that knowledge should be limited to absolute certainty make one assume that we can know things without regard to their certainty (Broughton & Carriero, 2010). Having explained that he exists since he is thinking, it is clear that is some thing which does the thinking. Descartes could possibly infer his existence from other activities such as ' I am walking, therefore I exist'. Although Descartes premises his arguments on doubts, he points out it is impossible to doubt that he exists (Aune, 2013). Descartes also asserts that he is dependent on the body and senses since body cannot live without mind yet he denies the existence of any senses (Broughton & <https://assignbuster.com/descartes-doubt/>

Carriero, 2010). Descartes asserts that working of the body can be explained by physics and mind is different from the body. However, he fails in conclusively explaining how the mind is different from the body since he only claims that the mind is indivisible and the body is divisible (Aune, 2013). He fails in accounting for how one experiences hunger and other feelings. In his analogy of pilot and the ship, he fails in explaining on a pilot perceives that the ships needs an adjustment and steering when things go wrong.

Descartes fails to prove the existence of non-deceiving God thus making his reasoning subject to doubt. Descartes reasoning would be uncertain if a supernatural God would manipulate it. Descartes complicates his arguments by asserting that God allows us to be deceived by the external world especially colors and smells of wax. In deed, if God could allow human beings to be deceived then he would allow them to be deceived by the external world (Aune, 2013). The consequences of impossibility of Descartes arguments would create great mind-body dualism problem. In addition, there would be a problem on the acceptable standard of truth since absolute truth could not be attainable. Philosophers would also be in disagreement whether omnipresent god could be deceiving human beings through sensory illusions (Aune, 2013). Conclusion Descartes relies on doubting his initially held knowledge to understand the truth. He disputes that senses and feelings are the source of true and asserts that it is through doubting that human beings can have active thinking and know the truth. References: Aune, B. (2013). Knowledge of the external world. New York: Routledge. Broughton, J & Carriero, J. P. (2010). A companion to Descartes. Oxford: Blackwell.