

Abstract

The thesis aims at examining Descartes's so called cogito from a wider perspective, especially as regards to the role in the development of *Meditationes de prima philosophia* (1641) and in the context of other relevant texts. Being an attempt to give a broad account of Descartes's "first cognition" the study deals not only with the cogito itself, e.g. with its logical structure, but also with other key Cartesian doctrines, so that we can understand the cogito as an integral part of Descartes's philosophy. The thesis inquires for this reason into the question of meditator's identity, the methodological skepticism, the question whether logical principles are called into question in the First meditation, the problem of the Cartesian circle, the distinction between implicit and explicit knowledge, the doctrine of innate ideas and finally, the question how to explain, according to Descartes, the awareness of our thoughts. Sometimes the considerations become rather systematic and go beyond a mere exegesis of Descartes's philosophy, especially when they concern the problem with the presence of ego in cogito and the explanation of our self-consciousness. There are three competing approaches to the second issue mentioned that are introduced and assessed in the last chapter. I have chosen this way of proceeding, in this particular context, for Descartes's views, compared to some other areas of his philosophy, are more unclear here. As regards to this issue, some commentators propose that one of these approaches either should be taken as closely related to what Descartes had in mind or must be incorporated into his system, in order to make key parts of his philosophy more plausible and tenable.

Key words

cogito, consciousness, thought, innate ideas, logical principles, Cartesian circle, methodological skepticism