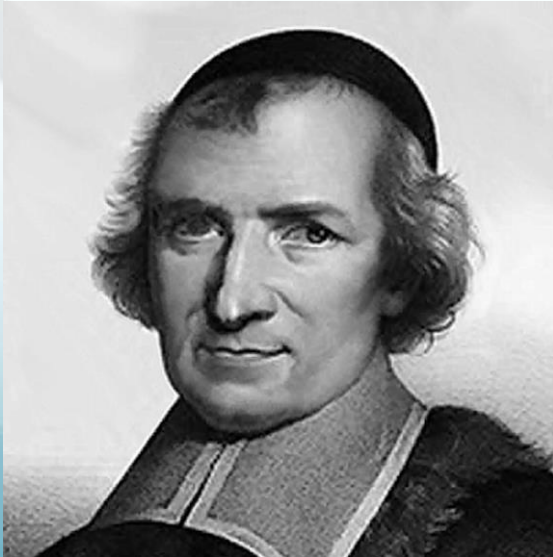


Arnauld vs. Descartes' Theory of Dualism

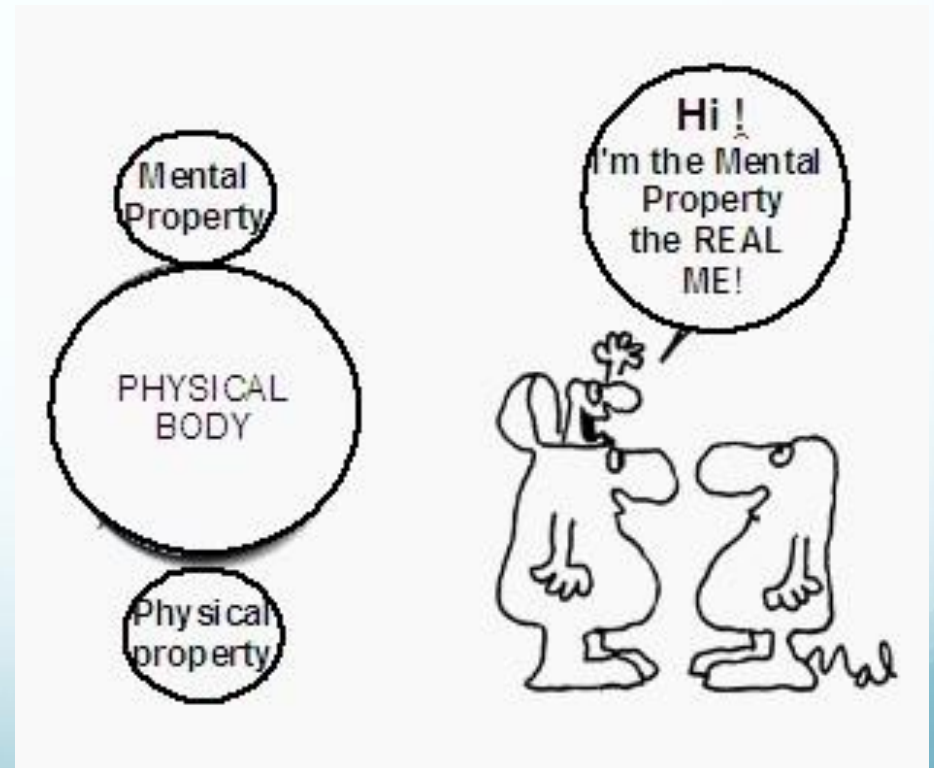


vs.



Dualism

- Descartes' Theory is called Dualism
 - Believes Mind and Body are distinct substances
- Bodies: mechanical, physical objects
- Minds: for thinking, non-physical objects

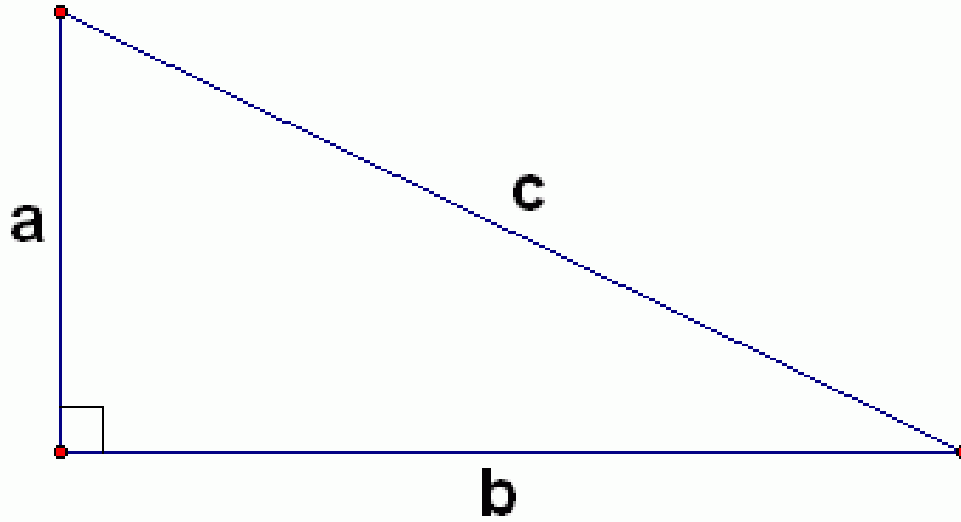


Descartes' Thought Process for Dualism

- Soul is same thing as the mind
- Believes mind and body to be clearly separate
- Whatever can clearly be seen as separate, can be separated by God and therefore must really be distinct
- Thus, Mind and Body are separate

Arnauld's Response

- Uses Pythagorean Theorem

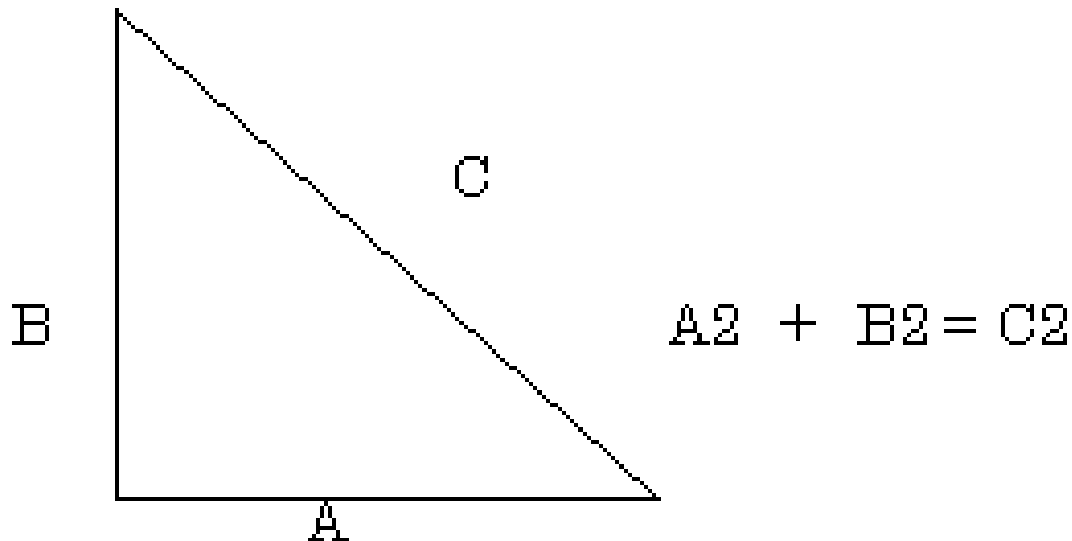


$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$

- Important: Arnauld is showing the possibility that Descartes is wrong. He is just saying that Descartes may not have a complete understanding of the mind

Arnauld's Argument

- Take, for example, a person who is certain that the angle in a triangle is a right angle, but is not certain that the squares of the sides are equal to the square of the hypotenuse
- He knows that it is right-angled, but doesn't know $a^2+b^2=c^2$



Arnauld's Triangle

- Certain that a right angle exists, but the ratio of sides is unknown
- In Arnauld's words:
 - “I do not see any possible reply here, except that the person in this example does not clearly and distinctly perceive that the triangle is right-angled. But how is my perception of the nature of my mind any clearer than his perception of the nature of the triangle? He is just as certain that the triangle has one right angle as I am certain that I exist because I am thinking.”
- Discrepancy over ratio of the sides shows similar discrepancy regarding knowledge of our minds

Arnauld's Thinking

- “Although I clearly and distinctly know my nature to be something that thinks, may I, too, not perhaps be wrong in thinking that nothing else belongs to my nature apart from the fact that I am a thinking thing? Perhaps the fact that I am an extended thing may also belong to my nature.”
- Another way of saying, we may not have a complete understanding of the mind

Descartes' Faults

- Therefore because the person does not know the Pythagorean Theorem, if Descartes reasoning about the mind and body is legitimate, then the Pythagorean Theorem would **not** be essential to the triangle
- Pythagorean Theory can be proved essential
 - Pythagorean theory can be shown to be mathematically significant in this triangle
- Thus, Descartes argument is deemed faulty

Descartes Responds to Arnauld

- Descartes' Response:
 - Pythagorean Theorem is merely a property of the triangle, not a substance
 - Doesn't need to know Theorem in order to know the triangle
 - We can understand that the triangle is right angled without knowledge of the Pythagorean Theorem, but cannot know the Pythagorean Theorem stands true without knowledge of the angle

Descartes Responds to Arnauld

- Descartes agrees there must be some relationship among the sides
- Since we don't know the relationship, it cannot be said that there is a clear understanding of the triangle
 - Descartes believes our knowledge of the mind is complete
- But, what evidence could justify his claim that we have complete knowledge of the mind???

Descartes Response to Question

- Descartes says that, through introspection, the body is not essential to the mind because the mind can be understood without the body
- Descartes believes knowledge of mind is complete, so mind and body distinction is successful
- Arnauld wonders if our knowledge of the mind is incomplete, so a link to the body cannot be ruled out

Conclusion

- Descartes believes in Dualism
 - Mind and Body are separate
- Arnauld uses Pythagorean Theorem example to show faults in Descartes argument
 - Says Mind and Body are not necessarily separate
- Descartes responds to Arnauld's arguments in three steps

Discussion Questions

- Do you think the mind and body are separate?
- Do you think Descartes has a complete understanding of the mind?
- Accept for a minute that we have a complete understanding of the mind – if someone were to have an injury to the brain, for example their hippocampus (plays key role in memory), then would this have any effect on the arguments presented previously?