

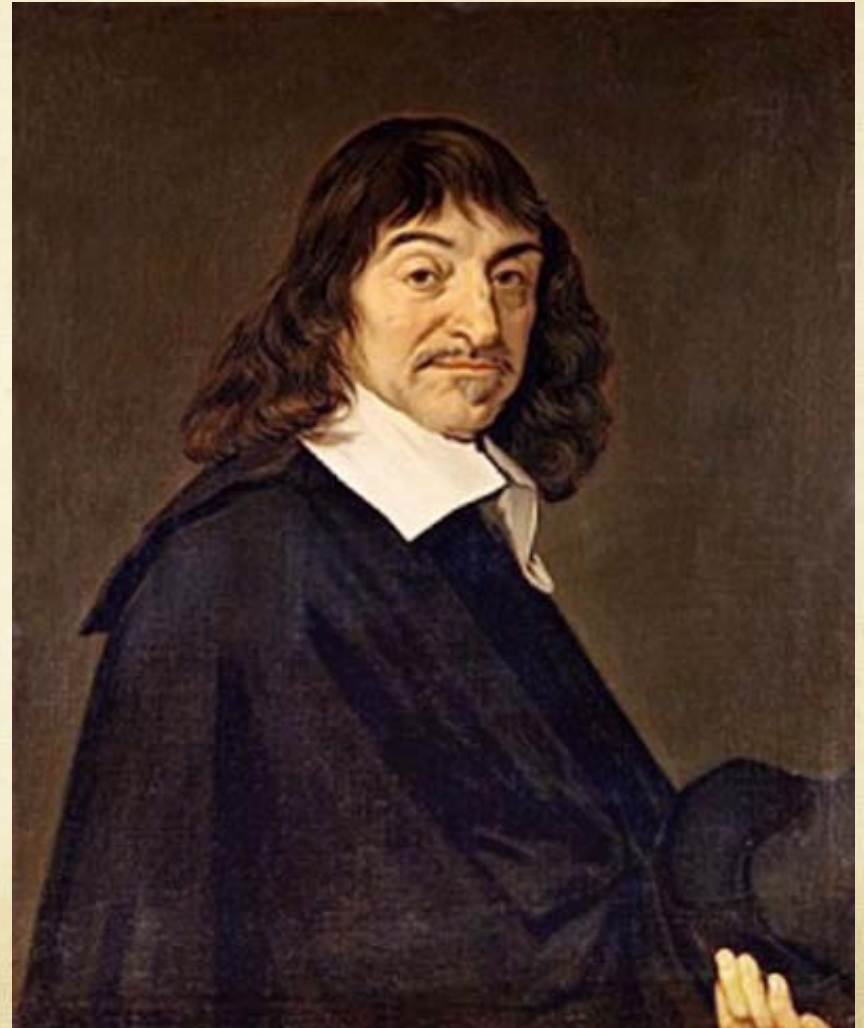


Descartes, On the Nature of Mind

Glory Bardin

cogito ergo sum and sum res cogitans

- The Meditator must eliminate all doubts until he finds certainty
- Recalling from previous meditation
 - what he sees does not exist
 - his memory is faulty
 - he has no sense
 - no body
 - extension, movement and place are false notions.



Does it now follow that I too do not exist?

- To have doubts, he must exist
- If the demon is deceiving him, he must exist to be deceived
- An "I" must exist that can doubt, be misled, so on
- *So after considering everything very thoroughly, I must finally conclude that this proposition, I am, I exist, is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived in my mind.*



Only a thing that thinks

- At first thought he had a soul
 - Nourishment
 - Moved
 - Sense
 - Think
 - Body
- All this has been cast into doubt, except his ability to think
- May exist without other attributes but cannot exist if he does not think
- Only exists as long as he is thinking
- Thought above all else is inseparable from being
- In the strictest sense, the Meditator is only a thing that thinks

Imagination

- The Meditator is also something that imagines an senses
- Can still imagine things
- Seems to hear and see things
- Sensory perceptions may be false but are a part of the same mind that thinks



The Wax

- Neither the senses nor the imagination can be trusted
- All the sensible qualities of the wax change when it is placed near the fire, but it is still the same wax
- This knowledge cannot come through the senses



The same wax?

- He can only know that the wax is extended, flexible, and changeable
- He does not come to know this through the senses
- Nor the imagination
- He knows the wax by reason alone
- His mental perception can be imperfect and confused or it can be clear and distinct



Conclusion of Second Meditation

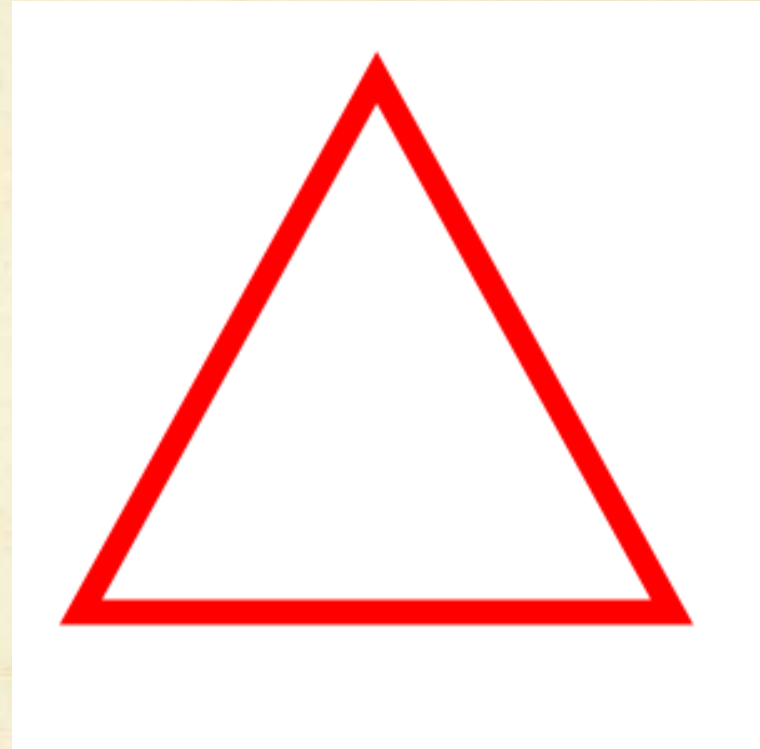
- The mind is far better at knowing than the body
- The Meditator understands the mind better than other things, including the body
- Every thought we have can be doubtful of the outside world but must with certainty confirm our own existence
- All clear perceptions come from reason alone and not from the senses or imagination

The existence of material things, and the real distinction between mind and body

- The Mediator accepts the strong possibility that material objects exist
- Two arguments:
 - One based on the faculty of the imagination
 - One based on the senses

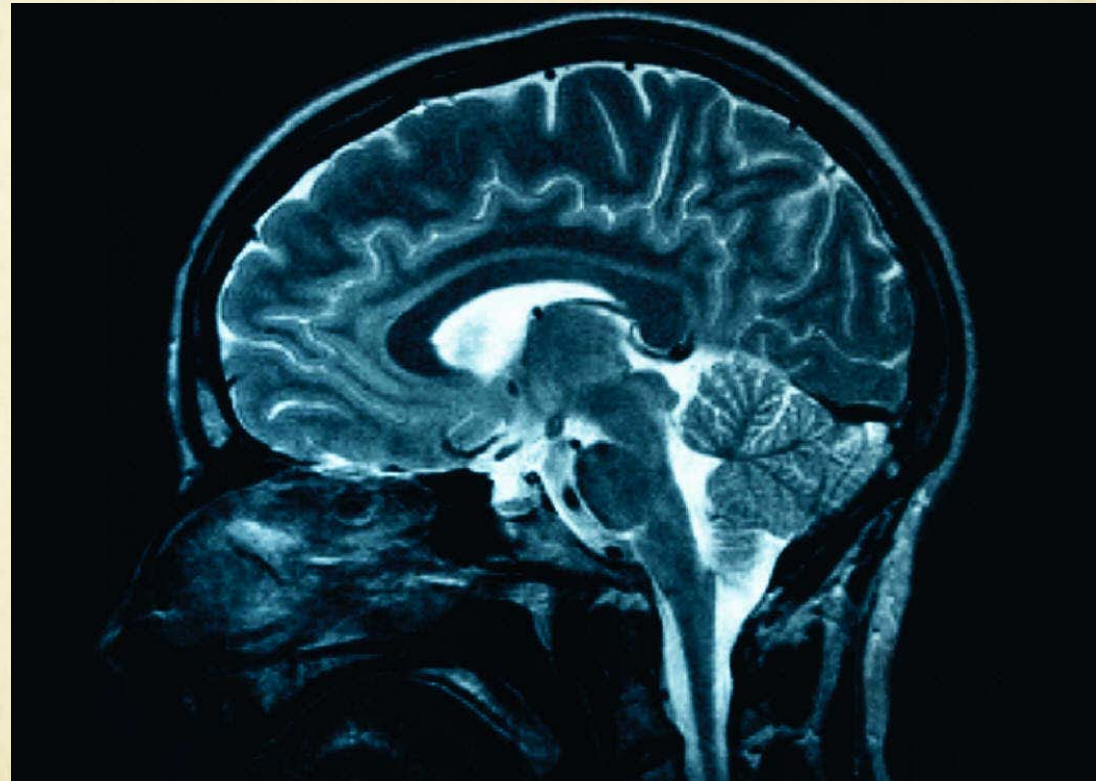
The Triangle

- Can perceive that a triangle is a three sided object
- Can also perceive these properties through use of the imagination
 - What about a 1000-sided figure?
 - A 999-sided figure?
- The pure understanding can perceive all the properties of a 1000-sided figure as easily as those of a triangle



The Imagination and the Body

- Imagination cannot be an essential property of the mind
- So the imagination must rely on something other than the mind for its existence
- The Meditator decides the imagination is connect with the body
- In understanding, the mind turns inward upon itself, in imagining, the mind turns outward towards the body

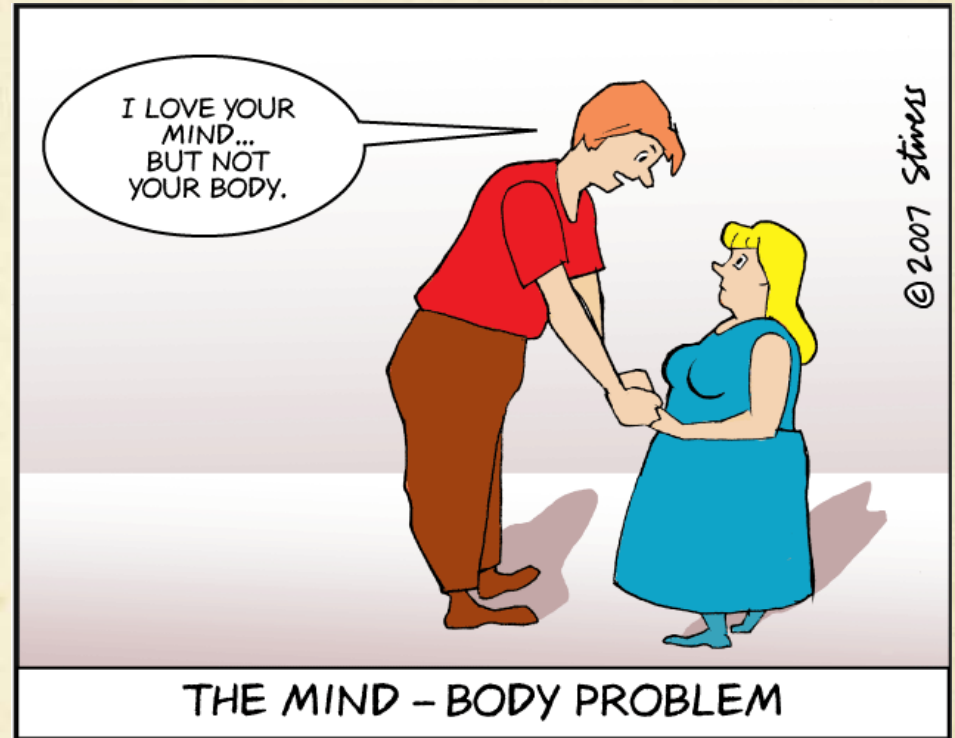


Perception

- The Meditator perceives he has a body that exists in a world
 - His body can experience pleasure, pain, hunger, and so on
 - Can perceive other bodies
- Supposes these perceptions all come from an outside source
- They come involuntarily and are more vivid than perceptions created in his own mind

Mind-Body Dualism

- The Meditator is inclined by nature to assume things about his body and the external world since they are so immediately accepted
- Body is extended and mind is non-extended, so he concludes that he is distinct from his body and could exist without it
- Doubting the material existence in his First Meditation, the Meditator now feels confident enough to not doubt them entirely, although may doubt how they are made up



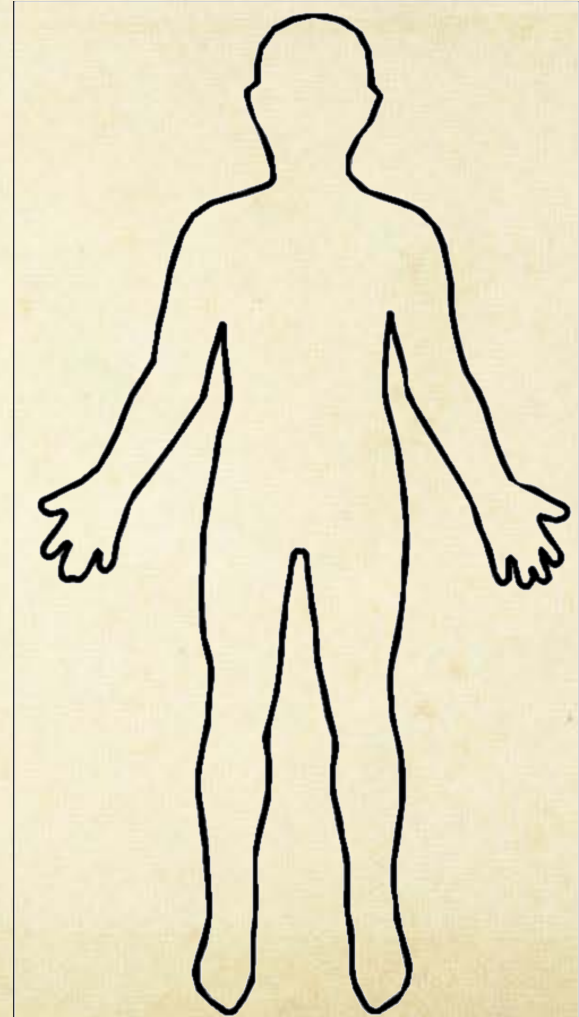
God, the Deceiver?

- Imagination and sensory perception are modes of thought and are non essential to him
- Sensory perception must have an active cause that resides outside of the Meditator
- Could be God
- God would not have misled the Meditator in thinking there are material objects when there are not
- Concludes material objects must exist, although his perceptions of them may not be perfect



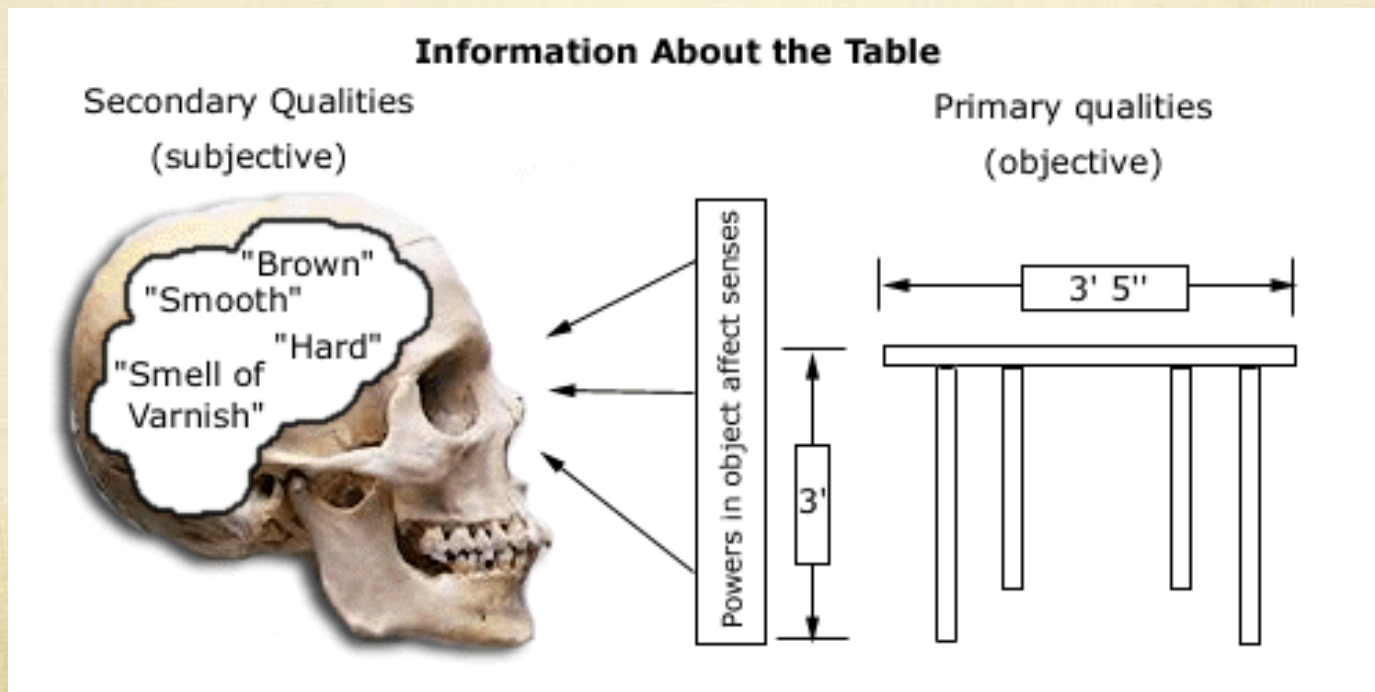
Mind and Body

- The Meditator reasons he must have a body
- Mind and body are integrated to form one unit
- He feels sensations sharply as if his mind itself, not the body, were suffering
- Confusion arises because the mind cannot separate itself from the body



Primary and Secondary Qualities

- Certain claims about material things he is not justified in making
- Senses are meant only to inform us what is beneficial or harmful
- Cannot expect them to also inform us of the *true* nature of things that are perceived



Conclusion

- Often make mistakes about what is harmful or beneficial to us
- While the body is divisible, the mind is indivisible
- There are different faculties of the mind but not different parts
- Sometimes the body is incapable of sending the right messages to the mind
- Since God is not a deceiver, the Meditator is safe as long as he applies his mind carefully