

## **Rene Descartes' Rationalist Epistemology and Its Impact on the Progress of Western Philosophy**

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**Abstract:** *The emergence of the Renaissance in the Western world started when individuals exhibited a high degree of criticality towards the prevailing circumstances, subjecting everything to empirical scrutiny. To attain a truth, it is necessary to employ several modes of thinking and evidence, one of which is the criterion of rationalism, which significantly shaped the foundation of the Age of Enlightenment. The present evaluation of rationalism in the Postmodern era is crucial to determine if the sole actual truth is a rational truth that is logically coherent, if the ratio is the exclusive source of truth, or if there exist alternative truths that rationalism is unable to attain. This study aims to acquire knowledge and comprehension of the epistemology of rationalism as a theory of truth. This study methodology employs literature (library research) by systematically collecting and tracking data or library resources pertaining to the topic of the discussion and the actual problem. The results indicate that rationalism is a philosophical perspective that asserts reason as the primary instrument for acquiring knowledge, with the ultimate truth being attributed to human reason or rationality. 2) In his philosophy, Descartes introduced a way of scepticism, the doubt method, which involves questioning all beliefs, ideas, thoughts, and materials acquired by the senses. The integrity of information and knowledge acquired by individuals from birth is not assured, necessitating thorough testing through doubt. 3) Despite being driven by rational and empirical principles, rationalism is inherently incapable of elucidating or manifesting empirical existence beyond the confines of the intellect, such as phenomena related to colour, taste, smell, or shadow.*

**Keywords:** *Rationalism, Rene Descartes, Impact, Epistemology, Progress*

**Abstrak:** *Kebangkitan abad Renaisans di Barat diawali ketika masyarakatnya mulai bersikap sangat kritis terhadap keadaan, segala sesuatu di hadapkan dengan “pengadilan” rasio. Untuk mencapai suatu kebenaran diperlukan berbagai macam cara berpikir dan pembuktian, salah satunya melalui tolok ukur Rasionalisme yang memberikan pengaruh besar pijakan awal Abad pencerahan. Penting untuk dikaji kembali Rasionalisme di abad Postmodern seperti sekarang, apakah satu-satunya kebenaran yang valid itu hanya kebenaran yang rasional masuk akal saja, apakah hanya rasio yang menjadi satu-satunya sumber kebenaran, atau ada kebenaran lain yang tidak bisa dijangkau oleh rasionalisme. Tujuan penulisan ini untuk mengetahui dan memahami epistemologi rasionalisme sebagai salah satu teori tentang kebenaran. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan kepustakaan*

(library research) dengan mengumpulkan dan menelusuri data atau bahan-bahan kepustakaan yang berkaitan dengan tema pembahasan dan permasalahannya. Hasil dari penelitian menunjukkan bahwa: 1) Rasionalisme sebuah pandangan filsafat yang berpegang teguh bahwa akal adalah alat terpenting untuk memperoleh pengetahuan, kebenaran tertinggi berada pada akal atau rasio manusia. 2) Descartes mencetuskan metode keraguan dalam filsafatnya yang disebut *doubt methode*, meragukan semua keyakinan, gagasan, pemikiran, dan materi yang diperoleh melalui indera. Informasi dan ilmu pengetahuan yang diterima oleh manusia dari sejak lahir tidak ada jaminan dengan kebenaran yang pasti, oleh karena itu semuanya harus diuji kembali dengan cara meragukannya. 3) Sekalipun berpedoman kepada prinsip rasional dan empiris, pada kenyataannya rasionalisme tidak mampu menjelaskan atau menjangkau eksistensi empiris di luar pikiran seperti soal warna, rasa, bau, atau bayangan.

**Kata kunci :** *Rasionalisme, Rene Descartes, Pengaruh, Epistemologi, Kemajuan*

## **Introduction**

The emergence of the Renaissance in the Western world started when individuals exhibited a high degree of criticality at the prevailing circumstances, subjecting everything to the scrutiny of rationality. Whatever could not be elucidated by ratios had to be rejected and regarded as either superstition or prejudice.<sup>1</sup> Rene Descartes (1596-1650 AD) was a prominent philosopher of the Renaissance period who exerted vast impact in many domains, particularly philosophy and science. His objective was to rejuvenate the entire field of science, revitalizing it with the most revolutionary approach of scepticism.<sup>2</sup>

Islamic logic designates human beings as *hayawanun natiq* (thinking creatures), so it is imperative to acknowledge that conscious reason, as a fundamental instrument of logic, constitutes the essential nature of human beings.<sup>3</sup> Human beings possess the utmost level of perfection among all creations of God.<sup>4</sup> It is due to their possession of reason, emotions, and abilities that enable them to cultivate their true selves.<sup>5</sup> Given all the resources bestowed upon humanity by God, the objective reality regarding every aspect of life has great significance. It becomes imperative to actively pursue and defend this truth to

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<sup>1</sup> Franz Magnis Suseno, *Etika Politik* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1987). 36

<sup>2</sup> SEKSAMA & IKAPI, *Pengantar Filsafat* (Yogyakarta: PT. Kanisius, 2018). 110

<sup>3</sup> SEKSAMA & IKAPI. 111

<sup>4</sup> Al-Qur'an, Surah At-Tin, ayat 4

<sup>5</sup> Abdurrahman Wahid, *Islam Kosmopolitan* (Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, 2007). 30

establish an exemplary society.<sup>6</sup> Throughout human history, the quest for truth has been pursued through many methods, including intuitive knowledge, systematic experimentation, rigorous scientific inquiry, authoritative power and religious influence, or serendipitous occurrences.<sup>7</sup> The attainment of truth necessitates using several cognitive processes and modes of evidence, among which the criterion of rationalism, which significantly impacted the early Renaissance in Western societies, stands out.<sup>8</sup> Re-evaluating rationalism in the postmodern period is crucial to determine if the only true truth is indeed rational and reasonable truth derived solely from ratio or if alternative truths exist beyond rationalism's reach.

Numerous entities engage in the study of rationalism through the publication of scholarly works. Thus far, the researcher's reading efforts have yielded the following sources that address Rationalism: Mursyid Fikri authored *A Critical Analysis of Descartes' Rationalism and its Relevance to Muhammad Abduh's Islamic Reform Philosophy*. This essay attempts to identify a shared element between Descartes' Rationalism and Muhammad Abduh's Islamic reform endeavours, but it does not address the epistemological criticism within contemporary Rationalism philosophy. Furthermore, the journal paper contains several literary errors concerning Descartes' history, particularly the year of birth. The birth year stated as 1959 significantly differs from the commonly used sources, notably Rene Descartes (1596-1650 AD).<sup>9</sup> Descartes' rationalism diverges from Muhammad Abduh's reasoning in dismissing all religious dogmas and anything that cannot be ascertained by reason without limitations. Although Muhammad Abduh's philosophical ideas are closely connected to religious texts, he restricts human reason to (*taqshir*) due to natural causes and (*al-asbab al-kauniyah*), which refer to unforeseen natural happenings.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Mursyid Fikri, "Rasionalisme Descartes Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Pemikiran Pembaharuan Islam Muhammad Abduh," *TARBAWI: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 3, no. 02 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.26618/jtw.v3i02.1598>. 129

<sup>7</sup> I Gusti Bagus Rai Utama, *Filsafat Ilmu Dan Logika* (Bandung: Univ. Dhyana Pura, 2013). 4-5

<sup>8</sup> Musakkir, "Filsafat Modern Dan Perkembangannya," *Tajdid: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman Dan Kemanusiaan* 5, no. 1 (2021).

<sup>9</sup> Desmond M. Clarke, *Descartes: A Biography*, *Descartes: A Biography*, 2006, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511498077>. 1

<sup>10</sup> Muhammad Abduh, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ed. I: A-Ak-Beyes, edisi ke-1 (Chicago, Inc, 2010). 20-21

The scholarly paper "The Philosophy of Rationalism as the Basis of Science" is authored by Meisakh Nur Anugerah and Usman Radiana. The essay communicates the significant impact of philosophy on science well, but it only briefly addresses the topic of rationalism, focusing solely on its definition and historical background. The subsequent discourse on philosophy is characterized by its dominance, albeit somewhat broad and does not explicitly elaborate on the philosophy of rationalism.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, Ngismatul Choiriyah's literary work encompasses Rene Descartes' Rationalism. The paper elucidates the concept of Rene Descartes' rationalism by examining its origins and methodologies for acquiring true truths. However, it lacks an explanation of the verification of the theory. It fails to critically evaluate Rene Descartes' rationalism and the construction of his epistemological system in advancing philosophy.<sup>12</sup> Following is Tedy Machmud's essay titled "Rationalism and Empiricism." Influence and significance of contributions on the advancement of the philosophy of mathematics.<sup>13</sup> While this article provides an overview of the ideas of rationalism and empiricism, it does not extensively explore the epistemic approaches employed by both theories. H. Muhammad Bahar Akkase Teng is the author of the article "Rationalism in Historical Perspective."<sup>14</sup> This paper elucidates rationalism as a philosophical framework that posits reason as a means of acquiring information and characterizes Rationalists as individuals who engage in rational thinking.

Furthermore, Rudi Kuswandi and Ofianto authored a book titled "The Development of Science in the Concept of Rationalism." An Examination of Empiricism from Historical and Epistemological Perspectives.<sup>15</sup> The subsequent study is titled "The Flow of Rationalism and Empiricism in the Framework of Science" and is authored by

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<sup>11</sup> Meisakh Nur Anugerah and Usman Radiana, "Filsafat Rasionalisme Sebagai Dasar Ilmu Pengetahuan," *Jurnal Filsafat Indonesia* 5, no. 3 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.23887/jfi.v5i3.41741>. 183-186

<sup>12</sup> Ngismatul Choiriyah, "Rasionalisme Rene Descartes," *Anterior Jurnal* 13, no. 2 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.33084/anterior.v13i2.284>. 237-242

<sup>13</sup> Tedy Machmud, "Rasionalisme Dan Empirisme: Kontribusi Dan Dampaknya Pada Perkembangan Filsafat Matematika," *INOVASI* 8, no. 1 (2011).

<sup>14</sup> H. Muhammad Bahar Akkase Teng, "Rasionalis Dan Rasionalisme Dalam Perspektif Sejarah," *JURNAL ILMU BUDAYA* Vol. 4, N (n.d.).

<sup>15</sup> Rudi Kuswandi and Ofianto Ofianto, "Pengembangan Ilmu Pengetahuan Dalam Konsep Rasionalisme Empirisme : Perspektif Historis Dan Epistemologis," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 7, no. 3 (2023).

Susanti Vera and Yuli A. Hambali.<sup>16</sup> Fuad Masykur's paper is titled "The Method of Seeking Knowledge: An Approach to Rationalism, Empiricism, and the Scientific Method."<sup>17</sup> Next is Nur Faizi's writing The Methodology of Rene Descartes (Rationalism) and David Hume (Empiricism) in Islamic Education.<sup>18</sup> Next is the writing of Amalia Febri Yanti and Radea Yuli A. Hambali, "The Rationalism of Modern Century Philosophers (Rene Descartes)".<sup>19</sup> There are notable distinctions between this study and prior research in terms of the data presented, the detailed discussion of the Rationalism Epistemology theory verification method, the analysis method employed, the presented data information, and the resulting research findings.

Following an extensive literature survey, this research intends to provide a comprehensive analysis of the theory of Rationalism Epistemology. The goal is to offer simply comprehensible material that enhances the existing theories of earlier scholars. Therefore, evaluating and analyzing the critical perspective towards rationalism is possible, which regards reason as the sole legitimate and authentic origin of knowledge within a broader academic context. This paper aims to acquire knowledge and comprehension of the epistemology of rationalism as a theory of truth. It will be further elaborated upon in terms of sources, methodologies, and the means to ascertain the validity of external objects as truths (verification). This work is expected to offer theoretical and practical advantages to readers and future scholars. While theoretically, it is likely to contribute to academic scientific thought and serve as a reference for future research on rationalism epistemology, practically, it is expected to enhance knowledge and insight for readers, so

## **Method**

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<sup>16</sup> Susanti Vera and R. Yuli A. Hambali, "Aliran Rasionalisme Dan Empirisme Dalam Kerangka Ilmu Pengetahuan," *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Ushuluddin* 1, no. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpii.12207>.

<sup>17</sup> Fuad Masykur, "Metode Dalam Mencari Pengetahuan: Sebuah Pendekatan Rasionalisme Empirisme Dan Metode Keilmuan," *Tarbawi : Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 1 (2019).

<sup>18</sup> N Faizi, "Metodologi Pemikiran Rene Descartes (Rasionalisme) Dan David Hume (Empirisme) Dalam Pendidikan Islam," *Risalah, Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Studi Islam* 9, no. 3 (2023).

<sup>19</sup> Amalia Febri Yanti, Radea Yuli, and Hambali, "Aliran Rasionalisme Filsuf Abad Modern (Rene Descartes)," *Gunung Djati Conference Series* 19 (2023).

To obtain thorough findings, the researcher directly examines the background of the study material on Rationalism Epistemology from the viewpoint of Renen Descartes. It includes an analysis of its concepts, characteristics, and impact on the advancement of Western philosophy. Qualitative library research systematically collects and analyses data or materials about debates and issues. These materials are sourced from primary and secondary literature sources.

The data-collecting procedure involves gathering information from a range of published textual sources such as reference books, documentation materials, journals, scientific periodicals, theses, and other scientific works relevant to this analysis. The present study utilizes two distinct categories of data sources, specifically primary and secondary data sources. Primary sources refer to the primary data sources directly relevant to the study material in this research program. Secondary data sources refer to data originating from books and literature directly or indirectly applicable to the subject of inquiry.<sup>20</sup>

As for data analysis, researchers use several methodological steps as follows: Verstehen (understanding) method, which is a method with the object of human cultural values, symbols, thoughts, meanings and even social symptoms that are multiple, which helps understand the meaning contained in the concepts and thoughts of philosophers to revive the meaning contained in philosophical concepts. Also, the intellectual method is used to deeply analyze, universally, systematically, and comprehensively an object of discussion material.<sup>21</sup> Next, the author employs the interpretative approach to elucidate the concept of rationalism in Western philosophical thought.<sup>22</sup>

### **Source of Rationalism**

Rationalism is a linguistic term derived from the Latin word ratio, which denotes reason.<sup>23</sup> Rationalism originates from the English term rationalism, which refers to relying

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<sup>20</sup> Kaelan, *Metodelogi Penelitian Kualitatif Bidang Filsafat* (Yogyakarta: Paramadina, 2005). 149

<sup>21</sup> Kaelan. 67

<sup>22</sup> Moh. Nazir, *Metode Penelitian* (Jakarta: Ghalia Indonesia, 1998). 65

<sup>23</sup> Wahid Masykur, *Filsafat Umum: Dari Filsafat Yunani Kuno Ke Filsafat Modern* (Serang: A-Empat, 2021). 85

alone on reason to acquire and justify knowledge and truth without any intervention from other means.<sup>24</sup> Reason is regarded as the fundamental instrument for gaining comprehensive knowledge.<sup>25</sup> Rationalism is a philosophical perspective that asserts reason as the paramount instrument for obtaining information, with the ultimate truth residing in human judgment or rationality.<sup>26</sup> The acquisition of knowledge by reason is inherently dependent on the presence of ratios; without them, people would be unable to acquire knowledge.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, the primary purpose of the five human senses in the rationalist school of philosophy is to facilitate the pursuit of knowledge by reason. Regarded as the progenitor of contemporary philosophy, Descartes posits that the mind is the ultimate origin of all positive knowledge and legitimate truth. "Clearly" implies that an idea can be comprehended, but any evidence outside the mind cannot be relied upon. Therefore, we must seek facts from within humans from birth, primarily through reason.<sup>28</sup>

The epistemology of rationalism starts by questioning the integrity of information acquired by the human senses and previously accepted as accurate. It is the fundamental principle of the epistemological theory of rationalism, which is crucial for constructing its philosophy.<sup>29</sup> Scientific data demonstrates that the "I" in human existence may be deduced from the fact that humans perceive its existence. If humans cease to think, there is no substantiation of its existence. From doubting to comprehending, affirming, rejecting, willing, envisioning, and feeling, the notion of thinking in the sense of rationalism is quite expansive.<sup>30</sup> Although acquiring knowledge through the senses is questionable, even though it is seen as equivalent to animal knowledge, gaining knowledge about anything external to the self should originate from the mind rather than the senses.<sup>31</sup>

Recognized as the pioneer of contemporary rationalist philosophy, Rene Descartes posited that humans possess three inherent concepts. Throughout human history, three

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<sup>24</sup> Simon Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy, The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780198735304.001.0001>. 732

<sup>25</sup> Abdul Chalik, *Filsafat Ilmu* (Yogyakarta: Arti Bumi Intaran, 2015). 35

<sup>26</sup> Suaedi, *Pengantar Filsafat Ilmu* (Bogor: IPB Press, 2016). 7

<sup>27</sup> Suaedi.

<sup>28</sup> Asmadi, *Konsep Dasar Keperawatan* (Jakarta, n.d.). 88

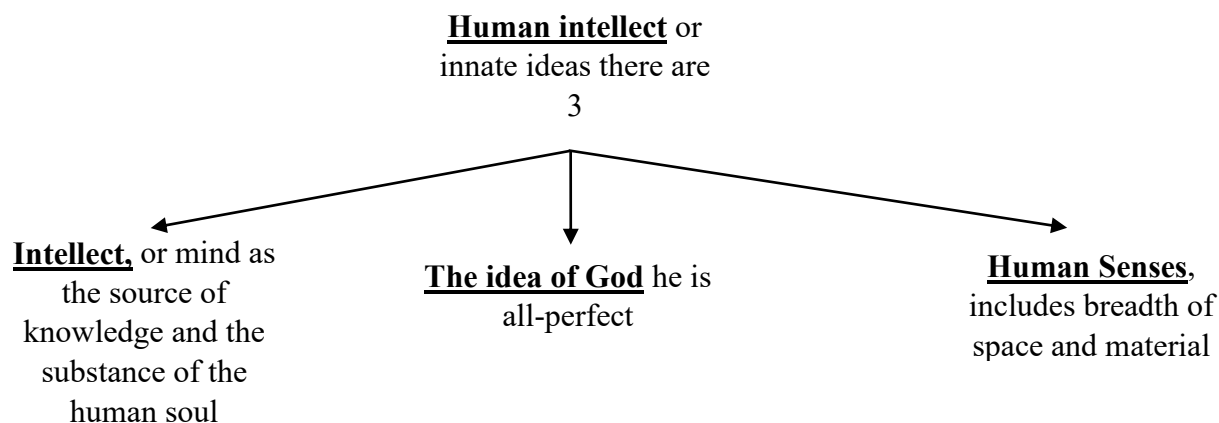
<sup>29</sup> SEKSAMA & IKAPI, *Pengantar Filsafat*. 111

<sup>30</sup> Bertrand Russell terj. Sigit Jatmiko dkk, *Sejarah Filsafat Barat Dan Kaitannya Dengan Kondisi Sosio-Politik Hingga Sekarang* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2020). 739

<sup>31</sup> Bertrand Russell terj. Sigit Jatmiko dkk. 742

fundamental concepts have persisted: reason and consciousness. Secondly, the belief in the perfection of God, and thirdly, the perception of the immense expanse of space and matter through the senses. Descartes deduced that all entities other than God have two fundamental components: the soul, which is essentially rationality or cognition, and matter, which is essentially spatiality or emptiness. However, as Descartes had previously questioned the existence of the world beyond the essence of the soul, particularly space or vastness and matter, he now encountered challenges in systematically and logically establishing the existence of God as an entirely flawless Being. According to Descartes, the sole justification for accepting reality based on the material world is that God would be misleading me if He revealed the concept of a sense that includes "space, extent, and matter" while nothing externally corresponds to it. However, it is unattainable for God, being a flawless entity, to fool humanity. That is to say, a tangible world exists outside the human soul. Therefore, Descartes established the world's reality by demonstrating God's existence.<sup>32</sup>

*Illustration 1, Sources of knowledge of rationalist*



### **Rationalism Method**

The integrity of the information and knowledge acquired by humans from birth is not assured, so it is necessary to subject everything to trial by scepticism. From a rational

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<sup>32</sup> SEKSAMA & IKAPI, *Pengantar Filsafat*. 112

perspective, the human body can be considered an illusion. However, the mind is not.<sup>33</sup> In his philosophy, Descartes introduced a mode of scepticism known as the doubt method, which involves questioning all beliefs, ideas, thoughts, and material obtained by the senses. He highlighted the possibility of erroneous reasoning behind any acquired knowledge. The sensory experience, the primary means of acquiring information, is frequently incorrect and misleading and should be questioned. Mere acceptance of the truth based there alone is insufficient. For instance, sensory perceptions experienced by an individual may be a form of hallucination, similar to the experiences encountered in dreams. Insufficient evidence exists to establish its impossibility. If a belief can be refuted, then its basis alone is inadequate. In this context, Descartes presents two arguments: the dream argument and the evil demon argument, suggesting that demons can fool individuals.<sup>34</sup>

In both dreaming and wake states, individuals undergo identical acts, and there is no assurance that the current reality they perceive as accurate is also a dream.<sup>35</sup> Descartes acknowledged that the setting of human dreams, however potentially implausible, frequently mirrors actual occurrences, postulating that individuals can possess a belief in them while they are awake and conscious. There is not enough justification to differentiate dream experiences from waking events.<sup>36</sup> As an illustration, consider an individual seated at a computer composing this essay. There is ample evidence to indicate that the act of writing this article is genuine, just as there is evidence to show that the events in the dream are genuine. Descartes observed that our reality is capable of generating concepts reminiscent of dreams. Nevertheless, in the concluding section of *The Meditations*, Descartes does conclude that it is possible to differentiate dreams from reality, at least retrospectively.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> SEKSAMA & IKAPI. 740

<sup>34</sup> Frank Garforth and Roger Scruton, "Modern Philosophy: An Introduction and Survey," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 43, no. 1 (1995), <https://doi.org/10.2307/3121767>. 33-36

<sup>35</sup> "Descartes: Selected Philosophical Writings," *Choice Reviews Online* 26, no. 07 (1989), <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.26-3838>.

<sup>36</sup> Jim Stone, "Dreaming and Certainty," *Philosophical Studies* 45, no. 3 (1984), <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00355443>. 353-368

<sup>37</sup> "Descartes: Selected Philosophical Writings."

Empirical evidence suggests that evil entities may manipulate human sensory perceptions.<sup>38</sup> Satan possesses high intelligence, astuteness, and immense power. He can meticulously construct a shallow reality that we mistakenly believe we inhabit.<sup>39</sup> Descartes' speculation, commonly called the Malicious Demon Hypothesis, arose from his realization that he could not rely on his most basic observations, prompting him to reexamine his beliefs.<sup>40</sup> Descartes contended that all the senses are fallible, as human senses are prone to falsehood. Therefore, his notion of the wicked demon possessing unlimited power must be genuine, as it can only be proposed by a being who is fully capable of deceiving humans and has any incentive to refrain from deceit.<sup>41</sup>

In the literary work "A Discourse on Method", René Descartes endeavours to determine the accurate approach to acquiring knowledge of whatever is attainable by the faculties of reason. He proposes four principles. The first is never to accept assertions that lack unambiguous knowledge of their truth as accurate, eliminating any basis for uncertainty. Secondly, each problem being studied should be broken down into as many components as required to develop a satisfactory solution. Thirdly, it guides the mind in a manner that induces organization, beginning with the subject's most essential and straightforward elements to be understood, enabling it to gradually ascend towards more intricate knowledge. Moreover, in every instance of problem research, ensure a comprehensive and meticulous accounting and assessment, ensuring that no aspect has been neglected or omitted.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Antti Revonsuo, *Consciousness: The Science of Subjectivity*, *Consciousness: The Science of Subjectivity*, 2009, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203859605>. 50-52

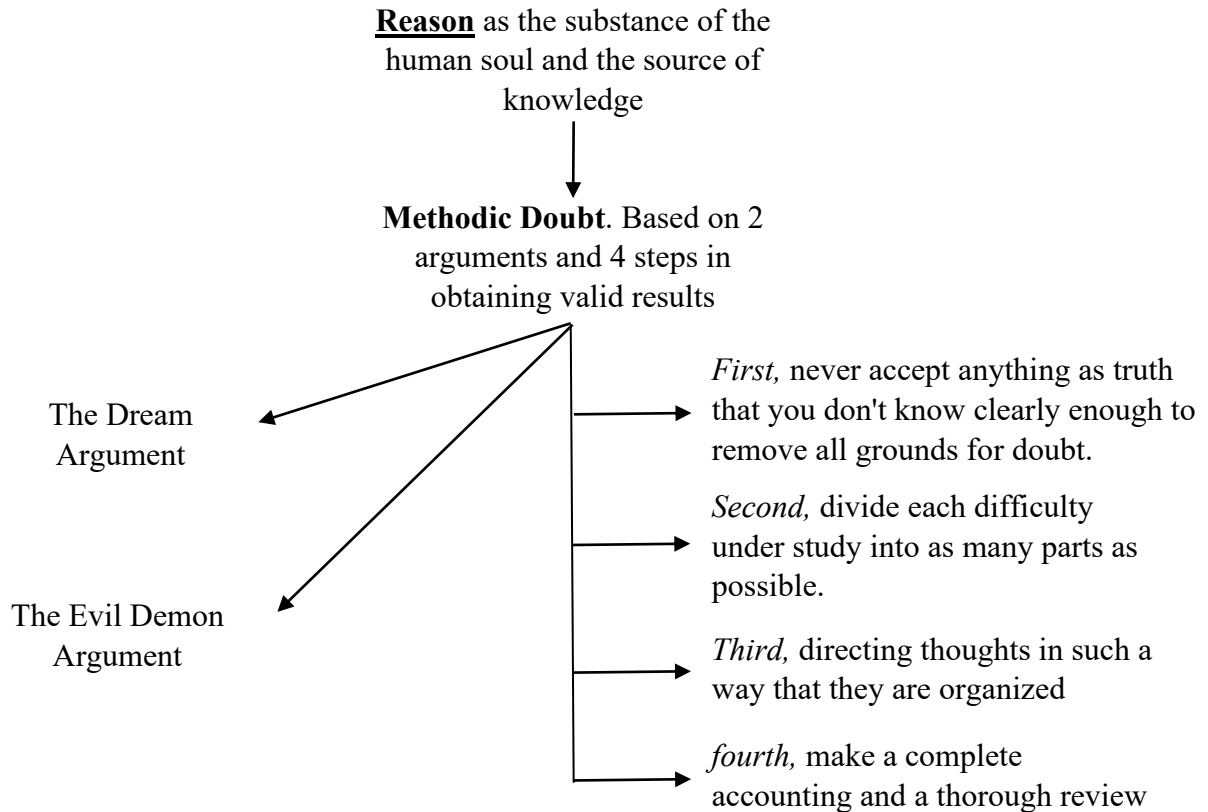
<sup>39</sup> Sir Roger Scruton, *Modern Philosophy: An Introduction and Survey* (London, England: Pimlico Books, 2012). 39-50

<sup>40</sup> M. C. Chung & M. E. Hyland, *History and Philosophy of Psychology* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012). 66

<sup>41</sup> Georges Dicker, *Descartes An Analytical and Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). 13

<sup>42</sup> Rene Descartes, *A Discourse on Method: Meditations and Principles*, ed. Veitch (London: Orion Publishing Group, 2004). 15

Illustration 2, Method of knowledge of rationalist epistemology



### Verification of Rationalism

Early rationalist thought processes included syllogistic reasoning as a means of obtaining knowledge through logical means. Syllogistic reasoning is founded on the notion that cognitive processes, independent of sensory perception, may alone acquire genuine truth. The experiential component serves as a mere substantiation for rationality.<sup>43</sup> The integrity of knowledge is established when the concepts expressed align with objective reality. The use of syllogistic deductive reasoning achieves rationalism.<sup>44</sup> A rationalist theory employed is the scientific method, characterized by a positive outlook.<sup>45</sup> Rational choice is constructed using deduction or verification techniques, which differ from the

<sup>43</sup> Choiriyah, "Rasionalisme Rene Descartes." Anterior Jurnal (No. 2, Juni 2014). 237-242

<sup>44</sup> dan Muliono W. Azwar, *Filsafat Ilmu: Cara Mudah Memahami Filsafat Ilmu* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2019). 119-120

<sup>45</sup> Mohammad Muslih, *Filsafat Ilmu* (Yogyakarta: Belukar, 2004).

inductive procedures used in traditional positivism. Observation and measuring activities constitute the basis for universal truths and rules derived from rational choice. Meanwhile, hypothesis testing against established hypotheses establishes a statement as untrue.<sup>46</sup>

The principles of logic proposed by Aristotle (384-322 BC) inform syllogistic reasoning in rational epistemology. A syllogism is a logical argument with three components: a central premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion.<sup>47</sup> Understanding, assertion, and reasoning are the three crucial stages that must be completed before constructing a syllogism.<sup>48</sup> The understanding stage refers to the cognitive process of abstracting external objects that the mind perceives, using the 10 categorical ideas proposed by Aristotle (384-322 BC). Substance, quantity, qualification, location relation, time, position, condition, active, and passive are the 10 notions. The fundamental idea is substance, while the remaining nine aspects are those that may coexist with substance.<sup>49</sup> The statement stage refers to the cognitive process of asserting statements derived from preexisting concepts. The proposition must encompass the components of the subject, the predicate, and the interrelation between them. Only from these aspects can a single understanding and truth emerge. To get an unambiguous comprehension, a proposal must consider five specific factors: species, genus, differentia, propium, and accidea. Reasoning is the cognitive process of deriving conclusions from the connections between premises, and syllogism occurs at this stage.<sup>50</sup>

Rationalism employs the method of proof by deduction and excludes the use of proof by induction. Deduction is deriving conclusions from general conditions to more precise, specific results.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, during its evolution, critical rationalists, like Karl Popper, maintain that a scientific assertion can be formulated if it can be verified by providing empirical data through scientific theories that adhere to systematic logic and if any flaws in

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<sup>46</sup> Dkk. Umar Suryadi Bakry, *Dasar-Dasar Hubungan Internasional Edisi Pertama, Hukum Perumahan*, 2021. 264

<sup>47</sup> Bertrand Russell terj. Sigit Jatmiko dkk, *Sejarah Filsafat Barat Dan Kaitannya Dengan Kondisi Sosio-Politik Hingga Sekarang*. 266

<sup>48</sup> A. Khudori Sholeh, *Filsafat Islam Dari Klasik Hingga Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2016). 221

<sup>49</sup> Rosamond Kent Sprague, "Aristotle: 'Categories' and 'De Interpretatione' . J. L. Ackrill," *Classical Philology* 60, no. 2 (1965), <https://doi.org/10.1086/365008>.

<sup>50</sup> A. Khudori Sholeh, *Filsafat Islam Dari Klasik Hingga Kontemporer*. 221-222

<sup>51</sup> Deduction & Induction, Research Methods Knowledge Base

the statement can be tested exhaustively. Thus, from the perspective of critical rationalism, reason necessitates empirical experimental methods.<sup>52</sup> Statements that have undergone testing to identify mistakes, if they remain valid, will be considered scientific truths at the present moment.<sup>53</sup> Considering the ontological element, the development of deductive episteme in rationalism is analogous to August Comte's positivist doctrine (1798-1857 AD). Such resemblance is particularly evident in the methods employed to ascertain the veracity and fallacy of a theory, namely through observation.

Furthermore, rationalism and positivism diverge in their epistemic approach to deduction. Rationalism posits the existence of a fundamental consistency in all natural and social phenomena defined as patterns of events.<sup>54</sup> From the perspective of critical rationalism, the theory is not derived from observation but instead serves to ascertain the truth about reality. Though theories without demonstrated faults after testing are provisionally acknowledged, they are not considered accurate.<sup>55</sup>

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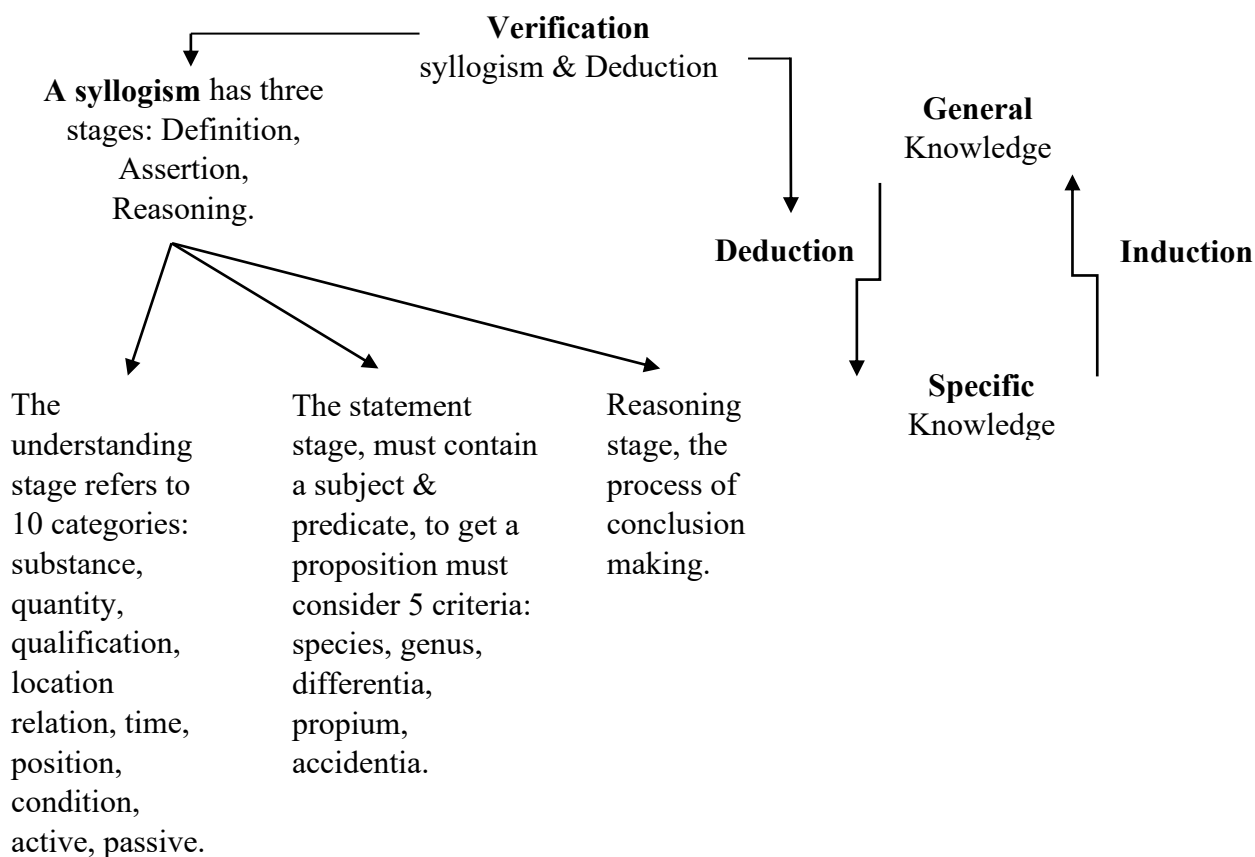
<sup>52</sup> Ibda Hamidulloh, *Filsafat Umum Zaman Now* (Pati: CV. Kataba Group, 2018). 138

<sup>53</sup> Juhnny Ibrahim Jonandi Effendi, "Metode Penelitian Hukum: Normatif Dan Empiris," *Depok : Pranandamedia Group*, 2018. 5

<sup>54</sup> M. R. Bustami dkk., *Islamic Social Science Research Methodology* (Malang: Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, 2021). 40

<sup>55</sup> M. R. Bustami dkk. 41

Illustration 3, Verification of knowledge of rationalist epistemology



### Discussion

Rationalism's advent signifies a pivotal moment in the Western history of philosophy since the philosophical movement led by Descartes serves as the precursor to the contemporary Renaissance period in its evolution.<sup>56</sup> The genesis of rationalism can be traced back to the aspiration to liberate oneself from conventional scholastic thought and to challenge the prevailing authority of the religious dogma of the church. Descartes and Western society seek a new cognitive framework to discover objective truths, which requires a clear starting point, which can be identified in the foundation of his thinking. This starting point is rational thinking and scepticism towards all the truths of religious

<sup>56</sup> Kuswandi and Ofianto, "Pengembangan Ilmu Pengetahuan Dalam Konsep Rasionalisme Empirisme : Perspektif Historis Dan Epistemologis." *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, (Vol. 7 No. 3 Tahun 2023)

dogma (church) and the existing state of affairs, as exemplified by his renowned adage cogito ergo sum (I think then I exist). Departing from uncertainty, one evaluates the truth to gain certainty. During the early modern age, the Western world resuscitated the intricacies of logical reasoning.<sup>57</sup> This historical fact validates the inability of religious doctrine (church) to address the prevailing issues of that period effectively. Western civilization started to exhibit anti-religious sentiments, and rationalism raised scepticism about the applicability of different metaphysical perspectives to reality.

The logical outcome of his perspective is that the authority of the ratio (reason) is the origin of all knowledge, with objective criteria of truth derived from logical intellect. Indirectly, it implies that it has streamlined and instead restricted the variety of knowledge sources and the scope of reality. Indeed, reality extends beyond the tangible realm and is not just apprehended by the faculties of rationality but also encompasses other realms, such as the soul and mental notions. It implies that more facts are not amenable to approach by the logical principle of rational syllogism, as stated by Suhrawardi. Notwithstanding its adherence to sensible and empirical principles, it is inherently incapable of elucidating or attaining empirical existence beyond the confines of the mind, such as phenomena of colour, taste, smell, or shadow. Consequently, a syllogism cannot uncover all states or things well-defined as empirical.<sup>58</sup>

Syllogism often leads its followers to a strictly binary mode of thinking, characterized by faith denial, wrong and right. This mode tends to generalize and determine the truth based on widely-accepted facts or events.<sup>59</sup> Within the realm of social realities, various shades of grey, red, green, and yellow exist between black and white ideologies. Similarly, between wrong and right, there is wisdom, and between faith and doubt, there are hypocrites, wicked individuals, and so forth. As an elementary illustration, deductive thinking can result in inaccuracies when formulating conclusions. At one point in history, a census taker meticulously documented the names of all the male heads of families in a

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<sup>57</sup> Muhammad Bahar Akkase Teng, "Orientalis Dan Orientalisme Dalam Perspektif Sejarah," *Jurnal Ilmu Budaya* 4, no. 1 (2016).

<sup>58</sup> A. Khudori Sholeh. 227

<sup>59</sup> A. Khudori Sholeh. 228

village in Wales. The first respondent was identified as Williams, followed by another individual named Williams, and then a third, a fourth, and a fifth. Ultimately, he remarked, "I find it tedious that everyone adopts the name Williams. I shall affix this name to all of them and conclude my work." However, he was mistaken in noting that an individual named John Jones was at that location. Not all of them were named Williams. Bacon further said that such occurrences demonstrate the potential for falls into fallacy when we, too, uncritically embrace this mode of thinking.<sup>60</sup>

Moreover, Bacon and John Stuart Mill have delivered a critique of the logical principle of Aristotle's syllogism. They argue that the specific conclusion should be derived from the general statement. In this case, the conclusion is implicitly stated in the general statement, known as the major premise. If the central premise does not exist, then the syllogism is rendered futile, as something that does not exist will not give rise to something new. Similar to Suhrawardi's critique of rationalism, it is evident that rationalism cannot inherently generate novel knowledge. The logic of syllogism, which asserts that the character factors must determine the characteristics of something<sup>61</sup>

Russell argues that syllogism, as the foundational system of formal logic, is not entirely incorrect; in fact, it holds significant importance and value. Yet, if formal logic is considered to be the culmination rather than the initial stage, it is susceptible to three types of criticism: first, inherent flaws in the system itself; second, an overestimation of the syllogism about other forms of deductive reasoning, since in mathematics, which is entirely deductive, the syllogism is hardly ever employed. Thirdly, the excessive emphasis on deduction thinking raises the question of ascertaining the fundamental premise from which it is derived. Aristotle's logic of the rule of causality asserts that everything, except the *prima causa*, cannot be considered independent from the law of cause and effect. The

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<sup>60</sup> Bertrand Russell terj. Sigit Jatmiko dkk, *Sejarah Filsafat Barat Dan Kaitannya Dengan Kondisi Sosio-Politik Hingga Sekarang*. 713-714

<sup>61</sup> A. Khudori Sholeh, *Filsafat Islam Dari Klasik Hingga Kontemporer*. 227

concept of *causa prima* refers to a fundamental reason that originates independently of any other causal elements. However, the precise origin of this concept cannot be confirmed.<sup>62</sup>

Within Islamic academia, rationalism and Burhani share similarities, but the distinction is in Burhani's perspective on interpreting religious texts in Islam, namely the Qur'an and hadith. Rather than dismissing the book as religious dogma, Burhani seeks a rational foundation to support revelation and regards it as a divine gift on equal footing with reason. For instance, Al-Ghazali (1058-1111 AD) acknowledged reason as the paramount aspect in human beings that can significantly enhance human existence, establish patterns, and methodically structure life. Moreover, reason is categorized into two types based on capacity and maturity: practical and theoretical. Practical reason stimulates emotions and motivates physical actions to do their desired tasks. Theoretical reason refers to the cognitive ability of humans to acquire knowledge. Therefore, the human inclination to seek knowledge is an outcome of the mental process of theoretical reason, which aims to refine its intangible and conceptual nature.<sup>63</sup>

Both Islam and the Western world regard reason as a crucial and indispensable capacity within individuals. Considering the perspective of Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938 AD), he praises reason but does not possess the authority to elevate reason to a deity like rationalists. According to Iqbal, religion necessitates intellectual explanation for its validation. If religion cannot be substantiated by reasonable means, it will eventually fade into obscurity. Intellectual capacity is one of the human faculties necessary for comprehending religion, although not the sole one.<sup>64</sup> It still requires the assistance of other faculties to facilitate its understanding.

Conversely, he perceives reason as highly astute and must exercise caution. It is the domain where people must harness an additional capacity, namely intuition, representing rationality's pinnacle. In Islam, intellectual capacity is called *Irfani*, the amalgamation of

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<sup>62</sup> Bertrand Russell terj. Sigit Jatmiko dkk, *Sejarah Filsafat Barat Dan Kaitannya Dengan Kondisi Sosio-Politik Hingga Sekarang*. 267-270

<sup>63</sup> Terj. Zakaria Adhan, *Wasiat Imam Al-Ghazali* (Jakarta: Darul Ulum Press, 1993). 72

<sup>64</sup> Syarif Hidayatullah, "Epistemologi Pemikiran Sir Muhammad Iqbal," *Jurnal Filsafat* 24, no. 1 (2018). 101

rationality and intuitive intuition. The acquisition of knowledge alone by reason is insufficient and fails to attain the truth. Consequently, combining both methods is necessary to gain a more comprehensive and profound understanding.<sup>65</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In philosophy, rationalism asserts that reason is the primary instrument for obtaining knowledge and that the ultimate truth is found in human reason or ratio. 1) The epistemology of rationalism starts by questioning the integrity of any objective knowledge acquired by human senses and previously regarded as the truth. 2) While regulated by logical and empirical principles, rationalism is inherently incapable of elucidating or attaining empirical existence beyond the confines of the mind, such as phenomena related to colour, taste, smell, or shadow. 3) Syllogism often leads followers to rigid and unequivocal thinking, and deductive reasoning can result in mistakes when making conclusions. Instances like these demonstrate that we can make mistakes if we depend too heavily on this mode of thinking.

The constraint of this study is in the overarching topic of the theory of rationalism, which scholars have extensively examined. However, there is a surprising lack of detailed exploration from an epistemological perspective, save from a general debate. As a comprehensive theory, rationalism established the fundamental principles of contemporary philosophy during the emergence of Western philosophy in the Renaissance period. Recommendations for future researchers include enhancing the analysis of rationalism to address its limitations in elucidating certain facets of reality that are not readily comprehensible through pure reason, such as the reality of colour and taste. Additionally, it is advisable to delve deeper into the epistemology of rationalism using more engaging methodologies to supplement this study's deficiencies and further diversify research endeavours.

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<sup>65</sup> Hery Prasetyo Laoli, "Eksistensi Tuhan Dalam Pandangan Suhrawardi Dan Mulla Shadra," *Aqlania* 13, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.32678/aqlania.v13i2.6443>.

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