

The background features a blue-toned anatomical illustration of a human face in profile, facing right. Overlaid on the face are several geometric diagrams. A large triangle is formed by dashed lines, with vertices labeled 'A' at the top, 'B' on the right, and 'C' at the bottom. A vertical line segment 'B' is also shown on the right side. Other smaller diagrams include a circular diagram with points labeled 'H', 'G', 'F', 'E', 'D', 'C', 'B', 'A' and numbers '1' through '8'. There are also various lines and points scattered across the face, suggesting a complex geometric or philosophical diagram related to the text.

# Introduction to Philosophy

Descartes 5: Mind-Body Dualism

Jeremy Dunham

# The *Meditations*



► Epistemology

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- ▶ Epistemology
- ▶ Metaphysics

# The Mind-Body Distinction

## The Argument from Doubt

*(Discourse on Metaphysics (AT VI 32-3: CSM I 127))*

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*What is wrong with the argument?*

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1. P1) Lois Lane Loves Superman

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2. P2) Lois Lane does not Love Clark Kent

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# The Mind-Body Distinction

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*What is wrong with the argument?*

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2. P2) Lois Lane does not Love Clark Kent
3. C) Superman is not Clark Kent

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- ▶ Features **representational content** which is 'aspectual'

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## The Argument from Clear and Distinct Perceptions

- ▶ **Meditation 2** C&D idea of the *essence* of the mind
- ▶ **Meditations 2,5 &6** C&D idea of the essence of matter (Extended in space, i.e. possesses shape and size & capable of motion & change)
- ▶ **Meditations 3 & 4** come to 'know that everything that we clearly and distinctly understand is true in a way which corresponds exactly to our understanding of it.'

# C&D Argument

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- ▶ 'I know that everything which I clearly and distinctly understand is capable of being created by God so as to correspond exactly with my understanding of it. Hence the fact that I can clearly and distinctly understand one thing apart from another is enough to make me certain that the two things are distinct, since they are capable of being separated, at least by God' (7: 78)

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- ▶ 'Mind can be perceived clearly and distinctly, or sufficiently so for it to be considered as a complete thing, without any of those forms or attributes by which we recognize that body is a substance... and body is understood distinctly and as a complete thing without those which pertain to mind (7: 223)

# C&D Argument

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3. If I clearly and distinctly understand the possibility that  $x$  exists apart from  $y$ , and  $y$  apart from  $x$ , then God can bring it about that  $x$  and  $y$  do exist in separation.

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4. If God can bring it about that  $x$  and  $y$  exist in separation, then  $x$  and  $y$  can exist apart and hence, by (1) they are distinct.

# C&D Argument

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1. I can clearly and distinctly understand the possibility of  $x$  and  $y$  existing apart from each other, if there are attributes  $F$  and  $G$ , such that I clearly and distinctly understand that  $F$  belongs to the nature of  $x$ , and that  $G$  belongs to the nature of  $y$ , and that  $F$  does not equal  $G$ , and I clearly and distinctly understand that something can be a complete thing if it has  $F$  even if it lacks  $G$  (or has  $G$  and lacks  $F$ ).

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2. Where  $x$  is myself and  $y$  is body, thought and extension satisfy the conditions on  $F$  and  $G$  respectively.
3. Hence, I am really distinct from my body and can exist without it.

# Objections

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- ▶ 'How does it follow, from the fact that he is aware of nothing belonging to his essence, that nothing else does in fact belong to it'? (7:199)
- ▶ Descartes does not claim to have a **complete** conception of mind and body, but a **sufficient** conception

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## The Divisibility Argument

**If  $x$  is  $F$  and  $y$  is  $\neg F$  then  $x \neq y$**

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1. P1) The body is by its very nature divisible

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1. P1) The body is by its very nature divisible
2. P2) The mind is indivisible

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## The Divisibility Argument

1. P1) The body is by its very nature divisible
2. P2) The mind is indivisible
3. P3) No one thing can be both divisible and indivisible ( $F$  &  $\neg F$ )

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1. P1) The body is by its very nature divisible
2. P2) The mind is indivisible
3. P3) No one thing can be both divisible and indivisible ( $F$  &  $\neg F$ )
4. C) There is a real distinction between the mind and the body

**If  $x$  is  $F$  and  $y$  is  $\neg F$  then  $x \neq y$**

# Problems for Mind-Body Dualism

## Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655)

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- ▶ How can a body be moved except by another body?
- ▶ Descartes' response: 'The whole problem contained in such question arises simply from a supposition that is false and cannot in any way be proved, namely that, if the soul and the body are two substances whose nature is different, this prevents them from being able to act on each other' (AT VII 213: CSM II 275).



# Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia (1618-1680)











# The Argument for Materialism

Papineau, 2002 'Thinking about Consciousness'

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- ▶ **The Hard Problem of Consciousness**

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- ▶ `philosophers share the general human weakness for explanations of what is incomprehensible in terms suited for what is incomprehensible in terms suited for what is familiar and well understood, though entirely different (Nagel, 435)

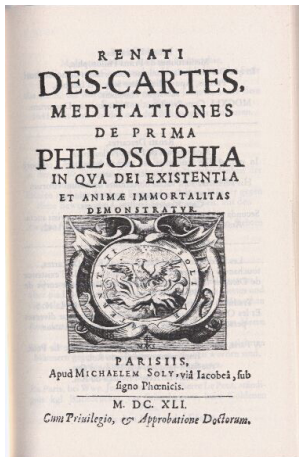


# Descartes' Problem



- ▶ There are mental properties and there are physical properties and we have no clear understanding of the relationship between the two

# The End of the *Meditations*: What's Changed?



# Reading

## 1. THIS WEEK: Descartes' *Meditations* MEDITATIONS 6

# Reading

1. THIS WEEK: Descartes' *Meditations*  
MEDITATIONS 6
2. NEXT WEEK: Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* SECTION 2 & 3  
([www.earlymoderntexts.com](http://www.earlymoderntexts.com))