

Critical Inquiry Seminar

Manifest versus Scientific Image



Writing Assignment Due Thursday, Oct. 14

Note the Thursday due date.

What you do for this assignment depends on how you did on the previous assignment. If you received a B– or lower on the previous assignment, I would like you to *rewrite* that paper. I will be posting guidelines on rewriting papers shortly.

If you received a B or B+, you have the *option* of rewriting or writing on the following topic.

If you received an A– or better, you should write on the following topic.

Here’s a thumbnail version of the argument Descartes offers in Meditation III:

1. I have an idea of God.
2. My idea of God has a certain amount of formal reality.
3. The Causal Principle.

4. Therefore, God exists.

In roughly **two to three pages**, first, explain why it seems that Descartes argues in a circle in Meditations II and III. You do not need to explain the above argument — assume your reader is familiar with it. Your paper should briefly explain what a circular argument is, and show how Descartes argues in a circle.

Descartes’s contemporary critics charged him with arguing in a circle, so fortunately we have Descartes’s response. The second part of your paper should explain Descartes’s response. You should consult the following (all are quite short):

- the selections from the Objections and Replies in DSPW on the Cartesian circle (pages 139–43); these are:
 - the circularity objections (probably due to Mersenne), Second Objections AT VII 125–126; Arnaud’s Fourth Objections AT VII 211
 - Descartes’s replies, Second Replies, AT VII 140–141 and Fourth Replies AT VII 246;
- the last five paragraphs of the Fifth Meditation (DSPW 108–110);

Note: do your best to present Descartes’s response in a clear way. You may not think Descartes’s response is any good. That’s okay — you’re just trying to explain to your audience what his response is.