

Discourse on the method by descartes

Philosophy



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This paper will analyze the surprise ending in part four of Descartes' book and how successful Descartes managed to convince me into accepting the validity of the surprise ending that he did not even suggest at the beginning of the book.

In this part, Descartes describes the results of his meditations. He states that everything that he can possibly doubt is false which means that he holds on only to things that are unquestionably certain. He forsakes all his sensory knowledge because he believes the senses undoubtedly deceive as well as demonstrative reasoning since he believes that people make errors often in their reasoning (Johnson, 2005). As a result, he imagines that everything in his mind is just illusions that are brought by dreams.

However, while doubting, he concludes that for him to doubt, he must be something since doubting requires thought; hence, the thought confirms his existence. For this reason, Descartes adopted the principle of "I am thinking; therefore, I exist" (Descartes, 1972). He used this principle as the foundation of his existence in which he argues that he is a thinking substance with a soul that is distinct and easier to understand than the body.

However, I thought Descartes was going to describe the results of his meditations to the end of this part until he introduced the idea of a perfect being: God. I realized that Descartes was planning to introduce a surprise ending when he argued that thoughts of external things such as the earth, sky, and light were delusions of the mind which is not possible of God (Johnson, 2005). He claimed that the thoughts of imperfect objects could

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only be invented by imperfect minds which means that his imperfect mind could not invent the idea of a perfect God. Therefore, this meant that, for a perfect being to exist, it had to depend on an imperfect being, which Descartes concluded that the perfect mind is God and all his perfections are due to the perfection of God (Descartes, 2008).

At this point, it is clear that Descartes is no longer trying to prove his own existence, but that of a perfect God. He even tries to prove the existence of God through geometry where he claims that geometers can prove facts with a lot of certainties. Geometers can prove that the sum of the angles of a triangle is 180 degrees; thus, the existence of God is as certain as this proof since Descartes claims that God's existence is as significant as the sum of three angles of a triangle.

However, according to Descartes (2008), people have difficulty in understanding God's existence because they rely mainly on their imagination and senses only. He argues that to understand God's existence a person needs to focus on reason instead of imagination and senses because his existence is more certain than everything else which is subject to doubts. Descartes claims that the doubts he discussed earlier can only be removed if a person recognizes the existence of a perfect God. This is because it is through him that we can be sure that the distinct and clear perceptions are true since they come from him.

However, Descartes has managed to convince me to accept the validity of the surprise ending which he did not clearly suggest in the beginning. First, I am convinced that without God, distinct and clear perceptions would not be

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true because God is the foundation of all truth. He uses geometry to prove the existence of God which also adds to my surprise especially when he relates the sum of angles of a triangle to God's existence. Moreover, I agree with him that the idea of a perfect God is caused by something which is as perfect as the idea itself and that must be a perfect mind from a perfect being. However, Descartes's ideas that he presents in this part are quite difficult to engage in mind because they present a certain world view in their approach as well as their conclusions. In this part, he has defined the world view of the western culture in ways that people are hardly aware of, hence, making him a critical thinker in a highly unique way.