DC English IV World/British Literature

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René Descartes

- considered the Father of Modern Philosophy
- born to an aristocrat family in France
- educated at a Jesuit boarding school

Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences, 1637

- French: Discours de la Méthode Pour bien conduire sa raison, et chercher la vérité dans les sciences
- Completed in 1637; translated to Latin 1656
- In full, it exists as a philosophical treatise
- Helped develop the natural sciences and opened up the era of Rationalism
- First and most famous work
- Established famous line, in Latin: *Cogito ergo sum* "I am thinking, therefore I exist."

Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences, 1637

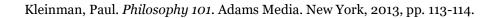
- Divided into six parts
 - .: **Part 1** discusses various importances of the sciences and provides an autobiographical opening
 - .: Part IV aims to prove the existence of God and the Human Soul
- Other portions of the text establish his thoughts on **Cartesian Dualism**
- Despite his religious leanings, the Catholic Church disliked his establishment human reason over religion / divine mystery

Some Basic Principles from *Discourse on the Method**

- argues that thought and reason are the essence of humanity
 .: these qualities separate humans from "lower animals"
- for thoughts to exist, there must be a source to do the thinking
- reason is a natural talent *gifted* to humans
- sensory perception (and therefore empiricism) is unreliable and can be mislead
- humans are thinking "things"
- perception and imagination exist do not necessarily hold any truths,
 but are essential to humanity

God Exists*

- since God is perfect, it is impossible for God to deceive someone
- despite the fact humans are imperfect (including Descartes), the fact that we/he can conceive of the notion of perfection means perfection must exist; and this perfection is God



- After the establishment of the Catholic Church and its acquisition of an overwhelming power, theorists and logicians were forced to use religion as a basis of philosophy.
- Descartes separated faith from reasoning by using a concept termed
 Methodical Doubt.
- Humans are allowed doubt as a means for rationalizing the existance of God.

What Eventually Resulted:

Religion (faith)

cannot ask questions
accept all without facts
answers that cannot be questioned

<u>Philosophy (intellect)</u>

must ask questions denies assumptions without facts questions that cannot be answered