Appendix XI (on the 10th lecture): *A difficult point in Descartes’ criticism.[[1]](#footnote-1)*

<I>

Descartes understands the exhibition of the pure subjectivity as that of a real substance and its cognitional independency from all nature as a cognitional independency from another kind of substance that is not without any doubt grounded according to its existence (and first of all from the physical body). It is insufficiently grounded because its grounding in the *ego* through the evidence implies the problem of the transcendent acceptance of the evidence, which has to be solved first of all. As far as this evidence gets a provable right, nature exists in a rightful way for the cognizing subject, that is, as a complex of substances of a completely different kind than the *ego*. Then of course other *egos* exist as well, due to the experiential connection to objective bodies (although the examination of the clarity and the distinctness of the cognition that is to be grounded on the experience of empathy is missing there – since there is a lack of rational psychology of a similar rationality as that of rational physics).

What is the countersenseful in this conception? Descartes wants to generally prove the acceptance of the evidence. But does not every proof, as proceeding in the evidence, only proving itself through the proper evidence of each step, presuppose the acceptance of the evidence? The acceptance of the immanent evidence cannot be put into any doubt of proof, every doubt that is supposed to be stated, every assertion of the evidence’s doubtfulness presupposes the same kind of evidence. Every question that is posed in relation to it, every sense-investigation performed in relation to it, presupposes it. The acceptance of the transcendent evidence can only there be questioned where it is secured itself as a fact – through immanent evidence. We can also explain (the same) in this way:

What kind of reasonable questions can evidence be asked at all? And in what sense? For instance in the sense that is the Cartesian one, whether an evidence and a kind of evidence as such is “accepted”, compelling, justifies the belief that it is actually the objective of whose being the cognizing subject has evidence? But what can a reasonable answer to this question look like, what else than that I now understand that this is actual that was supposed in that evidence? I need to have directed an evidence of this actuality, that is, some second evidence, to the same objectivity, and in the same sense, need to at least consider possible such an evidence, to which I could fit the “right”, the appropriateness of the first evidence. But if I now question the one [evidence], why should the other one have a better reason and be guarded against a question, a doubt?

[336] Here the difference of complete and incomplete evidence presents itself and the difference between different evidences, still relating to the same objective thing, but only relating to it according to the sides, the moments of the objective thing presents itself: and thereby in such a way that they, as evidences with restrictions, only have the being in a certainty that implies the expectation that further evidences that are differently shaped according to their content can be generated as verifications: as in the external experience. The same object can be given in many evidences without these evidences being mere repetitions.

We have here thus evidences of a differently inner structure that depend on one another, and evidences that are quasi able to say to us, and that we can ask in how far, with what “reach” they pretend to be justifications, and with what provisions. As to those other cases, differences of the complete insight and the insight that is half clear, unclear, it is again the evidence itself we can ask how it has to be taken itself, what it <has> given itself as evidence, and how it contains it in itself. And we can then see that an unclear evidence predelineates in itself possibilities of clarification, of conversion into clear evidences– verifying or legitimating the originally unclear one or in contrast to that correcting it in this or that, and thereby sets tasks to us, if we want cognition in the fullest sense. Do we not have to regard at all the experience that is called evidence and ask, what it implies itself, and do we not then find that it is the consciousness of the having-itself and grasping-itself of an alleged objectivity, which is as that norm for the other consciousness that is not a mental process of a grasping-itself? Is it not senseless to doubt the possibility of some evidence’s validity?

<II>

Let us consider, in order to get a step ahead, the peculiar independence of the existence of the *ego* and of the realm of its *cogito* of the world existence that served Descartes as the main foundation for his supposed discovery of the dualism. It is apodictically evident: I am as a transcendental I, no matter whether my experiential world is actual or not. Neither its being nor its not being is absolutely evident, rather the possibility of both is absolutely evident (which of course would demand a deeper explanation). Does now, as was Descartes’ conclusion, the independence of my transcendental existence from the world designate a separation – let alone a separation of different substances? And does the relation of my transcendental *ego* (this *ego* that I grasp in an absolutely direct way in the transcendental reflection, view, and not invent) designate a relation of the causality to the world even if only as a senseful possibility? We immediately cognize that separation as well as connection to a whole of pieces and as well as dependence of the changes on the separated – are all objective concepts <related> to the spatial form as a form of coexistence of things that are to be separated and to be connected, that is, taboo [concepts].

But if we remain at the pure *ego*, then it becomes clear that, as long as we continue to consider it as experiencing the world, its relation to the world is never cut off but always given. The experienced world does not need to be – but who sees this possibility in apodictic evidence: I myself, the transcendental *ego*; and how does it see it: as a possible one to be viewed in sense experiences themselves that then simply proceed in such a way that each of my experiential certainties are rather denied and not verified by those of new experiences. I can think of experiential progresses that do not bear any unity of the experienced world that remains univocally invariant, and eventually destroy every experiential belief. But likewise I grasp the possibility of the true being of the world in the frame of my *ego*, I only need <to> consider the style of my actual experience continued *in infinitum*, in such a way that the experienced things indeed present themselves singularly as illusionary things or as seemingly being thus, but that as a whole a unity keeps on invariantly, which still keeps a firm identity with a view to the being thus for all determinations of difference.

Descartes already touches the fundamental peculiarity of the *cogitatio*, which we call external perception, likewise that of external memories, fantasies and the like that they are in themselves a consciousness of things, of something spatial, worldly. Quietly he touches the wonder of all wonders, the consciousness. But wonders are things that are not understood, that are destined to be changed into understandabilities. All research begins with wonders, and the research ends with the demasking of the wonders and their change into cognition full of light. Descartes only touches this and because he does not go any further in this direction, he does not anticipate what the absolutely evident divergence of the *ego’s* existence and the existence of the world, experienced and otherwise cognized in the *ego*, then evaluated and treated, properly designates. He does not realize that existence of my experienced world has a sense for me, believing in this existence, that is to be made evident in an apodictic way, and without which my talking would make no sense, and that this sense becomes evident to me in the construction of the idea of an experiential system that is univocal *in infinitum*, as of a system of progresses of my experiences that are freely to be changed, and that furthermore a firmly ordered style of my experiences as my *cogitationes*[[2]](#footnote-2) is designated therein. And he does not see that non-existence [338] according to the sense expresses a correlate style of incongruity in the universe of my possible *cogitationes*. He is the original father of the psychologism interpenetrating the whole modern transcendental philosophy and which it was fundamentally never able to overcome; he is this already through the fateful turn from the *ego* to the *mens*, which, in one with the countersenseful metaphysical dualism, only enabled Locke’s cognitional theory in the first place.

On the other hand he is still also the father of all genuine transcendental philosophy, insofar as the research on the drawing back of all objectivity and all science determining it in the logical forms of the theory to the cognizing subjectivity was and had to be regarded as a necessity from now on, how ever all attempts to fulfill it in scientifically compelling clearness and consistency failed. The Cartesian working out is thereby most important and certainly not to be lost.

<III>

Still however bad is the situation of the Cartesian explanations’ strictness, nay, already the methodical clearness on the fundamental level they have to maintain in order to reach the goal: a genial instinct still reigns the main trait of the thoughts and this to such a degree that they indeed terminate in a great discovery, which at the same time is the discovery of the beginning. This is already brought about by the next step of the thoughts, or rather, this is brought to us in our consequent reshaping the Cartesian thoughts into fundamental necessities. This step towards the *ego cogito*, which at first seems to be so harmless, is implied in the simple proof that the proved possibility of the non-being of the objective world (of the world all in the full sense), which I constantly experience, the fact that I myself, the one experiencing it, am, is not in danger. And as a further result I can say in absolute doubtlessness, in apodictic certainty: I am as the one performing these meditations now, as feeling, evaluating, striving, etc., in such and such a way. I am absolutely certain of all that, I can consider it, and, as often as I do that, I have – a certainty of experience indeed, but one of apodictic character. That, which I experience thus cannot, while I experience it, be not. I have a field of experience here that, while I experience it, apodictically excludes the possibility of the non-being of the experienced. Accordingly I have here the realm of apodictically certain experiential predictions: and I have needed and searched for such a one for the necessary beginning. *Ego cogito, ego sum*.

I, the being one, therefore always have two realms of existence in [339] readiness to be perceived, correlatively to two kinds of experience. The one has the title “world”, and, although it is constantly there for me, it has contingency of experience for me. Nothing in it can ever reach adequate perception, nothing needs to be objectively perceived. The other one has the title “I am”, and I have here something absolute, excluding all negation of being in the self-experience.

The contrast of these spheres of existence though is not the one between I and the external world, and the contrast of the experiences not that between inner and outer experience: otherwise I could have spared the whole course of thoughts and the subtlety of the apodictic finishing touch. The I – or rather, the soul -, that is the theme of the psychological self-experience and of psychology, belongs to the objective world; to it belongs the whole man, with his body and mind, with his personal I, with his soul experiences. But it is exactly the fundamentally methodical function of the performed criticism of experience, to apodictically prove the possibility of the non-being of the whole world – as given through objective experience (“a sensuous one”) – and the possibility of the beginning of this non-being, and to exhibit that which cannot be denied at all on the basis of this account – that is, under the universal hypothesis of the world’s non-existence -, the *ego cogito* that is not concerned by this non-being – as something therefore not containing anything of the world and its realities. The basic thought thereby is the one that the “sensuous” experience at first – namely the spatio-temporal one – is fundamentally “inadequate”, its certainty one that is *a priori* provisory, and remains provisory in all progressing verification, never apodictically guaranteeing the being of the experienced. Thus, at first the universal physical nature is capable-of-non-being, without regard for its univocal experience. But together with the hypothesis of nature’s non-existence the hypothesis <of the non-existence> of the universe of all objects, receiving their credit from the sensuous (“natural”) experience, which are thus experienced in an experience founded in a natural one, is possible as well. But this concerns all experiences of men and animals that are somehow sensuously mediated (through so-called empathy, through the “expression” of bodilinesses), and of all their soul lives. And in this way I therefore quasi delete the whole world for me together with the possible account of nature’s non-existence, and if there still remains a sphere of being for me, then it is not a final small end and piece of the world, because indeed not a piece of the world may be separated of it and sensefully made independent by deleting the other world. Nor is it something real outside of the world, because indeed, as can be easily seen, all within and without of concrete realities only has a sense in the unity of the world.

Now you will object: but whether I say *ego cogito* or “I am”, [340] whether I say it without further ado or with the fictive hypothesis of the world’s non-existence – is it not me, now as before, am I not still this man, experiencing while moving in this room, touching with my hands, looking with my eyes, etc.? Certainly I am; but what makes me a man, that is, a member of the world, according to the sense I give to the word man, this does not at all belong into the frame of the apodictic evidence determining the “*ego*” and absolutely encompassing in itself; how ever well I need to satisfy the methodical demand of switching off the existence of the experiential world on the object’s side in every single case in order to gain this my *ego*, e.g. in seeing a house, that is, I need to put out of action the existence of this house, in the hypothetical approach, as if it does not exist, similarly I need to perform the same method on the subject’s side. I need to convince myself in how far the experience has immediately or mediately received its content of natural experiences from this subjective thing, that is, [in how far] would existentially be concerned as well by a possible non-existence of the world. That which the world demands is a radically performed suspension of that natural life attitude and theoretical attitude, in which world is there for me; only this radicalism leads to the new attitude that we call the transcendentally-phenomenological one, in which there is nothing of the world but the *ego*. This *ego* is simply the peculiar residuum that remains to me as something apodictically necessary and not to be denied at all simply and purely, if I perform at every *ego cogito* of the natural-naïve attitude – like: I experience this house, I judge the sun and the moon, I consider a physical theory, I express my sympathy to the one who suffers, etc. – if I, as I said, perform that methodical reduction at every such *ego cogito* everywhere on the sides of the *ego*, of the *cogito* and of the *cogitatum*. And then as a respective *ego* I gain the *cogito* and *cogitatum* of the new attitude. Only this is not concerned by the possibility of the world’s non-existence, and is my absolute “phenomenological” givenness, quasi the artificially pure residuum of the method, which we want to call that of the phenomenological reduction from now on. We only gain by it, in order to call it by its new term here as well, the transcendental I and the transcendental subjectivity as such in the sense of phenomenology – and gain it as a self-givenness of the phenomenological experience.

Descartes already was on the way to the transcendental I and touched it with the question: What is this *ego* I am absolutely certain of, what is part of it, and what is not? My body certainly not, as a sensuously experienced one. Therefore the current “I am” does not mean: “I, the man, am”. And following the words we completely agree with Descartes, and we would further explain in a more closely grounding way: in the objective experience, in which I experience any man as a man, is experienced a physical body at the deepest layer, a natural thing, and the quite different experience [341] of a corresponding subjectivity, expressing itself in this physicalness as bodiliness, of an I and a soul’s life, is founded in this natural experience. The psychological experience gains a root of the senses in this foundation from the body’s experience. The soul is the soul of the body, something empirically connected to it, orderly showing itself, expressing itself in it.

But Descartes, not making clear to himself in this hastiness of his consideration the method that was newly predelineated to him in reaching the transcendental subjectivity, views his task by way of the causal interpretation of the exterior experience, to change the instinctive causally concluding the transcendent into an exact one and the blindly instinctive one into a scientifically certain; furthermore to show that only in the form of the mathematical natural science the true essence of the transcendent nature uncovers itself, and that all true being of the complete world of experience determines itself in the sense of its two-substances-doctrine. As is known its way goes over a theological theory of the evidence. The complete, absolute actuality, cognizable from the *ego*, resulted as god and the god-made world of bodies and minds; thereby the world could now find a teleological explanation, beyond the exact exploring of its own essential qualities, performing the exact sciences.

This philosophy was, as any philosophy of a methodically related type, afflicted with the countersense that it wanted to be philosophy, universal science from absolute justification, but took ways, the thoughts of which were not taken from absolute justification, nay, would be cognizable in such a one as countersenseful.

The *ego cogito* in its transcendental purification is the necessary beginning for every philosophizing; but it is only the beginning – the beginning of a philosophy launching itself -, when it is seen that an endless working field is laid bare with this title for concrete research that are not only themselves absolutely justified ones, but to which all other in the radical sense philosophical ones are related back according to their possibility of cognition. This shall be actually proved now in the continuation of our meditations[[3]](#footnote-3), be grasped and become determining for the grounding of a science of the transcendental subjectivity preceding all else. This science, purely from the I, that is a philosophizing one there and determines itself as a transcendental I in the described method of reduction, drafted and purely related to this one single transcendental I, certainly would be of a most peculiar property; it would be its egology, science of its transcendental subjectivity and the universe of that, which is transcendentally encompassed by it in an apodictically evident foundation.

The pure subjectivity does not become a field of egological research for Descartes [342], which would have to form the foundation for a philosophy that was to be founded in an apodictically evident way, but a mere “Archimedian point”, on which in secure conclusions the world, as lost to methodical skepticism, can be gained as an absolutely certain one. His problem is that of the antique skepticism against the existence and cognizability of the objective world that is allegedly perceived and scientifically cognized in the subjectivity. The basic thought of the skepticism of Gorgias and Protagoras was this: The world is only given to me, the cognizing man, as one that is experienced by me and thought in my thinking. The subjective experiencing, the subjective intuiting is not the intuited. Generally we indeed say and confirm that something can be intuited, can appear without being. I thus always only have my subjective appearances, my intuitions. But how can I then ever claim, that something more exists than my intuiting and thinking, that some intuited and thought in itself exists?

For Descartes this is therefore a proof that this world of natural experience and experiential science is actual. Implicitly the contrasting was already encompassed in the skeptical argumentation between the pure subjectivity with its being-in-itself and being-for-itself, and the objective world on the other hand. But only Descartes’ method, and especially the method of the apodictically possible switching off of the world’s existence, offered the option to fixate the pure content of the *ego*, and it now seemed to give the secure ground for conclusions. But if we consider it more closely, then Descartes’ whole goal setting, the “proof” is a countersense. That, which is already the basis within the ancient scepticism’s argumentations is the fateful error, streaming from Descartes on Locke and the empirism, furthermore into newer philosophy as such, that the *ego cogito* presents and closes the universe of my immediate givennesses. Certainly: it designates that, which alone is given as a fact in an apodictically evident way, and the universe of actual and possible individual facts I can posit from apodictic evidence. But immediate givenness is not the same as apodictic givenness, and that the thing I perceive does not need to exist despite my perception, and that it is therefore not a real piece of the perception’s content itself and does not belong to the pure *ego*, this only designates that the external perception is inadequate and presuming; but it does not designate that the external perception is a mere illusion; it does not designate that perception is a conclusion in truth, a causal conclusion that is only conceptually not grasped, blind, “usual”, towards an “external” analogon or towards a causing something as such.[[4]](#footnote-4)

[343] Thus it has been a constant doctrine of philosophy since Descartes that the only immediately given thing are his own “ideas” for the cognizing one, that all external perception properly is not a perception at all, not an actual self-grasping of the perceived, and only “inner” perception is perception in the proper sense. The cognizing Ego is as an experiencing one therefore excluded from the external world, and the countersense of a causal confirmation of something that cannot be experienced in an experience, that can only grasp proper “ideas”, distant impacts of that inexperienceable, shall help against the solipsism: a countersense because this confirmation could only then designate a confirmation for the self-enclosed *ego*, if a respective proof would already have become known to it or could be interpreted in an analogous way – if thus the fundamentally inexperienceable would be simply fundamentally experienceable and would have already been experienced in analogous cases.

Because we discuss experience in a speculative way instead of studying it according to its proper essence in pure subjectivity, we do not see that the anticipation immanently belonging to the essence of the object’s perception, directed to possible progresses of the perception towards ever new perceptions of the same, we overlook that the conditionality of the perceptive belief grounding in it can never give it as a belief in the object’s existence the character of an immediate belief and can never deprive the perception of the character of the immediate self-grasping. It is and remains self-grasping, as long as the conditions verify themselves, self-grasping with the same constant condition.

We do not see that being true is the correlate to the idea of a possible experiencing that is harmonious into infinity, and that afterwards, if the thing that is perceived there is actual, each of its external perceptions remains an actual self-grasping and a finite one, and that to even only consider possible another kind of actual self-grasping of it is a countersense.

1. 1923. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Whether the idea of the existence amounts to nothing more or not: anyway, being and progress of nature is in a wonderful essential relation to the *ego*, and closer to the progress of the experiential livings possible for me, in such a way that every change of nature would necessarily demand changes for my consciousness. On the other hand, the not being of the world keeps on not disturbing my absolute existence and the I-am has an evidence independent of existence and non-existence. Since the non-being of the world alleged in the experience, no less than its being, prescribes a law to my *ego*, it is clear that we cannot talk of any causality here. How can something that does not exist, perform causality? [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Compare especially *First Philosophy II*, in volume VIII of the *Collected Works*. – Editor’s note. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. With regard to the sensuous „ideas“ already Berkeley in his genial originality denied the senseful possibility of a conclusion towards respective material substances, towards transcendent things, but without any success, because he stuck to the principle of the causal conclusion towards something transcendent (God as transcendent cause). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)