

Lichtenberg's Point

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Abstract

I argue that when Lichtenberg recommends saying “It is thinking” instead of “I am thinking”, he is not suggesting that thought might be a subjectless occurrence. His point is, rather, that we are often the *passive* subject or medium of our thoughts. I further argue that Descartes’ *cogito* argument is not affected by this point, because Descartes does not claim that we must be the active subject of all our thoughts. Moreover, I suggest that the *cogito* argument operates with the notion of a qua-object: It consists in the move from “I am thinking” to “I-qua-thinking am”. Seen in this way, the *cogito* argument by itself leaves entirely open what might be true of me insofar as I am *not* thinking.

Keywords

Descartes, Lichtenberg, cogito argument, res cogitans