

Meditations on first philosophy by descartes

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The paper "Meditations on First Philosophy by Descartes" is an outstanding example of a philosophy book report. Remembered today primarily as the father of modern philosophy, Descartes introduced a shift in thinking from the empiricist school of thought in which people believed all knowledge ultimately comes to us through our senses to the rationalist school of thought in which it was believed that human reason was the source for all human knowledge. One aspect of Descartes that separated him from the thinkers of his time was his departure from traditional modes of thought in bringing together things that had not been done, or not been done often, in times past. Dualism is Descartes attempt to bring the discipline of mathematics with its basis on basic 'real' knowledge, information that just cannot be wrong, together with the concepts of thought. Through the application of the logical questioning process, Descartes demonstrates how thought, not the observation is really the right foundation for knowledge. Assuming that what he is able to perceive as distinct must be true, he strives to erase his mind of all information that has been gained through his five senses to arrive at what he knows deep within himself. After rejecting all of the information he seems to know about the world because it has all come to him through one or the other of the senses, about the only thing Descartes is still sure of is that there is something within him that can be informed, rightly or wrongly, by these senses. He reasons that in order to fool a mind, a mind must first exist. "But there is I know not what being, who is possessed at once of the highest power and the deepest cunning, who is constantly employing all his ingenuity in deceiving me. Doubtless, then, I exist, since I am deceived; and, let him deceive me as he may, he can never bring it about that I am nothing, so long as I shall be conscious that I am something"

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(Descartes, 1989). This conclusion led to the now-famous line “ I think, therefore I am” that is at the heart of the dualism question. Through these thoughts, Descartes also claimed to have proved the existence of God since there must be something greater than himself that either gave him the capacity to sense the truth or has engaged in efforts to keep him continuously fooled.