

Minds and Bodies

Descartes, Hobbes, and Spinoza

Descartes's Dualism

Believes in complete separation of mind and body.

- “My ability clearly and distinctly to understand one thing without another suffices to make me certain that the one thing is different from the other, since they can be separated from each other, at least by God” (AW 64).

The Indivisibility of the Mind

- Argues that
 - DB1 Two things with different properties cannot be the same thing.
 - DB2 The mind is indivisible
 - DB3 The body is divisible
 - DBC The mind and body are different things
- Descartes seems to be falling into his own trap
 - How can the mind be tangibly divisible if Descartes defines it as intangible?
 - In first argument: “I consider that this power of imagining that is in me... is not required for my own essence, that is, the essence of my mind” (AW 62).
- “I consider that this power of imagining that is in me... is not required for my own essence, that is, the essence of my mind” (AW 62).

Descartes and the Problem of Interaction

Descartes attributes the link between the mind and body to:

- God

- Pineal Gland

- However, doesn't explain how immaterial becomes material.

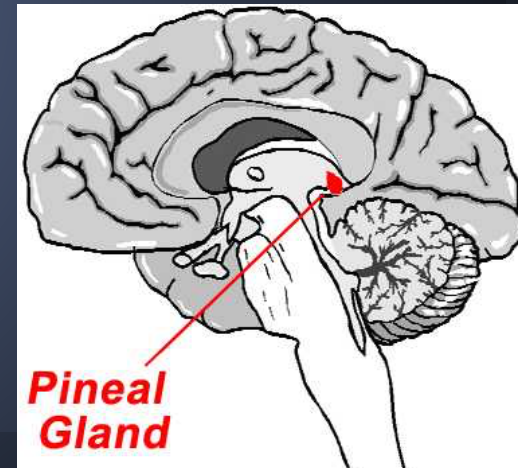
Descartes and the Pineal Gland

Descartes hypothesised that it is the “principal seat of the soul, and the place in which all our thoughts are formed.”

- However, one could argue that Descartes was not far off in his claim, since many sensations attributed to the “mind” or “soul” could plausibly be hormonal sensations.
- Isn't he agreeing with Hobbes?
 - not necessarily, since Descartes would argue that the pineal gland is only the *cause* of the sensations in the mind, not the mind itself. Recall the sound waves causing sound, but not existing *as* sound.

The Pineal Gland is responsible for making hormones

- However, the argument seems to contradict itself...



Potential Problems With Descartes

- "When I think about why it is that sight does not see itself and the intellect does not understand itself, it occurs to me that nothing acts on itself. Thus the hand or the tip of the finger does not strike itself and the foot does not kick itself... Why do you think that the eye can see itself in a mirror although it cannot see itself in itself?... It is because there is a space between the eye and the mirror, and the eye acts on the mirror, transmitting a semblance of itself onto it ... there is no hope of your knowing yourself" (Gassendi, 291-2).
- "It is however, easy to answer this by saying that it is not the eye which sees itself in the mirror rather than itself, but the mind alone that recognizes the mirror, the eye, and itself. Other counter-examples can also be cited in the realm of corporeal things: when a top turns itself round in the circle, is not the turning an action which it performs on itself?" (367)
- Descartes would likely respond by pointing out that all of Gassendi's examples refer to parts of the *body*; Descartes is claiming that the mind is exempt from bodily limitations.

Hobbes's Materialist Monism

- Issues about the spirit and Soul are meaningless
 - "As for the idea of my own self, if we are talking about my body, I get it from looking at my body. If we are talking about the soul, there is no idea of the soul at all. Rather, we deduce by reasoning that there is something internal to the human body, which gives it the animal motion by which it senses and moves. Whatever it is, we call it the 'soul', but without having any idea of it."
 - Contradicts notion of God
- Everything is about both Matter and Motion
 - If materialism holds true then the mind cannot be separated from the brain
 - If the Mind is a material thing then it makes sense that the mind correlates with the functionality of the brain
 - Brings us back to the idea that everything belongs to matter
- Hobbes was the first philosopher to present these ideas and they were created to answer the Body Mind Problem
 - Thoughts are just matter in motion

The Intentionality argument (Against Hobbes)

1. Certain types of mental states, such as hoping, believing, knowing, wishing, dreaming, etc., are intrinsically intentional.
2. However, no physical, purely material thing is intrinsically intentional.
3. Therefore, by Leibniz's Law, mental states such as hopes, wishes, desires, knowledge, etc., are nonphysical, immaterial in nature.
4. But the brain is purely physical in nature—it is a physical or material entity.
5. Therefore, mind and brain must be two different things. (<http://www.manyworldsoflogic.com/mindbody.html>)

Materialist Monists have countered this with the argument of the book

- The book is a purely physical object, however a book is about something
- Therefore it is both purely physical and intentional at the same time

The Zombie Argument

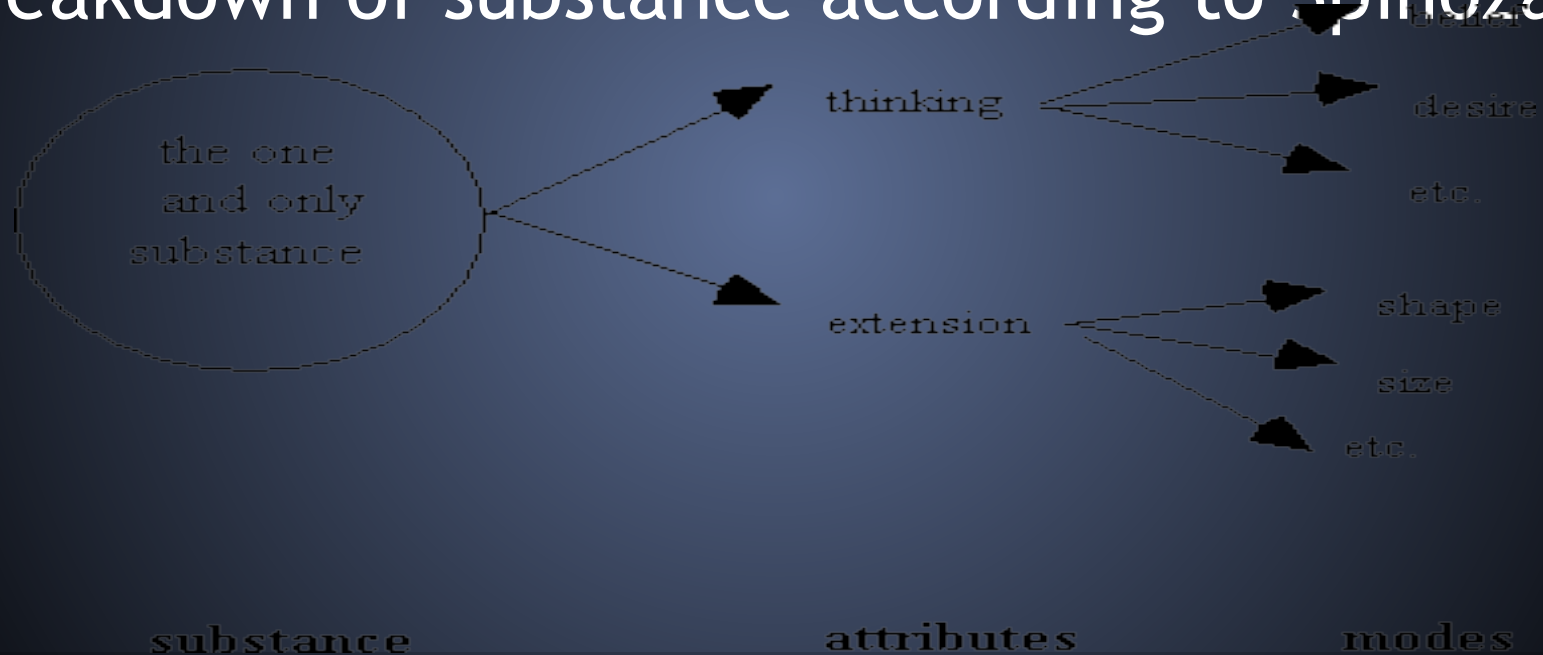
- Debunks Hobbesian thought
- Step 1: A zombie would be physically identical to a human, yet lack consciousness
- Step 2: There are no contradictions in describing a zombie therefore zombies are logically plausible
- Step 3: If zombies can plausibly exist, then consciousness is not purely material, therefore materialism is false
 - There are similarities within this argument to how Descartes views animals

Development of Zombie argument and other Model Arguments

- Zombie argument and others like this have developed in modern times
 - They account for technological advances as the human race develops
 - As the human race continues to develop it will be interesting to see how these affect philosophical thought
- Part of Hobbes failures have come from a lack of scientific knowledge
 - Hobbes was based in Galilean thought, yet was also limited by these very same thoughts
 - Hobbes sought to understand things that science just wasn't ready to explain

Spinoza's Substance

Breakdown of substance according to Spinoza



Spinoza's Single Substance

- ❖ Spinoza argues there is only one substance by arguing:
 - We can only compare distinct substances by comparing the different attributes of the substances or the different affections (modes) of the substances. (Pr. 4)
 - Substances can exist without attributes or modes (Pr. 1 & Def. 3)
 - If two substances have the same attributes then we can not distinguish them. So no two substances can exist with the same attributes. (Pr. 5)
 - Substance can exist without modes (Pr. 5) so if we disregard the modes of two substances we will not be able to distinguish them (Pr. 4). So there can only be one such substance.

Spinoza's Single Substance cont'd.

- ❖ If two substances have different attributes then they have nothing in common. (Pr. 2)
- ❖ If two substances are different one can not be the cause of the other. (Pr. 3) Therefore a substance must cause itself.
- ❖ No two substances can have the same attribute (Pr. 2), and substance must be finite or infinite, and a substance can only be limited by another substance of the same nature (Pr. 7), which can not exist, so the substance must be infinite. (Pr. 8)
- ❖ A substance can have two or more attributes (Pr. 10)
- ❖ So because a substance causes itself it must always contain all its attributes, and because there can not be two substances with the same attributes there must be a single substance with all the attributes.

Spinoza's Monism

- ❖ The mind and the body are made of “God” (nature)
- ❖ “The mind is united to the body... from the fact that the body is the object of the mind” (Ethics 2, Proposition 21)
- ❖ Spinoza thinks that the mind and the body are the same thing described from different perspectives.
- ❖ In the same way we can describe light in an aesthetic terms (colour) or through physical means $E=MC^2$, $c=\lambda\nu$
- ❖ Believes that the mind and body are simultaneous. The mind is an extension of the body, and the body is an extension of the mind.
- ❖ “The object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body- i.e., a definite mode of extension actually existing, and nothing else”

Mind Body

- “The mind is united to the body... from the fact that the body is the object of the mind”
- Descartes would probably argue that in saying this, Spinoza is clearly and distinctly perceiving the mind and body as separate, therefore classifying them as such.
- “The object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body”
- Spinoza responds by saying that the body is the mind. That we are not defining two different things but simply giving

Thoughts on Spinoza's Monism

- Spinoza creates his own definitions for substance, attributes, and modes
- By having his own definitions its easy for him to prove his points
- His views are similar to Hobbes but taken further
- Hobbes believes in Galilean physics while Spinoza believes in there being only one substance

The problems we found

- ❖ Descartes:
 - Contradicts his own definitions (Pineal Gland, mind's ability to imagine)
- ❖ Hobbes:
 - Has inherent contradictions within his arguments that contradict his own beliefs
 - Zombie argument and Intentionality Argument
 - Lack of scientific knowledge
- ❖ Spinoza:
 - Creates his own definitions to fit his argument, therein making it irrefutable unless one questions his definitions.