

## Religion and War

Reformation and Counter-reformation bitterly divided Europeans. Everywhere in what had been Catholic Europe there had been struggles about religion during the 16th century. Some countries successfully persecuted minorities out of existence: Spain and Italy thus remained strongholds of the Counter Reformation

Yet religion was not the only explanation of the religious wars, which devastated so much of Europe between 1550 and 1648. Sometimes, what was really going on was a struggle for dominance between great aristocratic families who identified themselves with different religious parties

Example: 30 Year's War

But the Peace of Westphalia, which ended the war in 1648, opened a new era: although even then many people still thought of religion as well-worth fighting over and certainly as something which justified murdering or torturing your errant neighbors, statesmen for the most part began to take more account of other matters in dealing with one another

## Descartes 1596-1650

He had vision, contained mathematical picture of the world  
-this convinced Descartes that the workings of the entire universe could be discovered by the app of universal mathematical science

### **Q: that night [11.11.1619] had vivid dreams. What is the dream?**

1. struggles against wind on road to church at old college in la fleche, turns to greet someone, wind flings him against the church wall.
2. then, from middle of courtyard, someone calls to him that a friend of his has a melon which he wants to give him
3. Descartes overcome with terror and hears a noise like a crack of lightning, after which the darkness of his room is filled with an explosion of sparks
4. less clear: sees dictionary and a book of poetry on desk; followed by series of disparate images

-later Descartes believes that the vision and ensuing dreams revealed his god-given vocation, they gave him confidence in his calling as well as a confidence in the correctness of its findings that was not always backed by argument. its ironic that dc, the great rationalist, should have found his inspiration in a mystical vision and some highly irrational dreams

-as a result of his vision in the Poeele, Descartes conceived of a universal science capable of embracing all human knowledge, a system that would not only include all knowledge, but also unite it.

This system would be free of all prejudices and assumptions, and would be based on certainty alone, would start from basic principles, which were themselves self-evident, and would build up from these

-in order to discover the universal science, we first had to adopt a method of thinking properly, this method consisted of following two rules of mental operation:  
intuition and deduction

**Q: What is intuition?**

-intuition he defined as ‘the conception, without doubt, of an unclouded and attentive mind, which is formed by the light of reason alone.’

-dictionary immediate awareness, either of the truth of some proposition or of an object of apprehension such as a concept

-ex. awareness of passage of time or of the ineffable nature of god  
-regarded with suspicion; it’s just labeling the place where the philosophical understanding of the source of our knowledge stops.

**Q: What is deduction?**

-for Descartes, deduction = ‘necessary inference from other facts which are known for certain’

-dictionary process of reasoning in which a conclusion is drawn from a set of premises. usually confined to cases in which the conclusion is supposed to follow from the premises

-i.e. the inference is logically valid

Descartes’ celebrated method-- became known as Cartesian method-- lay in the correct application of these two rules of thought

**Discourse:** this book consists of safer bits lifted from his Treatise on the Universe

-contained ideas that were to change the face of mathematics and make several revolutionary advances in science

-lays foundations of modern analytic geometry and introduces coordinates; in optics he proposes the law of diffraction, and put fwd an explanation of the rainbow

-Descartes made his philosophy comprehensible by a simple method. in clear autobiographical prose he describes how he goes about his thinking, and the thoughts that occur to him in the process.

**Q: What is his method?**

-11/ four rules of method

-so, he starts off by taking us back to the snowy Bavarian woods, and then in surprisingly cool tone of voice he then goes on to describe how it is possible, by means of persistent and determined doubt, for us to destroy our belief in the entire fabric of the world around us.

-nothing remains certain.

-whole universe, our very individuality, even our own existence, could all be a dream

-we have no way of knowing anything for certain. except for one thing.

**Q: What is that one thing? how do we know it?**

-18-19/reject all you could doubt

- I think, therefore I am

je crains, donc je suis

-no matter how deluded I may be in my thoughts about myself and the world, there is just one thing that is undeniable. what is that?

-I am thinking.

-this alone proves to me my existence. cogito ergo sum.

-having established this one ultimate certainty, dc proceeds to rebuild upon this foundation all that he has doubted

The modern age of philosophy begins with him, from this period, the primacy of the individual and the analysis of human consciousness became fundamental to philosophy

**Q: Does Descartes agree with Aristotle that some people are more intelligent than others?**

-1/ no: good sense evenly distributed, need to apply correctly. do that by self-study

**Q: Descartes has been accused of cowardice, of being a secret atheist, and of not even knowing himself despite all his introspective meditations. Do these accusations stand?**

Descartes was convinced that without dropping any of its scholastic tenets the church could still come round to his point of view and his intellectual self-knowledge was actually quite deep. He saw the world as subsisting of two kinds of substance:

mind and matter

mind was unextended and indivisible

matter was extended and divisible, and obeyed laws of physics

This meant that our incorporeal mind was lodged in a mechanistic body.

But how could the mind, which had no extension, interact with a body which could only obey the mechanistic laws of science? According to

Descartes, the mind and the body interact in the pineal gland [obscure organ near base of brain, precise function remains uncertain to this day]  
The question is not so much where they interact, but how.