

The background features a detailed anatomical illustration of a human head in profile, facing right. Overlaid on this are several geometric diagrams. A large triangle with vertices labeled A, B, and C is prominent on the right side. Dashed lines connect these vertices to various points on the head and neck. On the left, there are smaller diagrams, including one with a circle and points labeled H, C, and D, and another with a circle and points labeled 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. The overall style is that of a historical scientific or philosophical text illustration.

Introduction to Philosophy

Descartes 2: The *Cogito*

Jeremy Dunham

Descartes' *Meditations*



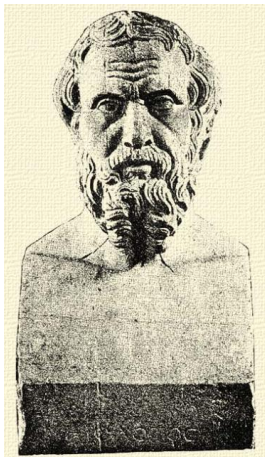
A Recap of Meditation 1

- ▶ First Person Narrative
- ▶ From Empiricism to Rationalism
- ▶ The Withholding Principle
- ▶ Local Doubt
- ▶ Global Doubt
- ▶ Hyperbolic Doubt

The Meditator at the end of Meditation 1

Believe	Doubt
	<p>A good God exists</p> <p>All propositions of...</p> <p>Sensory Experience</p> <p>Physics</p> <p>Astronomy</p> <p>Medicine</p> <p>Arithmetic</p> <p>Geometry</p>

Hyperbolic Scepticism and Ancient Scepticism



The Criterion of Truth

- ▶ **The Ancient Sceptics** - No Criterion, No Truth
- ▶ **Descartes** - Let's push our doubts as far as they will go!

Certainty!



► Je Pense donc Je Suis

Certainty!



- ▶ *Je Pense donc Je Suis*
- ▶ *Cogito, ergo Sum*

Certainty!

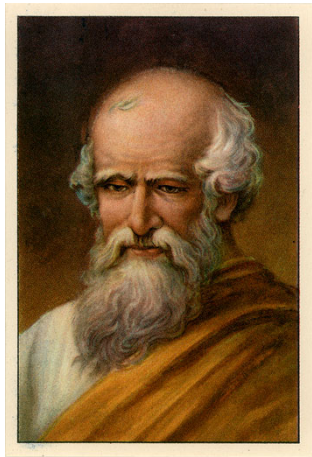


- ▶ *Je Pense donc Je Suis*
- ▶ *Cogito, ergo Sum*
- ▶ 'I am, I exist, is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived by my mind' (7: 25).

The Meditator's Belief Set

Believe	Doubt
<i>I exist</i>	A good God exists All propositions of... Sensory Experience Physics Astronomy Medicine Arithmetic Geometry

The Archimedean Point



- ▶ Descartes' 'firm and immovable point in order to move the entire earth'.
- ▶ Archimedes (287 to 212 B.C) 'Give me a place to stand and with a lever I will move the whole world'.
- ▶ He designed lever systems for sailors to lift objects otherwise too heavy to move

The Archimedean Point

‘Just give me your attention and I shall conduct you further than you think. For from this universal doubt, as from a fixed and immoveable point. I propose to derive the knowledge of God, of yourself and of everything in the universe.’ (AT 10, 515: CSM II 409)

Agrippa's Trilemma



Epistemic Justification

- ▶ Infitism
- ▶ Foundationalism
- ▶ Coherentism

Agrippa's Trilemma



Cogito, ergo Sum

- ▶ Deduction
- ▶ Intuition
- ▶ Performance

Cogito, Ergo Sum

An Enthymeme?

- ▶ P1) If I am **thinking**, then I **exist**

Cogito, Ergo Sum

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Cogito, Ergo Sum

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- ▶ We must be able to understand a proposition all at once - in one sweeping mental gaze
- ▶ 'When someone says I am thinking, therefore I am, or I exist, he does not deduce existence from thought by means of a syllogism, but recognises it as something self evident by a simple intuition of the mind' (AT 7, 140: CSM II 100).

Cogito, Ergo Sum

A Performance?

- ▶ Cogito, ergo Sum: Inference or Performance - Jaako Hintikka (1962)

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- ▶ I exist - Self-Verifiable
- ▶ 'The relation of cogito to sum is not that of a premise to a conclusion. This relation is rather comparable with that of a process to its product'.

Cogito, Ergo Sum

A Performance?

'When someone says 'I am thinking, therefore I am, or I exist', he does not deduce existence from thought by means of a syllogism, but recognises it as something self evident by a simple intuition of the mind. This is clear from the fact that if he were deducing it by means of a syllogism, he would have had previous knowledge of the major premise: 'Everything which thinks is, or exists'; yet in fact he learns it from experiencing in his own case that it is impossible that he should think without existing' (AT 7, 140: CSM II 100).

Agrippa's Trilemma



Cogito, ergo Sum

- Has Descartes successfully blunted the 'Foundationalist' horn of Agrippa's Trilemma?

The *Cogito* Investigations

- ▶ *The nature of the human mind, and how it is better known than the body*

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- ▶ *The nature of the human mind, and how it is better known than the body*
- ▶ 1) The meditator will discover that she is more certain that the mind exists than that the body exists
- ▶ 2) She has a more clear and distinct conception of the nature of the mind, than the nature of the body

What Am I?

- ▶ A 'Rational Animal'?

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- ▶ Someone who can engage in sense-perceptions?
- ▶ Evil Demon
- ▶ She has no body and thus no sense perceptions.

What Am I?

'Thought; this alone is inseparable from me. I am, I exist that is certain. But for how long? For as long as I am thinking. For it could be that were I totally to cease from thinking. I should totally cease to exist I am in the strict sense only a thing that thinks; that is, I am a mind or **intelligence**, or **intellect** or **reason**' (7: 27).

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- ▶ The Enlarged Conclusion: 'what then am I? A thing that thinks. What is that? A thing that doubts, understands, affirms, denies, is willing, is unwilling, and also imagines and has sensory perceptions' (7: 28).

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- ▶ The 'I' is a unity - the centre of these activities

The *Thinking Thing*



Cogito, ergo Sum

- ▶ Georg Lichtenberg -
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The *Thinking Thing*



Cogito, ergo Sum

- ▶ Georg Lichtenberg - There is only 'thinking going on' and no 'thinking thing'
- ▶ Is Lichtenberg correct or is Descartes entitled to this inference?

The *Piece of Wax* Argument



- ▶ 1) It helps to demonstrate why Descartes believes that the mind is better than the body
- ▶ 2) Further illustrates Descartes' conception of the intellect
- ▶ 3) Illustrates Descartes' Physics

The *Piece of Wax* Argument

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- ▶ If I put the wax by the fire ...
- ▶ Does the same piece of wax remain?

The *Piece of Wax* Argument

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- ▶ The Essential Properties of Matter: 'extended, flexible and changeable'.

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- ▶ The Essential Properties of Matter: 'extended, flexible and changeable'.
- ▶ The Properties are known through the mind and not through the senses.

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4. It is not the imagination that allows me to grasp this capacity of the wax.
5. I do grasp this capability, but not through the senses or through the imagination, so it must be grasped through another faculty - call it the mind itself. (Hatfield, 2003: 130-1)

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- ▶ Our perception of the nature of the wax is a case not of vision or touch or imagination nor has it ever been, despite previous appearances but of purely mental inspection (7: 31).

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- ▶ We can 'imperfect and confused' knowledge, or 'clear and distinct' knowledge.

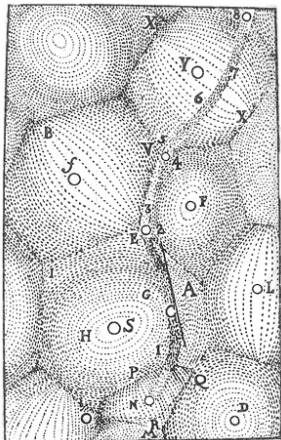
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- ▶ We can 'imperfect and confused' knowledge, or 'clear and distinct' knowledge.
- ▶ 'My awareness of my own self is not merely much truer and more certain than my awareness of the wax, but also much more distinct and evident' (7: 33).

Descartes' Physics

'I may tell you, between ourselves, that these six Meditations contain the entire foundations for my physics. But it is not necessary to say so, if you please, since that might make it harder for those who favor Aristotle to approve them. I hope that those who read them will gradually accustom themselves to my principles and recognize the truth of them before they notice that they destroy those of Aristotle.' (AT III 297-298)

Descartes' Physics



- ▶ Matter is everywhere one and the same
- ▶ All parts of matter are merely length, breadth and depth
- ▶ A network of interlocking Vortices

Paintings and Visions



Men in Hats



'Do I see any more than hats and coats which could conceal automatons? I *judge* that they are men' (7: 32).

The Mind is better known than the Body

- ▶ 'If I judge that the wax exists from the fact that I see it, clearly this same fact entails much more evidently that I myself also exist' (7: 33).

The Mind is better known than the Body

- ▶ 'If I judge that the wax exists from the fact that I see it, clearly this same fact entails much more evidently that I myself also exist' (7: 33).
- ▶ 'Every consideration whatsoever which contributes to my perception of the wax, or of any other body, cannot but establish even more effectively the nature of my own mind' (7: 33).

The Meditator at the end of Meditation 2

Believe	Doubt
I exist I am a thinking thing intellect priority mind priority	A good God exists All propositions of... Sensory Experience Physics Astronomy Medicine Arithmetic Geometry