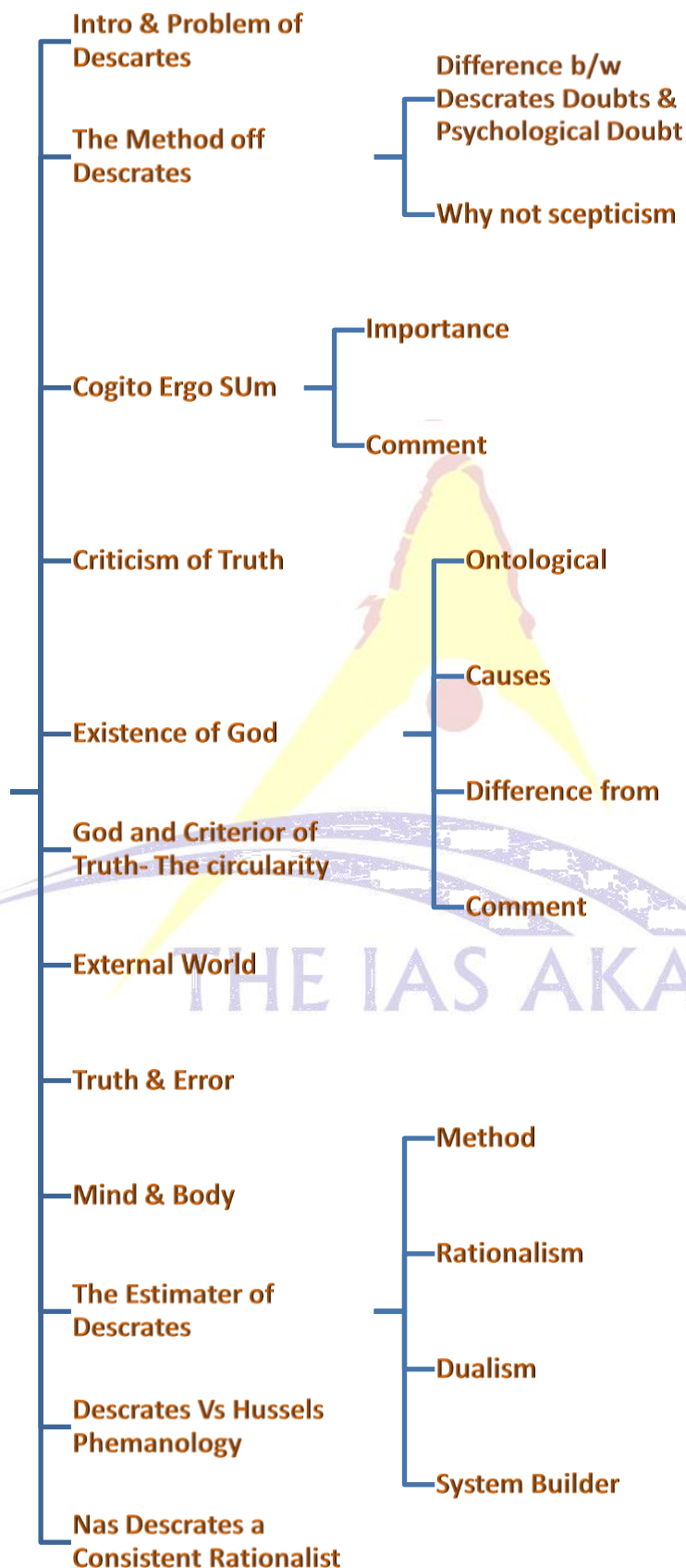


DESCARTES



SOME QUOTABLE LINES

1. Cogito Ergo Sum means my consciousness is the means of revealing myself as something existing.
2. Descartes tries to rehabilitate the world which doubt has destroyed
3. Regarding relation between God and criterion of clearness and Distinctness
 - a. "The veracity of God is the ontological assumption of the methodological criterion.
4. Descartes wavers between interactionism which he seems to suggest and parallelism which follows logically from his absolute dualism.
5. Descries is the legislator of modern philosophy
6. According to Descartes
 - a. We found that "philosophy aims at not giving us knowledge but wisdom". Wisdom implies not only sufficient knowledge of actual states of affair but also a higher state of realization in man himself.
 - b. In other words philosophy aims at self-realization through the help of knowledge in science or in other walks of everyday life.
7. On Science vs Philosophy
 - a. The reality as a whole has been the traditional matter of philosophy.
 - b. Science deals with observables either directly or indirectly. But reality as a whole cannot be object of any one's observation. Hence naturally God or the immortality of soul cannot be known in a scientific way.
 - c. The perennial philosophers have not claimed any scientific knowledge of their subject matter. They all the while were dealing not with facts but within the realm of values. That is why their language was symbolical, metaphorical & analogical

PROBLEM OF DESCARTES

1. Descartes was very much worried about the uncertain state of philosophy in his times.
2. He saw that philosophy was cultivated for many centuries by the best minds that had ever lived and there was yet not a single proposition in it which was not under dispute.
3. Descartes wanted the certitude of knowledge in the field of philosophy and hence wanted a “method of Philosophizing”.

THE METHOD OF DESCARTES

1. In search of a certain method in philosophy which reflected the certitude of arithmetic and geometry, Descartes noted that **deduction alone could yield certain results** and experimental inference could not yield errorless results.
2. However any deduction would require **self-evident axioms** as in methods which Descartes plans to discover through his method in philosophy.
3. He lays down in broad principles for his guidance.
 - a. Resolute refusal to believe in what is not clearly and distinctly perceived.
 - b. Division of difficulties under examination into as many parts as necessary.
 - c. Commence with the simplest object and ascend to complexities in orderliness such that the latter would seem to follow naturally.
 - d. Make enumerations so complete and explanations so general that nothing is excluded[no fallacy of illicit generalizations]

METHOD OF DOUBT

1. The Cartesian method laid down foundation for Descartes to discover a method in philosophy as certain as that of mathematics.
2. Descartes had noted that deduction alone could yield certain results and not experimental inferences; however deduction in mathematics were based on certain self-evident truths.
3. To find these certain self-evident truths in philosophy, on the basis of which all knowledge could be logically deduced, Descartes applies “deliberate Doubt”.
4. When doubt is pushed to its farthest limit then it will reveal something which is “indubitable”.

In order to discover the indubitable intuition, he doubts everything.

a. Sense testimony can be doubted:

Knowledge of things around us are through senses, however the senses deceive us which is clear from illusion, imagination etc.

b. Argument from Dream

One may say that it is certain that he is sitting in the chair at present, however similar certainty is also found in our dreams and we can't say whether all this is not a dream unless we speak from a higher form of truth or existence [Shankar 3 stages of truths].

c. Even truth of science and mathematics can be doubted →

There might be a demon who tricks us to believe in falsehood like $2+2=4$

CONCLUSION

"That I Doubt Cannot be Doubted"

When doubt has done its worst, it finds a fact of complete certainty. I may doubt anything but I cannot doubt that I am doubting

Why? { Whether it is dream or real consciousness I must exist as a doubting or thinking being
Let there be a demon to deceive me but then I must exist as a thinking being to be deceived.

❖ Cogito Ergo Sum is one certain truth which can be taken as the foundation of philosophy.

<u>Descartes Doubt</u>	<u>Psychological Doubt</u>
i. It is deliberate and dispassionate towards human experience in general	i. This is directly felt & experienced by us
ii. It is not directly determined by the nature of object	ii. It is caused by the nature of object about which we want to know
iii. It is logical and depends on one's will	iii. It is independent of our will. However hard we try, it continues.
iv. It is concerned with attitude towards totality & absolute things.	iv. It is related with immediate things or particulars.

Q1. Why Method of Descartes is not scepticism?

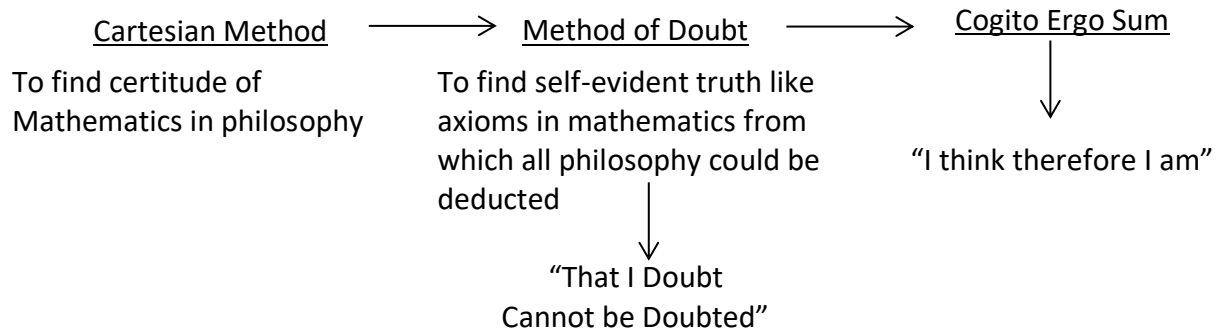
Ans: 1. Scepticism is the finished conclusion about knowledge which professes the denial of any certain knowledge.

However, the Cartesian doubt is only a starting point to find out what cannot be doubted further.

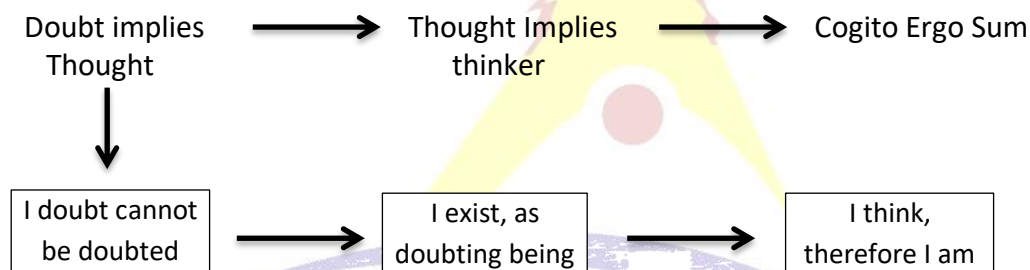
2. Descartes while doubting on various aspects does assert that whatever can be doubted is false, but he is only supposing it to be false.

“COGITO ERGO SUM”

Background -->



When Doubt is pushed to its farthest limit, it reveals a certain unassailable truth, "That I Doubt cannot be doubted". Doubting or thought can exist only if there is someone to doubt or think & hence the need for a thinker.



CERTAIN IMPLICIT POINTS IN THE DICTUM ARE →

1. Cogito Ergo Sum is not an inference or deduction but an intuitive self-evident axiom. The use of "therefore" is in secondary sense of a relation of necessary connection.
2. Certainly of cogito is clear and distinct and nothing else could be pursued with same certainty.
3. Cogito Ergo Sum means my consciousness is the means of revealing myself as something existing. No others function apart from consciousness can guarantee this. It would be incorrect to say, "I walk therefore I am".
4. Further in Cogito "**I know that I am, but I do not know I am**", i.e. the content which constitutes the self is not known.
5. That which thinks is a **substance**

Note: Descartes approach to metaphysical truth is epistemological because he tried to discover metaphysics of "what is" from epistemology of "what can be known".

IMPORTANCE OF COGITO →

1. Holds a strategic position in Descartes philosophy because all other element like
 - a. God exists, based on Ideas of Cogito
 - b. External world exists for God is not a deceiver.
 - c. Mind Body Dualism
 Are all deduced from Cogito
2. Cogito is a sufficient answer to any future agnosticism which hinders us from attaining certain knowledge.
3. Again, Cogito is the first, existential proposition.
4. Here, we come in contact with a very important equality of “consciousness (thinking)” which will serve as a distinguishing marker in “mind-body dualism”.
5. Descartes method is deduction inductive, analytic-synthetic . Inductive because we discover a certain truth and deductive because of his philosophy is deduced from it.

COMMENT

1. Locke also believed that self can be known by intuition like Descartes.
2. **Absence of reasoning to prove self as substance**
 Descartes takes a leap of faith when from I think which means I exist, he deduces that I am a substance.
3. **Epistemological difficulty**
 Greatest difficulty Kant has pointed out, the self is the knower and cannot be the known otherwise it becomes a mere object. For this Kant postulates the “**Fallacy of Paralogism**”
4. **Hussel’s phenomenology**
 Descartes confused between an empirical self and a transcendental consciousness.
5. **Empirical difficulty**
 Empiricist David Hume has refuted the conception of a permanent self. He points out that “whenever I look deeply into what I call myself, I stumble upon particular ideas of pleasure & pain, hot or cold, at no point am I without them and without them I am nothing”
6. **Existential philosophers** have reversed Descartes position and justified that “I exist, therefore I think”
7. **Logical difficulty**
 “Existence cannot be maintained with regard to subject, but with predicates”.
 The deduction of Mind-Body Dualism requires explanation of a relation between them.

SUMMARY

Cogito Ergo Sum

1. Cartesian Method → Method of Doubt → That I Doubt can't be doubted
2. Doubt implies Thought → Thought Implies thinker → I think therefore I am → Cogito Ergo Sum
3. Features
 - a. Not a deducting
 - b. Self-Evident axiom clear & distinct
 - c. My consciousness
 - d. I am a substance
4. Significance and Comment

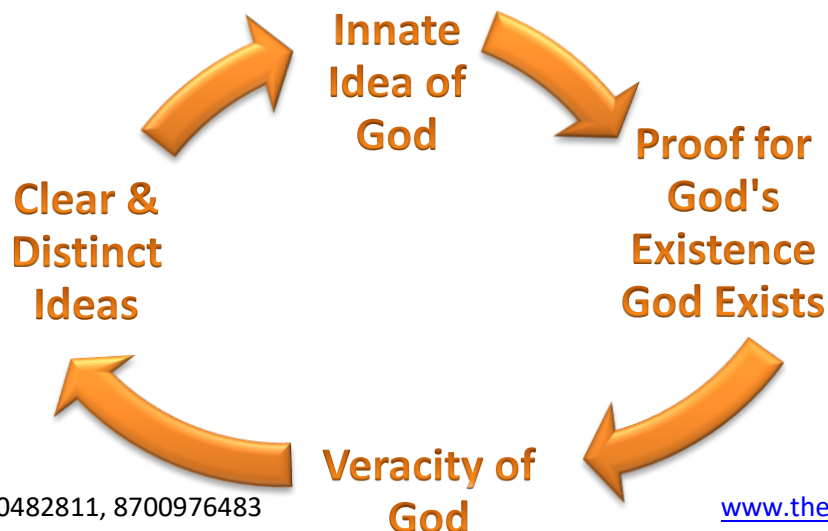
CRITERION OF TRUTH

1. Cogito is true because it is clear and distinct. Hence clearness and distinctness may be regarded as the criterion of any true knowledge.
2. To be clear an idea must be present to the mind, open to the mind and the mind must also attend to it.
3. To be distinct is that which is precisely determined so that it may not be confused with anything else.

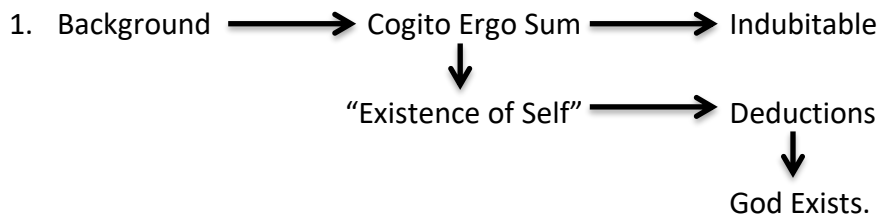
CRITICISM → 1. Prof N. K. Smith has pointed that Descartes has not been able to lay down any logical criterion of clearness & distinctness.

2. Circularity

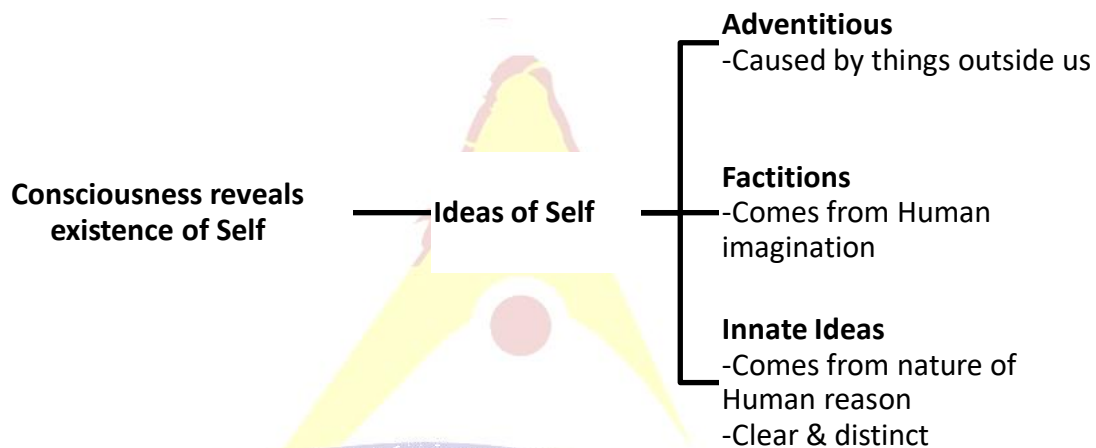
The veracity of God is the ontological assumption of the methodological criterion.



EXISTENCE OF GOD OR PROOF'S FOR GOD'S EXISTENCE



2. Descartes first establishes God's existence as a logical deduction from Cogito Ergo Sum & then supports it with further proofs.
3. God's existence from Cogito: Casual Argument



The question is what is the cause of these innate ideas, one of which is concept of a perfect God. Descartes argues that had man himself been the cause of this idea of God, he would have been perfect since God is perfect. Human is finite & mortal so God himself is the cause of that idea. **Therefore God Exists.**

1. Difference from Anselm

- i. Casual argument of Descartes does not start from God as an essence but an actual idea of God existing as an innate idea
- ii. Existence of God follows upon the existence of a concept of God and not the essence of God [which was a mere definition]

Hence it is called causal & not ontological.

2. Argument from clear & distinct ideas

- i. Descartes criterion for truth is that anything can be accepted to be true or real if it is clear & distinct.
- ii. The concept of God stands this test fairly because God creates clear & distinct innate ideas in man's mind and God is perfect. Hence won't deceive with illusory ideas.

3. Cosmological arguments

- i. Having established God's existence Descartes fortifies it with cosmological arguments
- ii. There must be creator of all objects & living beings in the universe & man obviously can't create himself because man would have to exist before his birth which is a contradiction.

If it be argued that my parents are my creator this would lead to a series of unending causes- regress ad infinitum. It is only God who can be the first cause of the universe.

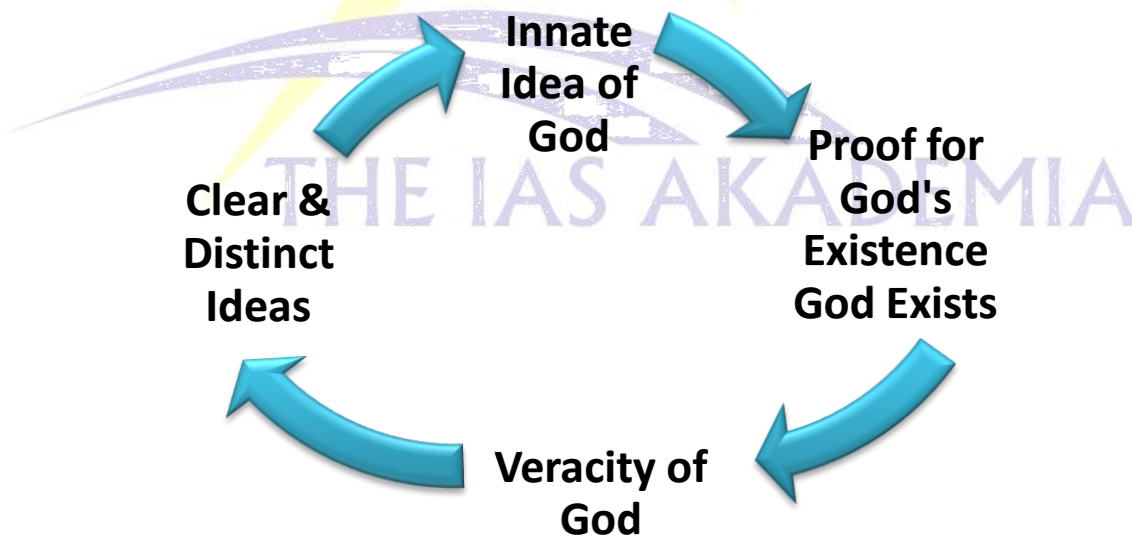
Note: Descartes does not accept St. Thomas Aquinas's cosmological argument because Descartes doubts the existence of the world.

4. Ontological Argument

- i. The existence of God is proved from the very idea of a perfect being just as equality of 3 angles of triangle= 2 right angles follows from the idea of a triangle.
- ii. The most perfect being cannot be thought w/o existence.

COMMENTS

1. The circularity of criterion of truth



2. **Concept of God: Bad Metaphysics**

Descartes existence of God from concept is a apriori line of reasoning which at best can prove that a concept of God exists but such apriori propositions are independent of actual state of affairs.

3. If wishes were horses, Beggars could ride and certainly nobody would suffer from want
No amount of thinking can produce an actual thing –Kant
4. The ontological Proof which Descartes seems to inherit from St. Anselm suffers from Kant's logical criticism of self-contradiction in the term, "Necessary Being".

GOD & THE CRITERION OF CLEARNESS & DISTINCTNESS

1. The veracity of God is the ultimate touchstone of all knowledge, for He cannot have created us to err
2. All that we clearly & distinctly perceive must be true because otherwise against God-will become a deceiver
3. The existence of god is a guarantee against any doubt or agnosticism
Hence **"modern rationalism is introduced by Descartes by the circuitous route of scholasticism."**
4. The veracity of God means that the universe is rational through and through and we can make search w/o fear of being baffled or deceived.
5. Descartes has been accused of arguing in a circle by making God the ultimate ground of all knowledge
 - i. From the criterion of clearness & distinctness he proves existence of God
 - ii. From veracity of God he proves the truth of clearness and distinctness

However this criticism is apparent and not real because in order of knowledge, the criterion comes first but in the order of existence, God comes first.

CONCLUSION

Descartes' God is partly the absolute of metaphysics on which everything depends & partly the personal creative being of Christian theology.

- ❖ How metaphysics becomes inconsistent with the conception of God or theology.

THE EXTERNAL WORLD

- ❖ Besides the idea of God and self, we experience many ideas of color, taste, smell extension etc. What can be the causes of these ideas

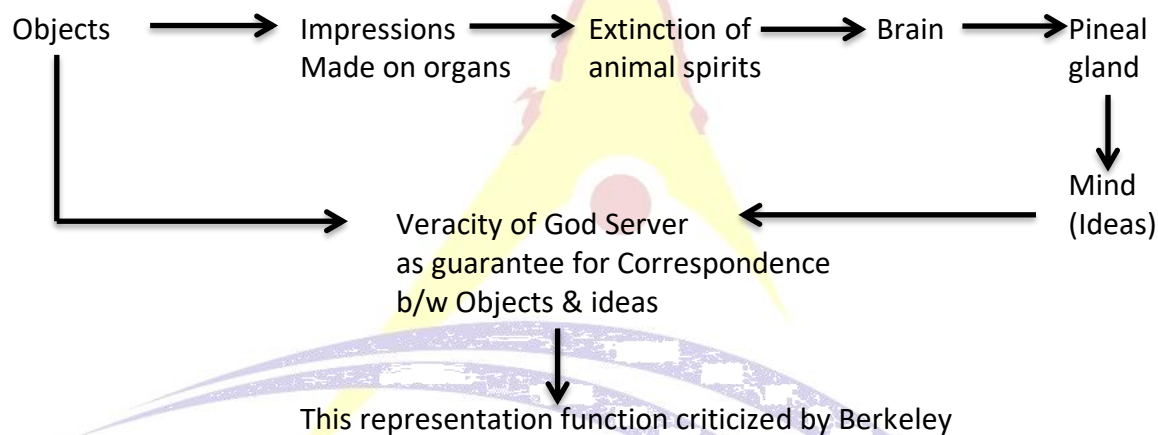
I cannot be Cause

- The physical substance cannot be caused by me because I am a thinking substance
- The effect has to Be like the Cause

God is not a Cause

- God can't deceive us, for we clearly and distinctly perceives these ideas to originate from external bodies.
- Otherwise such intuitive belief in illusion will be against God & Veracity

- ❖ The cause is the external bodies themselves and clear & distinct perception shows that the world is extended, but existence is known only through our ideas of it.



- ❖ Descartes was a naïve realist. He believed in existence of independent bodies called Substance. By substance, we understand that which so exists that it needs no other thing in order to exist.
- ❖ Strictly speaking there is **only substance called God but two relative substances Mind & Body.** Each can exist without the other but both depend on God for existence.
- ❖ **Attribute, Modes**

- The essential property of substances w/o which substance cannot be conceived to exist is attribute. Mind → Consciousness
Body → Extension
- While substance cannot change its attributes but the attribute manifests itself in many ways. This modification of attribute is known as modes, e.g. Figure or motion is a mode of Extension.

Note: The mode cannot exist w/o substance and attributes but substance & modes can exist w/o attributes.

- ❖ Material bodies then are substances whose attribute is extension
- ❖ However the things perceived have either qualities also of color, taste, smell.

To explain than Descartes points out that there are two kinds of qualities namely, Primary & Secondary. Primary qualities like extension, figure, motion, solidity & rest are clearly perceived while secondary qualities are confused ideas. They are heat, cold, color & we cannot clearly perceive them.

IMPLICATION

- i. Matter being purely extension is entirely passive and requires motion and inertia by First unmoved mover-God. This motion is constant.
- ii. The world is explained in terms of mechanism as matter is inert and governed by natural laws & motion created by God.
- iii. In this doctrine of universe as a vast machine, he anticipates the 19th century materialism and his insistence on reflect is an anticipation of Behaviorism.

DESCARTES EXPLANATION OF ERROR AND DETERMINATION & FREE WILL

- i. The criterion of knowledge is that all that is clear & distinct must be true.
- ii. God stands as guarantee for ideas of external world. But question remains as to how than do we have illusion as true or false perceptions.

DESCARTES ANSWER

- Truth or falsehood lies in judgmental not in ideas or perception
- Judgment depends on intellect and will
- The intellect is finite and it cannot hope to receive clear and distinct ideas of all things. But the will be its very nature is infinite for it has unlimited choices to make and gives assent or dissent to even confused ideas.

Thus error is due to joint product of finite intellect & infinite will.

This is also true in relation to secondary qualities of color, heat, smell which do not represents anything objective.

FREEDOM OF WILL

- ❖ Error is the product of finite intellect and infinite will. So can God be responsible for error because of making finite mind.
- ❖ Descartes replies that God is the creator of the universe, for the perfection and harmony of universe it is better to have fallible rather than infallible intellect. Logically too created intellect has to finite. Finally, the will is made infinite and not limited to clear and distinct ideas because this would have made man a machine rather than free spirit. Thus the gift of free will is necessary for spiritual growth.

COMMENTS ON DESCARTES CONCEPTION OF WORLD

1. Dualism of Universe

His theory of universe faces same difficulties as any other dualistic theory of explaining relation origin etc. Descartes believes that god and nature are distinct and on the other hand he strives to relate the two. God and nature cannot be treated as one until one assumes the presence of an ultimate element that can relate the two & render them one.

2. Difficulty concerning motion

How does an unmoved mover impact motion to the material object?

3. Difficulties of mechanism theory

The mechanistic function of living objects heralded cruelty to animals in the form of materialism & behaviorism.

4. Mutually Contradictory

The truth of matter is that Descartes has made unsuccessful attempt to synthesize science & religion, determinism and free will.

CONCLUSION

- ❖ Every philosopher from the time of Descartes has tried to solve the puzzle of dualism and in the process had to shed one of the three substances believed real by Descartes- **God , Mind , Body**

CARTESIAN DUALISM

- ❖ Dualism is the philosophic theory based on this conception that two elements exist in nature- the material and the conscious and accepts the fundamental distinction b/w mind & body, God and natural world.

CARTESIAN DUALISM

- ❖ Cogito Ergo Sum establishes a thinking or conscious mind and later Descartes establishes distinct external world based on veracity of God. This dichotomy is evident in our mind & body since both possess contradictory attributes. Mental exercise is not limited by time and space while body is extended within a specific order of space of time. However Cartesian Dualism can be understood in various other senses: -

i. Absolute & Dependent Substance → Metaphysical Dualism

Substance is that which for its existence does not depend on anything else. In strict sense God is the only substance while Mind & Body are two dependent substances

ii. **Dualism based on attributes→ Qualitative Dualism**

- The essential quality of “mind is consciousness” while that of “body is extension”. Both are independent and diametrically opposite.

<u>Mind</u>	<u>Body</u>
i. Attributes is consciousness and modes are thinking, imagination	i. Attributes is extension & modes are figure, motion etc
ii. Mind is subtle	ii. Body is gross
iii. It is not visible or perceived	iii. It is perceived in time & space.

iii. **Epistemological Dualism**

- a. The knowledge of self is intuitive [Cogito Ergo Sum]. Regarding knowledge of external material world it is through ideas. He divides knowledge into ideas [knower] and things of which we have ideas. This representative dualism was criticized by Berkeley.

iv. **Primary and Secondary Qualities**

- a. Descartes divides the qualities of external world into primary and secondary. Primary qualities like solidity, motion, rest, figure, and motion do exist in external substances and give clear ideas.
- b. While secondary qualities like color, taste, smell are confused ideas are subjective dependent on mind

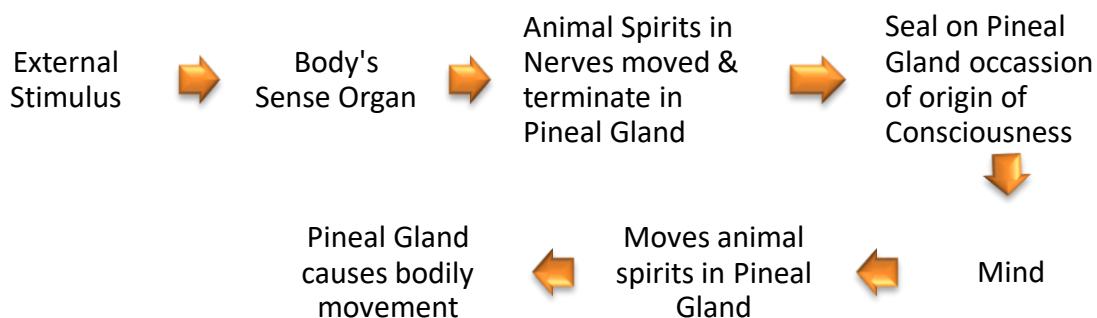
v. **Dualism of Mind**

- a. Descartes divides the mental qualities into attributes of thought and will. The intellect is finite while the will is infinite.

vi. **Mind-Body Dualism(In detail)**

- a. Body, which is not sentient and mind which is conscious.
- b. Extension is the characteristic of the first and thought of the second.
- c. The human body like all other organic bodies is a mere machine. However human beings have a conscious soul diametrically opposite to body.

d. **Relation b/w Mind & Body: Interactionism.**



ANALOGY OF HORSE & HORSE RIDER

- Descartes tries to conceal direct interaction by an analogy of horse and horse rider .Just as horse rider spurs the horse to run faster without imparting his own energy, similarly mind excites the body

ARGUMENT TO SUPPORT DUALISM

1. Arguments from Language

- a. The duality is evident in language. When talking about love, hope, thought etc. we do not use terms of extension, members
E.g. Absurd to say “love is many square yards” or “that mountains have hope”

2. Support from experience & Common Sense

- a. Things behave in the world of imagination in a way which is not possible for them in physical world.

OBJECTIONS TO DUALISM

1. Difficulty in establishing relationship between mutually contradicting elements→

- a. Interactionism fails to establish how a conscious mind interacts with material body. Mind can't be limited to pineal gland and pineal gland is a figment of Descartes imagination.
- b. If the mind & body are independent of each other, then why does not one body harbor infinite minds or one mind function in innumerable bodies

2. Violation of Conservation of energy

- a. Sometimes the smallest change in the body provides remarkable changes in mind and at time the minutest change in the mind results in the comprehensive changes in the body. In these changes mental energy converts into physiological energy and vice versa. But Descartes agrees to no dual form of energy and therefore his theory migrates against the principles of conservation of energy.

3. Epistemological difficulties

- a. Descartes theory has contradicting notion. If mind & matter are completely contradictory then Descartes claim of representative knowledge of external world through ideas in our minds can't sustain.

4. Metaphysical Difficulties

- a. If mind & matter (body) are two separate substances, which one of the two exists prior to the other?

5. Ethical difficulties

- a. Mechanistic explanation of the world led to materialism & behaviorism.

CONCLUSION

- Descartes wavers between interactionism which he seems to suggest and parallelism which logically follows from his absolute dualism. **There can be no real remedy of a fancied malady. Here we can say that we have ourselves raised the dust and complain that we cannot see.**
- In the larger scheme, any dualistic philosophy be it Cartesian dualism or Sankhya's Prakriti Parinamvada cannot be resolved without establishing monism in duality or turning towards non-dualism like that of Spinoza's Pantheism or Advaita Vedanta of Shankaracharya.

ESTIMATE OF DESCARTES' PHILOSOPHY

1. Descartes was the legislator of modern philosophy creating an epoch in man's thinking.
2. **His Method** →
 - a. Reason after years of bondage came to its own freeing science & theology from the subordination of faith and morality of medieval philosophy.
 - b. His Cartesian method lead to geometrical method of Spinoza & influences On Leibniz & Kant
 - c. His method of doubt established Cogito by rejecting what cannot be clear & distinct. This successful negation reaches its peak in Spinoza's every determination is a negation.
3. **Rationalism** → Medieval philosophy → Descartes natural to accept reason & not experience
 Descartes is founder of rationalism in its distinguishing features by pointing out that real, universal & necessary knowledge is found innate ideas alone.
4. **Innate Ideas**
 - It means that mind is not only totally receptive but also active. It supplies active formative principles of knowledge.
 - Here it is a precursor of Kant who lays down "Categories of Understanding" i.e. concepts w/o which sense data or percepts would be blind
 - However Descartes holds dual role of innate ideas:
 - Essence of mind is consciousness or thought so these are certain ideas which belong to mind alone. E.g. Innate idea of God
 - Descartes extends innateness to sense ideas especially for secondary qualities which are not in object

Criticism → Locke's Reputation of innate Idea

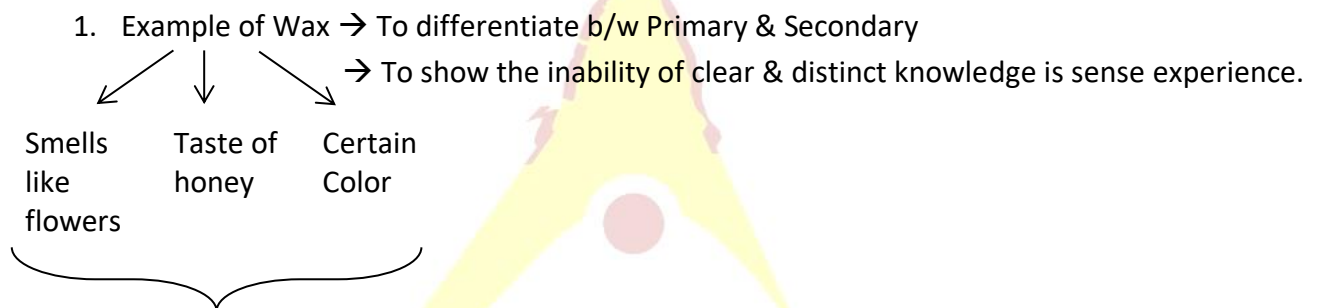
5. System builder

- A method to free philosophy from gymnastic exercise by giving it a strong foundation – Cogito from which logical deduction of the rest.
- He completes his circle of thought by establishing veracity of God and through it external world in which he was followed by Spinoza, Leibnitz & Berkeley.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

- This constructive part of Descartes theory of Knowledge is much less interesting than the earlier destructive part. It uses all sorts of scholastic maxims, such as that an effect can never have more perfection than its cause, which escaped the critical scrutiny.
- *Russell in the History of Philosophy*

POINTS LEFT



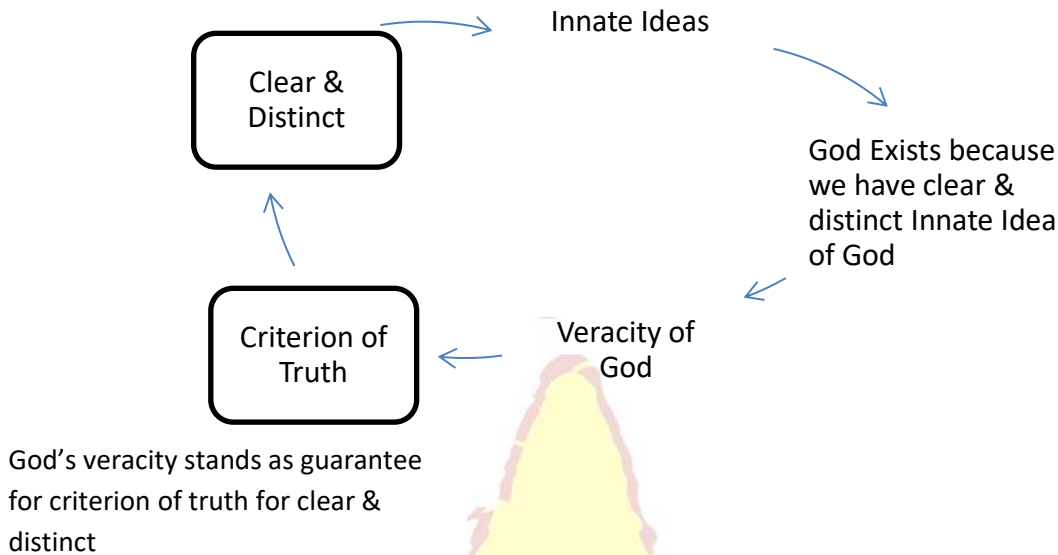
Never Fire → These qualities change
So what appeared to sense was not
The Wax itself

Descartes Vs Husserl's Phenomenology

- Descartes in search for certitude of mathematics in philosophy looked for Meta-Metaphysics – a science that should contain the primary rudiments of human reason.
Husserl in his phenomenology also tries to search from presupposition less and primordial position.
- Both were concerned about the dispute in every proposition and state of philosophy.
- Descartes through his method of doubt established “consciousness”. That I doubt cannot be doubted and that consciousness is the means for revealing my existence.
Similarly Husserl's reductionism & Epoch aim to achieve essence or “Pure consciousness”.
- Descartes in his doubting, negates everything which is not clear and distinct to arrive at an unassailable certainty “Cogito”. Husserl also wants to get the consciousness by elimination of naturalistic belief and psychological beliefs.

Differences:-

- Descartes on establishing Cogito takes a leap of faith from "I think" to "I exist" to I am a Substance. This goes against any critical unbiased scrutiny that phenomenology preaches.
- Descartes takes the circuitous route of scholariticism



CONCLUSION

- Descartes constructive philosophy is much less interesting than his destructive part. He uses all scholastic maxims such as effect can't surpass cause in perfection to prove his point. **- Russell**
This highlights Descartes departure from phenomenology

Q. Was Descartes a consistent rational?

- ★ Rationalism is a theory of Knowledge in which reason or intellect is the main source of knowledge
- ★ Rationalism does not accept knowledge derived from sense experience. However the rationalist philosophers differ among themselves as to how much importance can be given to experience which is confused knowledge and Descartes is one of such propounders.
- ★ Descartes was an initiator of rationalism and wanted to employ only proved and probable means & looked down on the medieval philosophers' thinking which clearly showed the stamp of faith; it was only natural that he should accept reason as the final criterion.

<u>Rationalism</u>	<u>Inconsistency</u>
(i). <u>Innate Ideas</u> → Clear & distinct like the innate idea of God	(i). He had to extend innateness to sense ideas like color, taste which were not found in things.
(ii). Knowledge of self is intuitive	(ii). Paralogism or Epistemological Challenge → Self is knower & not knowable
(iii). From I think → I Exist to I am a Substance “ <i>Cogito Ergo Sum</i> ”	(iii). Leap of faith because Cogito can establish only a thinking process not a “ <u>Conscious Substance</u> ” as refuted by Hume.
(iv). <u>Cartesian Dualism</u> Dualistic explanation of Mind & Body. On cosmic scale Living & Non-Living	(iv). No rational explanation for relation b/w two diametrically opposite substances. Body as extension only experiment.
(v). Descartes claims to establish God on the basis of rational arguments from ontology, cosmology etc.	(v). Kant’s criticism of God’s proofs punctures any rational acceptance of God’s existence.

CONCLUSION

- Russell → History of Philosophy
- Dualism has to end in monism just as monism requires dualism
- Kant’s synthesis of Rationalism with empiricism → Knowledge originates in the sense, proceeds through understanding and ends with reason
- However Descartes credited for freeing Reason from bondage of faith & superstition

The constructive part of Descartes philosophy is much less interesting than the earlier destructive part.

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