

PHIL 255  
**Week 2: Dualism**  
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 electronics.

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Arguments for  
 dualism.



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## What is Reality?

**Monism:** There is only one kind of existence.

Materialism: only matter/energy.

Idealism: only mind.

Neutral: basis of both matter & mind.



**Dualism:** There are two kinds of existence: Matter  
 and mind (spirit).

**Pluralism:** There are more than two kinds of  
 existence.

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## Dualism



Dualism: you consist of both a mind and a body.  
 Bodies are mechanisms, but minds are not.

Descartes' doubt argument: You can doubt that you  
 have a body, but not that you have mind. So you  
 are essentially a mind, not a body.

Descartes' divisibility argument: Bodies are divisible,  
 but minds are not, so minds are not physical.

Leibniz's law: if two things have different properties,  
 then they are not identical.

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## Appeal of Dualism

Minds can be immortal; fit with religion.

Minds can have free will, independent of physical  
 laws.

Minds make people better than animals.

Minds have morality.

Problem: need evidence, not wishful thinking.



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## Super argument for Dualism

Dualism can explain:

1. Life after death experiences
2. Sense of freedom
3. Sense of morality
4. Consciousness
5. Parapsychology



Science cannot explain 1-5.

Hence dualism should be accepted as the best (most coherent) explanation of the evidence.

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## Critique of Dualism



Science can explain:

1. Life after death experiences: brain process/wishful thinking
2. Sense of freedom: ignorance of brain processes
3. Sense of morality: emotions
4. Consciousness: complex brain process
5. Parapsychology: fraud, incompetence

Dualism cannot explain how a non-physical mind and a physical body interact.

Simplicity: only matter/energy exists, not spirit.

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## Discussion Question

What do you find most plausible: monism, dualism, or pluralism?

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## Defense of Dualism



Substance dualism (two kinds of thing) vs property dualism (mental properties are not identical to physical properties).

Leibniz's law: X and Y are identical if and only if they have the same properties.

mind		thinking	aboutness (intentionality)	phenomenal (what it's like)	directly known
matter	spatial				

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## Intensional fallacy



- 1) My mind is known with certainty.
- 2) No physical thing is known with certainty.
- 3) So mind is not physical.

But properties of knowledge do not work with Leibniz's law, e.g. Lady Gaga.

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## Explanatory Gaps

Dualism cannot explain consciousness, language, etc.

Qualia: qualitative experiences, e.g. what it's like to be happy, see red, taste beer, etc.

Response: life used to seem to be beyond material explanation (vital force - *élan vital*), but now we know it results from mechanisms: metabolism, cell division, genetics, reproduction, etc.

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## Modal Argument

1. I can imagine my mind without a body.
2. So it is possible I am a mind without a body.
3. So my mind is different from a body.

Response: Imagination is no guide to reality, e.g. I can imagine that lightning isn't electricity and that water isn't H<sub>2</sub>O.

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## Inverted Spectrum

1. We can imagine two people with same brain processes but different qualia, e.g. blue vs. red.
2. So qualia aren't brain processes.

Response: Imagination is no guide to reality, e.g. I can imagine that lightning isn't electricity and that water isn't H<sub>2</sub>O.

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## Zombie Argument

1. We can imagine beings with bodies just like us but without consciousness (zombies).
2. So consciousness is not a bodily process.

Response: Imagination is no guide to reality, e.g. I can imagine that lightning isn't electricity and that water isn't H<sub>2</sub>O.

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## Knowledge Argument

1. Imagine Mary who knows everything about brain processes but has never experienced red.
2. When she becomes able to see red, she knows something she didn't before.
3. So experiencing red is not a brain process.

Responses:

Knowledge-of vs. knowledge that.

Intensional fallacy. Never know everything.

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## Discussion Question

What do you think is the strongest argument for dualism? Is it successful?

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