Descartes’ weak argument for dualism.

Argument from Doubt (usually characterized as Descartes primary argument for Dualism) (Meditation II)

(1) I can doubt that I am / have a body
(2) I cannot doubt that I am / have a mind
(3) Therefore, my body has a property (being doubtable) that my mind does not.
(4) Therefore, my mind is not identical with my body (by Leibniz’s law)

Consider a substitution instance:

(1) I cannot doubt that the masked person in front of me exists.
(2) I can doubt that movie star R.R. exists (as he may have died)
(3) Therefore, the movie star R.R. has a property (being doubtable) that the masked person in front of me does not.
(4) Therefore, the masked person in front of me is not movie star R.R.
Descartes’ strong argument for dualism

First, I know that all the things that I clearly and distinctly understand can be made by God such as I understand them. For this reason, 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. The question as to the sort of power that might effect such a separation is not relevant to their being thought to be different. For this reason, from the fact that I know that I exist, and that the same time I judge that obviously nothing else belongs to my nature or essence consists entirely in my being a thinking thing. And although perhaps (or rather as I shall soon say, assuredly) I have a body that is very closely joined to me, nevertheless, because on the one hand I have a clear and distinct idea of my myself, insofar as I am merely a thinking thing and not an extended thing, and because on the other hand I have a distinct idea of a body, insofar as it is merely an extended thing and not a thinking thing, it is certain that I am really distinct from my body, and can exist without it.

-- Descartes Meditation VI AT VII, 78

Formalized:

1. If A can exist apart from B and vice versa, A is really distinct from B and B from A.
2. Whatever I clearly and distinctly understand to be possible can be brought about by God.
3. If I clearly and distinctly understand the possibility that A exists apart from B, and B apart from A, then God can bring it about that A and B do exist in separation.
4. If God can bring it about that A and B exist in separation, then A and B can exist apart and hence, by (1) they are distinct.
5. I can clearly and distinctly understand the possibility of A and B existing apart from gathered, if: there are attributes ? and ? , such that I clearly and distinctly understand that ? belongs to the nature of A and that ? belong to the nature of B (and that ? ? ? ) and I clearly and distinctly understand that something can be a complete thing if it has ? even if it lacks ? (or has ? and lacks ?)
6. Where A is myself and B my body, thought and extension satisfy the conditions of ? and ? respectively.
7. Therefore, I am really distinct from my body and can exist without it.
--Wilson, Descartes, p. 198.
Descartes’ solution to the causal problem.

The conarium resembles a gland, since the principle office of all the glands is to receive the subtlest parts of the blood emitted by the surrounding vessels, and its office is to receive the animal spirits in the same way. And since there is no solid part in the whole brain that is single, it follows necessarily that it is the seat of common sense, that is to say, of thought, and consequently the soul. For the one cannot be separated from the other.

![Diagram of brain with labeled glands](image)
Leibniz’ solution

We must say that God originally created the soul (and any other real unity) in such a way that everything must arise for it from its own depths [fonds], through a perfect spontaneity relative to itself, and yet with a perfect conformity relative to external things. And thus, since our internal sensations (meaning those in the soul itself, and not those in the brain or in other subtle parts of the body) are merely phenomena which follow upon external beings, or better, they are true appearances and like well-ordered dreams, these internal perceptions in the soul itself must arise because of its own original constitution, that is, they must arise through the representative nature (capable of expressing external things as they relate to its organs) given to the soul from its creation, which constitutes its individual character... ...There will be a perfect agreement among all the substances, producing the same effect that would be noticed if they communicated through the transmission of species or qualities, as the common philosophers imagine they do. In addition, the organized mass, in which the point of view of the soul lies, being expressed more closely by the soul, is in turn ready to act by itself, following the laws of the corporeal machine, at the moment when the soul wills it to act, without disturbing the laws of the other –the spirits and blood then having exactly the motions that they need to respond to the passions and perceptions of the motions that they need to respond to the passions and perceptions of the soul. It is this mutual relation, regulated in advance in each substance of the universe, which produces what we call their communication, and which alone brings about the union of soul and body.

Leibniz, Philosophic Essays, 143-144 (Hackett Edition)
Introduction to Possible Worlds

Each circle represents a possible world. ? and ?? are sentences which are true in that
world. ~\(\beta\) is "not \(\beta\)".
Necessity and Possibility

The light grey area covers the worlds in which ? is true. The medium grey covers all the worlds in which ? and ? are true. The black covers all the worlds in which ?
and ?? are true. ? is necessary, ?? and ~? are possible. Since no world can contain ??, ?? is impossible.
Supervenience and Materialism

**Global supervenience thesis:**

For all possible worlds w and w’, if w and w’ are exactly alike in hair distribution, then w and w’ are exactly alike in who and what is bald.

**For materialists, the global supervenience thesis becomes:**

For all possible worlds w and w’, if w and w’ are exactly alike with respect to the laws, relations, properties and entities studied by physics, chemistry, biochemistry and neurophysiology, then w and w’ are exactly alike with respect to psychology.

**In a less technical manner:**

Any two possible worlds that are physical duplicates are psychological duplicates.

**Materialism is a thesis about our actual world:**

Any possible worlds that is a physical duplicate of our world is a psychological duplicate of our world.

**Finally**

Any possible worlds that is a minimal physical duplicate of our world is a psychological duplicate of our world.