
The Missing Piece in Descartes' Metaphysical Project: Time ^[*]

Descartes'in Metafizik Projesindeki Eksik Parça: Zaman

VOLKAN ÇİFTECİ 

Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University

Received: 30.08.2017 | Accepted: 06.04.2018

Abstract: Descartes' metaphysical project revolves around the themes of the self, God, and the external world. He takes the self as a thinking substance by separating it from the extended substance. Unlike God – the uncreated substance – the self and the external world are considered to be created substances. This paper has three objectives. The first is to find out Descartes' answer to the question of what the self and the external world are by examining existence and persistence. The second is to show how Descartes demonstrates the self-getting access to this world. The last is to point out the deficiency in his metaphysical project, namely, the deficiency in his accounts of the self, the external world, and the relation between them. This paper attempts to make up for this deficiency by putting the missing piece, i.e., time into its place.

Keywords: The self, time, external world, access, metaphysics, God.

© Çiftçi, V. (2018). The Missing Piece in Descartes' Metaphysical Project: Time. *Beytulhikme An International Journal of Philosophy*, 8 (i), 45-60.



Introduction

Descartes uses an analogy in which philosophy is compared to a tree: “the roots are metaphysics, the trunk is physics, and the branches emerging from the trunk are all other sciences” (1984: 186). It shows that metaphysics is essential in Cartesian philosophy. The methodical doubt, the self, God, the external world and the interaction between the self and the external world are the main themes to focus on for a more thoroughgoing insight into Descartes’ metaphysical project. Indeed, the project in the *Meditations* is best summarized by Cottingham as follows:

[A] dramatic account of the voyage of discovery from universal doubt to certainty of one’s own existence, and the subsequent struggle to establish the existence of God, the nature and existence of the external world, and the relation between mind and body. (1993: 8)

My argument is that in this project, there is a missing piece without which the project would remain incomplete. This missing piece is nothing other than time. I will focus on the themes mentioned above by trying to reveal the role that time plays therein. I will show that time functions as a sort of ground upon which the Cartesian metaphysical project rests. This is why the notion of time is of great importance to this paper. It should be noted that the Cartesian notion of time has not yet received the full attention it deserves. Moreover, there is no consensus on Descartes’ theory of time. For example, Laporte (1945) and Beyssade (1979) argue that Descartes assumes the continuity of time. However, Copleston champions an atomic theory of Cartesian time (1994: 134). Bonnen and Flage argue for temporal atomism of a specific sort (2000: 1). On the other hand, Garber argues that “there is no strong reason to attribute *either view* [temporal atomism or temporal continuity] to Descartes”; instead, he favors a cinematic theory of time (1992: 269; 275-276). Regarding time, most commentators are divided into two camps: proponents of temporal atomism and proponents of temporal continuity. While temporal atomism holds that “time is a whole consisting of parts”, temporal continuity asserts that “time is a whole with no parts” (Bonnen and Flage, 2000: 1). Both camps have textual evidences to support their conclusions, and these conclusions can be accepted as true albeit to a certain extent. This makes it hard to attribute a specific doctrine of time to Descartes.



For instance, Secada radically argues that “Descartes had no [decisive] views on the matter [of time]” (1990: 46). That is to say, Descartes did not have a fully developed theory of time. Be that as it may, in this paper, I try to unfold the essential role that time – continuous or discontinuous – plays in Descartes' metaphysical project.

Descartes' project rests on finding a secure path to proceed in the right direction and establish a solid foundation upon which his new system can be built. To accomplish this, Descartes realizes that he has to establish the first principle(s) of philosophy, from which all other knowledge could proceed with certainty (Markie, 1992: 141). Among these principles are the existence and immateriality of the self (the soul), the existence of God, the existence and materiality of objects, as well as clear and distinct ideas – when used in the singular form as in “the first principle”, it always means “the existence of immaterial self (the ‘I’)”. It must be noted that to obtain an insight of any significance into the principles of Descartes' system; we must enter into the details of his method.

1. The Methodical Doubt

The method Descartes uses in philosophy consists in doubting anything until they are confirmed and secured as true knowledge. In this method, the aim is to remove all obstacles for possessing the first principle of philosophy and to render it unshakable. That is, the doubt ceases to exist when he reaches true knowledge. This is why Descartes' methodical doubt does not lead to skepticism. It is rather used as a tool to reach, first the knowledge of the self, and then the external world by the existence of the supremely good God. Descartes takes the first principle as the basis of his Metaphysics. Nonetheless, before establishing the base, he points out the inevitable: the destruction of the foundation of the former system, and by extension, of the system as a whole (1993: 46). Such removal is the prerequisite for reconstruction, which cannot happen except using his method of doubt.

The goal of this method is merely to bring all things “within the sphere of the doubtful” (1993: 45). In so doing, Descartes expects to discover some truth or truths that are beyond any possible doubt. According to Descartes, each person can discover at least one truth which is impos-



sible to doubt (Cottingham, 1988: 46). He aims to use this truth as a first step towards constructing a solid structure in metaphysics. In fact, this method consists of four precepts (see Descartes, 2006: 17). Yet, what he expresses in the first one is sufficient for our purpose here: to accept nothing in the judgments other than that which is presented to the mind clearly and distinctly (2006: 17). In his account, the two different properties of the knowledge of true science must be “clarity” and “distinctness”. Descartes states that “we may be assured that all things which we conceive clearly and distinctly are true [...]” (1993: 42). Clarity and distinctness are the conditions that will lift a belief to the region of indubitable knowledge. That is to say, if we do not doubt the clarity and distinctness of a belief, then we can call it knowledge. To return to his method, in the Second Meditation, Descartes draws an analogy between his method and that of Archimedes which demands only one fixed and immovable point to “draw the terrestrial globe out of its place, and transport it elsewhere” (1993: 50). Once the truth of the first principle is established, it is treated by Descartes as an Archimedean point. Clearly, Descartes’ dream of rebuilding the system of metaphysics starts from this point and then proceeds further accordingly.

Moreover, in the *Meditations*, Descartes argues that sense perceptions cannot be trusted. He attempts to justify this by way of an example which is known as the “dream argument”. After waking up from a dream and realizing he was somewhere else and doing something else rather than lying in bed, he remarks: “But in thinking over this I remind myself that on many occasions I have in sleep been deceived by similar illusions [...]” (1993: 47). Evidently, if sense perceptions might be deceptive, beliefs which are based on them cannot be clear and distinct. Therefore, those beliefs must be treated as doubtful according to his method.

Descartes also investigates, in the *Meditations*, the reliability of mathematical truths. He asks: “[H]ow do I know that I am not deceived every time that I add two and three, or count the sides of a square [...]” (1993: 48). Descartes seems to think that, “even mathematical truths can be shown not to be reliable beyond any possible doubt” (Floridi, 2000: 225). He comes to this conclusion by entertaining the possibility that God is deceiving us even when we are reasoning mathematically. He carries



this doubt one step further by formulating a stronger argument which is also known as the “evil genius” hypothesis:

I shall then suppose, not that God who is supremely good and the fountain of truth, but some evil genius not less powerful than deceitful, has employed his whole energies in deceiving me; I shall consider that the heavens, the earth, colours, figures, sound, and all other external things are nought but the illusions and dreams [...] (1993: 49)

This hypothesis supposes that all beliefs must inevitably fall within the scope of the methodical doubt. If everything is doubtful, it gives the impression that true knowledge cannot be attained. This seems to bring Descartes face to face with skepticism. As indicated, since true knowledge is attained, skepticism is defeated. The merit of Descartes' method is that the mind frees itself from every sort of bias; it also distances itself from the senses. This is a precondition for starting over in order to establish a secure structure in metaphysics.

2. The Self: Existence and Persistence

When it comes to the self, our general inclination is to consider it as a “thing” which is the subject or agent of all our thinking activities, i.e. inner and outer experiences. The self is accepted as an entity, which is the *substratum* of all our experiences. John Locke formulates this traditionally-considered self. According to Locke, the self is “a thinking, intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and place [...]” (1999: 318). As is clear from Locke's quote, the self is considered as “a thinking being” that preserves its identity over time. This traditional self-holds all my experiences together. Nevertheless, before Locke, Descartes already held that the self is “a thinking thing” by giving it a substantial character.¹

Though the discussion on the self-permeates almost the entire *Discourse* and *Meditations*, Descartes is specifically concerned with the existence of the self in the fourth part of the *Discourse* and the Second Meditation of the *Meditations*. Despite the fact that Descartes seems to be dragged into skepticism by the methodical doubt, he proceeds further:

¹ In contemporary discussions, it is still held that the self is a thinking “thing”. Garrett, for example, defines “the self” or the person as a “self-conscious mental being” (1998: 5).



[O]f a surety I myself did exist since I persuaded myself of something or merely because I thought of something. But there is some deceiver [...] whoever employs his ingenuity in deceiving me [...] and let him deceive me as much as he will, he can never cause me to be nothing so long as I think that I am something [...] I am, I exist [...] (1993: 28)

Not even the existence of an “evil genius” can disprove the truth of the assertion: “I exist”. As indicated, being skeptical about the truth of all things, including my very self, presupposes my existence. As far as I can think, there is always one thing that I can know for certain, namely: “I exist”. Descartes’s proof of the existence of the self is based on this line of thought. Here, it is essential to note that even though thinking (as well as doubting) is itself a temporal process (i.e., thoughts are successive; each must follow one another in time), there seems to be no need to time for passing from doubting to self-knowledge. It is because, as Descartes says, doubt – as being a thought – is equal to knowledge (1985: 415). Thus, the relation between them is *atemporal*.² The proof of the first principle is essential to Descartes’ metaphysical project since once the certainty of this principle is established, it will function as the basis of metaphysics:

[W]hile I was trying to think of all things being false in this way, it was necessarily the case that I, who was thinking them, had to be something; and observing this truth: *I am thinking therefore I exist*, was so secure and certain that it could not be shaken by any [...] suppositions of the sceptics, I judged that I could accept it without scruple, as *the first principle of the philosophy* [emphasis added] I was seeking. (2006: 28)

The proposition: “I am thinking therefore I exist” (in Latin, “*cogito ergo sum*” or simply “*cogito*”) is revealed as the first principle of philosophy. Descartes concludes that “I” (the self) is a “real thing and really exist[s]” (1993: 52); it is “a thing which thinks”. To put it better, “[i]t is a thing which doubts, understands, [conceives], affirms, denies, wills, refuses, which also imagines and feels” (1993: 54). Since it is considered as “the thing” (the subject; the agent) which holds all our (dispersed) mental

² Nonetheless, this *atemporal* relation cannot be held as true for the relation between doubt and the external world. Transition from the thought of the external world to the knowledge of its physical existence depends certainly on time; this transition is in need of two steps, namely the certainty of the existence of the self and that of God. Only then can one know for certain that the physical world exists.



states in unity, the Cartesian self has a substantial character.

It is of the utmost importance, that the first principle – “I am thinking therefore I exist” – cannot be reduced to a form of the deductive argument (syllogism). Descartes makes this clear in his reply to the *Second Set of Objections* to the *Meditations*:

When someone says, 'I am thinking, therefore I am, or exist, he does not deduce existence from thought by a syllogism, but, recognizes it as something self-evident by a simple intuition of the mind. [...] [I]f he were deducing it by means of a syllogism, he would have to 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. (1985: 100)

If the *cogito* could be reduced to a syllogistic form, the argument would run as follows:

<i>Premise 1</i>	Everything which thinks exists.
<i>Premise 2</i>	I think.
<i>Conclusion</i>	Therefore, I exist.

First, in this syllogistic form, the conclusion “I exist” is supposed to be inferred from the first and second premises. Yet, as indicated, premise (1) is, in fact, an inference from the *cogito*. Second, in this form, “existence” is taken to be derived from “thinking”. Nevertheless, as Descartes puts it, it is not possible to think without existing. Recall that there is no before-after relationship between them; the relationship in question is *atemporal*. That is, in the proposition: “I am thinking therefore I exist”, “he does not deduce existence from thought by means of a syllogism but recognizes it as something self-evident by a simple intuition of the mind [...]” (McClean, 2006: Iv). The essential point is that the *cogito* should not be taken as consisting of two halves; the first one as “I think”, and the second as “I exist”. Instead, it must be regarded as one thing (“self-evident by a simple intuition of the mind”) as in “I think therefore I exist”.

2.1. The Role of Time in the Persistence of the Self

The Cartesian/substantial self – the bearer of all our mental states – suggests that mental states are discrete and combined into a unity. Any



attempt to give an account of how the mental states are unified would take us to the problem of the persistence of the self:

For all the course of my life may be divided into an infinite number of parts, none of which is in any way dependent on the other; and thus from the fact that I was in existence a short time ago it does not follow that I must be in existence now. (1993: 69)

Here, Descartes divides “the span of life” into parts. Bonnen and Flage state that proponents of temporal atomism of Cartesian time mostly draw their evidence from the above quote (2000:2). Dividing “the span of life” into parts suggests that there is a gap between each mental state – as well as each event. So, the outcome of this idea must be this: the self is composed of discontinuous parts; and thus, it requires a span of time to preserve its identity. Having realized this, Descartes concerns with this problem and also provides a solution to it. He is aware that the existence of the self does not alone suffice for the preservation of its continuous identity over time. To resolve the issue, he appeals to “divine intervention”, i.e., God. On this solution, my existence in the past does not guarantee my existence in the present; nor does my present existence guarantee my future existence, “unless some cause at this instant [...] produces me anew, that is to say, conserves me” (1993: 96). God must constantly create the self anew, since, in Descartes’ understanding, what matters is not only “coming into existence”; what is no less important than this is “staying in [continuous] existence”. Even so, this account does not make sense without considering time:

It is as a matter of fact perfectly clear and evident to all those who consider with attention *the nature of time* [emphasis added], that, in order to be conserved in each moment in which it endures, a substance has need of the same power and action as would be necessary to produce and create it anew [...] (1993: 69)

This is where Descartes, for the first time, considers the notion of time. Nevertheless, dividing the span of self’s life into parts leads to the conclusion that the mental states are spread over time. So, it already assumes time. If these states are to constitute a unity, they must be combined into one single self over time. In *the Fifth Set of Objections* to the *Meditations*, Gassendi claims that from Descartes’ assertion that says:



“lifespan is divided into independent parts”, it follows that the parts of time are independent of each other (2010: 115). In so doing, Gassendi seems to attribute a kind of temporal atomism to Descartes. By challenging Descartes' temporal atomism, Gassendi asks: Can we imagine anything whose parts are more inseparably connected together, than a period? (2010: 115). By holding that the components of time are necessarily linked, Gassendi seems to favor temporal continuity. Upon this, Descartes replies by stating that Gassendi confuses abstract time with concrete duration (2010: 117). In part 1, section 57, of the *Principles of Philosophy*, Descartes says that time as “a mode of thought” is abstract, by distinguishing it from a particular duration (1982: 25). In his reply to Gassendi, Descartes writes:

[T]he parts of time, considered in the abstract, are necessarily inter-connected. But what is in question here is not that, but rather the time or duration of a thing that lasts through time; and you wouldn't deny that each individual moment of that can be separated from its immediate predecessor and successor, which implies that the thing that lasts through time may go out of existence at any given moment. (2010: 117)

To clarify this distinction, Gorham draws an analogy between ideal time and numbers on the one hand; and the concrete duration and “the span of life”, on the other. Gorham argues that “[while] there is a necessary connection between the number 40 and the number 41 [because] natural numbers cannot simply end at 40”, there is no such necessity between now and my next birthday, because the self's life may cease to exist at any instant of time (2007: 37). According to Gorham, in Descartes' account, the linkage between the parts of lifespan happens “at best only in the ‘parts of time considered in the abstract’” (2007: 37). This shows that the parts of the ideal time get inter-connected; so it may serve as a basis where the connection of independent parts of the self's life takes place. Thus, time as a basis or condition, where this connection can exist, must be incorporated into the system. Only then can the persistence of the self through time become defensible. Clearly, just after time's entrance into Descartes' project that the self can be established as a *substratum* (the enduring thing), i.e., as the bearer of all independent mental states.



3. The External World: Existence and Persistence

By the external world Descartes means “the existing material universe which we take to be the cause of our sensory perceptions [...]” (Cottingham, 1993: 53). In the Fifth Meditation, before examining the objects that exist outside of us, Descartes begins with inquiring into their ideas. After having assured himself of the clarity and the distinctness of these ideas, he moves on to investigating the “active faculty capable of forming and producing these ideas” (1993: 92). That is, he tries to find the cause of the ideas of corporeal objects by focusing on three possible alternatives. The first is that “I”, myself, is the cause of these ideas. This is eliminated immediately for the reason that I am “a thing that thinks” which is distinct from material objects. Accordingly, he argues that these ideas must, therefore, be caused by some substance that is distinct from me. The second alternative is that God might be the cause of these ideas, while the third one is that some other creature (perhaps an “evil genius”) is the source of them all. Both alternatives are swept aside just like the first one:

[S]ince God is no deceiver [...] He does not communicate to me these ideas immediately and by Himself, nor yet by the intervention of some creature [...] For since He has given me [...] a very great inclination to believe [...] that they are conveyed to me by corporeal objects, I do not see how He could be defended from the accusation of deceit if these ideas were produced by causes other than corporeal objects. Hence we must allow that corporeal things exist. (1993: 92)

Since the ideas of corporeal objects are clear and distinct and that God is no deceiver, Descartes concludes that corporeal objects (of the external world) exist. Moreover, regarding the existence of the body, he argues: “I have a body which is adversely affected when I feel pain [...] when I experience the feelings of hunger and thirst, and so on [...]” (1993: 93). As in the case of the objects, Descartes acknowledges the existence of his body for the same reason.

3.1. The Role of Time in the Persistence of the External World

For Descartes, the existence of the external world does not suffice for its persistence. As in the case of the self, he tries to justify the persistence of the external world by appealing to “divine intervention”. Thus,



he claims that for the world to endure, i.e. for its objects to preserve their identities, God must produce the world anew at every instant:

[A]ll substances generally – [...] all things which cannot exist without being created by God – are in their nature incorruptible, and that they can never cease to exist unless God, in denying to them his concurrence, reduce them to naught [...] (1993, 42)

That God must continuously create all enduring objects suggests that “an object in time” – just as “the span of life” – is divisible “into an infinite number of [temporal] parts, none of which is in any way dependent on the other” (1993: 69). To bind these parts together, Descartes calls for the assistance of “divine concurrence or intervention”. As already indicated, this binding process can only be performed on a temporal basis. As for the demonstration of matter’s continuous identity, time must be taken into account here. The argument for this demonstration runs parallel to the demonstration of the persistence of the self. The persistence of the world does not make sense without taking time as a kind of basis upon which the dispersed (temporal) parts of objects are linked together. When it is realized, the essentiality of time comes to the fore.

4. The Role of Time in the Self Getting Access to the External World

It must be noted that the problem of the interaction between the mind and body is no less different from the problem of the mind’s interaction with the external world. Descartes’ conception of the mind/self and the body/matter as two distinct substances leads to the problem of accessibility. Having assured himself of the existence of “the self”, he concludes that it must be distinct from corporeal objects. He expresses this conclusion in the following:

I thereby concluded that I was a *substance* whose whole *essence* or nature resides only in thinking, and which, in order to exist, has no need of place and is not dependent on any material thing. Accordingly this ‘I’, that is to say, the Soul by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body and is even easier to know than the body; and would not stop being everything it is, even if the body were not to exist. (2006: 29)

Elsewhere, he further says: “it is certain that this I [my soul by which I am what I am] is entirely and absolutely distinct from my body, and can



exist without it” (1993: 91). As Cottingham puts it, Descartes demonstrates in the *Meditations* how the meditator passes “from the isolated subjective awareness of his own existence to the knowledge of other things;” that is, “the movement outwards from self [...] to the external world [...]” (1993: 70-71). It is quite apparent that the self and external world are distinct and completely independent of each other. If so, then, once the departure of Cartesian metaphysics is taken from the inner self, it encounters a problem of transcending its inner sphere to have access to the outer sphere. Therefore, the self faces a question of how to get access to the external world. However, to perceive, know, anticipate, and have expectations; to make observations, experiments and have any experience; further, to taste, feel and love; in short, to live in the fullest sense of the word, the self must have access to the external world.

Even though Descartes considers the “I” – thinking *substance* – as distinct from the body – extended substance – he acknowledges the unavoidable interaction between them. He does not think of this interaction as in the case of a “pilot in his ship”. He rather states that “the mind of man is distinct from the body, and at the same time that the two are so closely joined together that they form [...] a single thing” (1993: 44). He further argues that it is necessary for the soul “to be more closely joined and united with the body in order to [...] compose a true man” (2006: 48). The two substances not only interact with each other; but they must also be very closely united. Here, Descartes is expected to provide a third element which the self and the external world – mind and the body – have in common. In Descartes’ understanding, this third element is God or, specifically, “divine intervention”. Nevertheless, a deeper inquiry will unfold that even if “divine intervention” is indispensable in the self’s access to the world, time must enter the scene to make sense of this act of God. The entrance at issue may be rendered possible, only if time manifests itself as the element that the two substances have in common. This element serves as the common ground upon which the self and the world meet and interact.

Conclusion: The Missing Piece

Descartes’ metaphysical project begins with – through universal



doubt – the certainty of the existence of the self; the proposition “I think therefore I exist” is the first principle of his metaphysics. As indicated, universal doubt ceases to exist when Descartes reaches the first principle. Therefore, Descartes' methodical doubt does not lead to skepticism. This method is rather used as a tool to reach the first principle of metaphysics and secure it as true knowledge. However, the doubt about the existence of the external world continues; this runs the risk of falling into solipsism. Yet, having proven the existence of God – the uncreated substance – through the innate idea of perfect being (1993: 71), Descartes knows for sure that God is the foundation upon which the existence of the physical world rests. Thus, God, who is supremely good, keeps Descartes from falling into solipsism.

Descartes takes the self as the thinking substance by separating it from the external world which is the extended substance. These created substances are considered as distinct in the sense that the self's essence is thinking, whereas the matter's nature is an extension. The starting point of Cartesian metaphysics is inner self; yet, it needs to pass to an awareness of the external world. Given this, Descartes faces the problem of the interaction between these two distinct substances. In the end, the interaction between the self and the world is established by God's intervention. God keeps the self and the world in existence – on a temporary basis where they can interact. As Cottingham says, Descartes' metaphysical project, therefore, can be seen as the journey which starts first with the proof – through universal doubt – of the existence of himself, and then the existence of God and the external world; and which later proceeds to the strenuous effort to establish the interaction between the self and the external world (1993: 8). As demonstrated in detail, in this project there is a missing piece which becomes more noticeable when we look more closely into the persistence of the self and the world along with the problem of the interaction between them. Apparently, to give accounts of 1) the persistence of the self, 2) of the world, and 3) of the interaction between them is problematic since there is a gap in Descartes' project which is filled by time alone.

Introducing time into Descartes' system to close the gap can be regarded as a vain attempt to solve the problem. Some may object by saying



that Descartes has already proven the existence of God, and so God closes this gap. To those who might raise objections, this paper responds as following: even if God preserves the identity of the self and the world, as well as allowing them to interact, there must still be time as a common ground where the persistence of the self and the world along with their interaction are established. If God divinely preserves the identity of the self or the world, He must divinely maintain them over time.

Even if time is not incorporated into Descartes' system, it appears that as a result of God's intervention, time – perhaps as a by-product – must somehow be formed as a kind of “basis” (“horizon”) upon which his system rests. In this manner, God's interfering with the world in order to establish the persistence of and interaction between the self and the world makes sense. After what has been said, it can be seen that Descartes' system relies heavily on time. As Gorham asserts “without time the Cartesian universe would be an undifferentiated blob” (2007: 29). In short – metaphorically speaking – time must stretch out beneath the self and the external world so as to secure first the persistence of them both, and then the self's coming out of its inner realm into the external sphere. Otherwise, Descartes' metaphysical project would collapse on its own footprint.

References

- Beysade, J-M. (1979). *La Philosophie Premiere de Descartes*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Bonnen C. A. & Flage D. E. (2000). Descartes: The Matter of Time. *International Studies in Philosophy*, 32 (4).
- Copleston F. (1994). *A History of Philosophy Modern Philosophy: From Descartes to Leibniz*. New York: Image Books.
- Cottingham, J. (1988). *The Rationalists*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cottingham, J. (1993). *A Descartes Dictionary*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Descartes, R. (1982). *The Principle of Philosophy*. (Trans. V. R. Miller & R. P. Miller). London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Descartes, R. (1984). *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. I. (Trans. J. Cottingham & R. Stoothoof & D. Murdoch). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



- Descartes, R. (1985). *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol II. (Trans. J. Cottingham & R. Stoothoof & D. Murdoch). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Descartes, R. (1993). *Meditations on First Philosophy*. (Ed. S. Tweyman). London & New York: Routledge.
- Descartes, R. (2006). *A Discourse on the Method*. (Trans. I. Mclean). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Descartes, R. (2010). *Objections to the Meditations and Descartes's Replies*. (Trans. J. Bennett). Last Modified: November, 2007.
- Floridi, L. (2000). Mathematical Skepticism: The Cartesian Approach. *The Proceedings of the Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy*, 6, 217-265.
- Garber, D. (1992). *Descartes' Metaphysical Physics*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Garrett, B. (1985). *Personal Identity and Self-Consciousness*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Gassendi, P. (2010). Fifth Objections (Gassendi) and Descartes's Replies. R. Descartes, *Objections to the Meditations and Descartes's Replies*. (Trans. J. Bennett). Last Modified November, 2007, 83-146.
- Gorham, G. (2007). Descartes on Time and Duration. *Early Science and Medicine*, 12, 28-54.
- Laporte, J. (1945). *Le Rationalisme de Descartes*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Locke, J. (1999). *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Maclean, I. (2006). Introduction. R. Descartes. *A Discourse on the Method*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, vii-lxx.
- Markie, P. (1992). The Cogito and its Importance. *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes*. (Ed. J. Cottingham). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 140-173.
- Secada, J. E. K. (1990). Descartes on Time and Causality. *The Philosophical Review*, 99 (1), 45-72.



Öz: Descartes'ın metafizik projesinin merkezinde kendilik, Tanrı ve dış dünya temaları bulunmaktadır. Descartes, kendiliği uzamlı tözden ayırarak onu düşünen töz olarak ele alır. Yararılmamış töz olan Tanrı'nın aksine, kendilik ve dış dünya yaratılmış tözler olarak düşünülürler. Bu makale üç ana konuya odaklanmaktadır. Birincisi, Descartes'ın kendilik ve dış dünya hakkındaki düşüncelerinin ne olduğunu, varoluş ve sürerlik üzerinden anlamaya çalışmaktadır. İkincisi, Descartes'ta kendiliğin dış dünyaya nasıl erişim sağladığını göstermektedir. Sonucusu ise Descartes'ın metafizik projesindeki, diğer bir deyimle kendilik, dış dünya ve bunlar arasındaki ilişkiyi açıklama girişimindeki, eksikliğe dikkat çekmektedir. Bu makalede, bulmacadaki eksik parça olan zaman yerine konularak söz konusu eksiklik giderilmeye çalışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kendilik, zaman, dış dünya, erişim, metafizik, Tanrı.

[*]This paper is drawn from the author's PhD Dissertation, *Revealing the Fact: The Inseparable Relation between the Self and Time*, which is fulfilled in the METU..

