
Analysis of Descartes' Wax Argument on the Existence of God

Descartes example is simply about the mass difference a lump of wax can have; we may perceive it as one thing when in fact it can be seen as much more. Descartes uses an ordinary lump of wax as an argument about taking things into consideration and reflection. He believes that in order to make an unbiased observation of the wax one's perception and feelings must be removed. Therefore, Descartes takes this lump of wax and begins to describe its obvious main characteristics; taking into consideration the wax's texture, size, shape, color, smell and all other features being exhibited by said wax. After having described the wax Descartes was able to create a specific idea of what the wax was, but once he melted the wax it gave light to another substance. Descartes made it clear that the melted piece of wax was in fact still the same piece he had begun with, but now it presented a new shape, size, texture, color and smell which was his overall argument about the piece of wax.

Although the wax didn't appear to be the same from its exterior appearance it was the same, it had gone through a process of change causing its indifferent appearance. The wax was melted therefore it technically lost all its initial conditions, but yet the wax remains to be the same piece of wax; this gets to the point that when a person thinks of a lump of wax, they're not using their sensory abilities. Overall Descartes is using the lump of wax to refer to something that is much more, something that goes more in depth, something like space itself. The piece of wax went through an ordeal of changes, yet people are probably aware that such changes occurred or are occurring. Descartes concludes that his "grasp" of the piece of wax is not sensory, but rather it is "the result of purely mental inspection" because he is making the complex conclusion that in order to take an object into consideration we must view it as much more than just a simple object. He saw the wax as more than what his senses allowed him to see, he absorbed every crevasse of the simple piece of wax. At first his senses showed him one thing, but as he began to burn the piece of wax, he saw something completely different, so he took full grasp of the concept of wax rather than just using the illusions his senses demonstrated.

Descartes knows that objects are in fact changeable no matter what are senses are saying, we are aware of such objects due to our knowledge we can take ahold of such "grasps." We know our minds better than any objects that we come along with. The example of the wax tells Descartes that the mind can find a way to push emotions and judgement aside, while at the same exact time our mind falsely perceived us into thinking something that's not true. We solely rely on our senses that can easily let us down, "when we perceive an object like the piece of wax, there is an act of judgment involved in our perception. I do not see the piece of

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wax - I infer that it is there from appearances provided by my senses". Therefore, when someone is taking an object into consideration, they are overly focused on their specific perception of said object, thinking of the object as just that an object describing/discussing its fundamental characteristics. Although we are using our senses to interpret the change of the wax, we still see it change physically. Descartes sees it melt, he smells the change in its fragrance and yet the wax still remains to be the same piece of wax, no matter what our senses tell us. Our sight, smell, taste, and touch are trying to deceive us according to Descartes we see the changes, we are meant to think that the wax is somehow a completely different piece when in fact it was evolving within our eyes.

The lump of wax is related to other passages in the Meditation such as when Descartes is using the wax argument to take into consideration the idea of God being an existing creation. Although we have never seen God, in reality it doesn't really matter that we are unable to see God; we are able to fully understand that God exists. If we apply the issue of the wax when it comes to the consideration of God, we will try to prove that we hold trust in God while having no visual support of any kind. Visualization is one of the main characteristics Descartes describes when it comes to the wax argumentation, Descartes believes that visualizing is responsible for teaching people to not only see an object but to take the object into consideration in a way one can understand it.

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