

# Q&A Lecture: Canceled Tutorial Meeting

Mind-Body Problem

Oliver Lindemann

Erasmus University Rotterdam

Mind-Body Problem



## Questions

Mind-Body Problem



### Question 1

If you look at the picture above which notion of the philosopher Gilbert Ryle: “*the dogma of the Ghost in the Machine*”. What do you think does he mean by that?



#### Answer

**Dualism.** Mind (Ghost) and Machine (body) are separate entities. One could conclude this from the picture.

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### R ne Descartes (1596–1650): Cartesian Dualism



#### Law of Contradiction

- Opposites are mutually exclusive.
- holds that something cannot both *be* and *not-be* ( $A \neq \text{not-}A$ ).

1. Sensory experience could be deceptive (illusions) or we could be dreaming. Thinking must be completely independent of the body.
2. Different identities
  - **Body: spatial** (location and extended) and **divisible**
  - **Mind: non-spatial** (no location, no extend) and **indivisible**
  - They must be two distinct entities
3. Mind and body must be considered incommensurable (having nothing in common).

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### Question 2

Many old ideas in the philosophy directly relate to the fundamental question of psychology about the mind. The philosophers were particularly interested in the relation between mind and body.

Before you start discussing possible solutions to the mind-body problem, it might be good to define the problem. What is exactly the mind-body problem?

#### Answer

The mind-body problem entails the question how our mental processes (thought, consciousness) are connected to the physical body. This is a problem because it is assumed that the body is physical and the mind is non-physical. This would make interaction impossible because non-physical processes can't interact with physical one's or vice versa. Philosophers have proposed multiple solutions to the problem.

In the lecture, I illustrated the mind-body problem by for notions.

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### What is the Mind-Body Problem?



Inconsistent tetrad

1. The mind is a nonphysical thing.
2. The body is a physical thing.
3. The mind and the body interact.
4. Physical and nonphysical things cannot interact.

**One notion must be wrong**

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### Question 3

What are the main ideas of cartesian dualism (as proposed by Ren  Descartes). In your view, how did it influenced the study of psychology and affected thus our disciple?

#### Answer

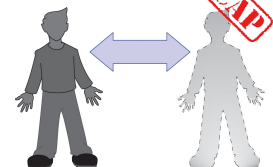
- distinction between the mind (a non-material entity) and the body (a material entity)
- influencing early psychological theories by suggesting that mental and physical states occur independently
- **groundwork for thinking about consciousness and cognition as distinct from physiological processes.**

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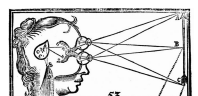


### Descartes: Interactionism

- **Mind and body interact**
- *Example:* hand on fire  $\rightarrow$  pain



- Pineal gland in the brain is the “contact point” between mind and brain

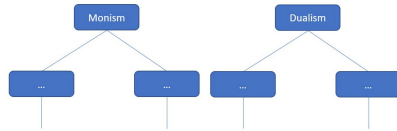


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## Question 4

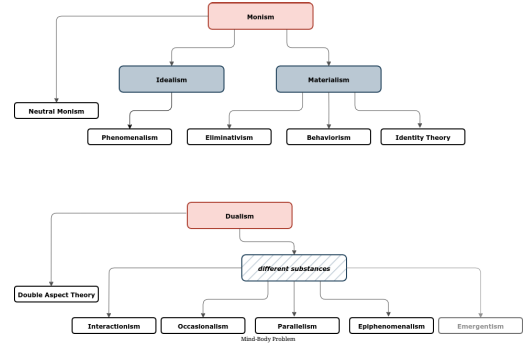
Categorize the different views on the mind-body problem. Use the hierarchical structure below. You can add as many lines and rectangles as necessary. Explain your decisions and elaborate on the different views and provide keywords.



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## Question 4: possible solution.



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## Question 4: Answer

- Category borders are not always sharp and clear. Some views can be placed under different categories. For instance,
- Neutral theories** could be a own category, that is, neither monism or dualism
  - Double aspect theory and/or Neutral monism could be neutral
- Emergentism or emergent interactionism is not relevant for the exam

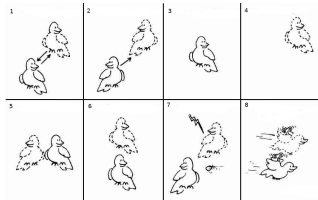
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## Question 5

Have another look at the pictures and statements below. Which views on the mind-body problem belongs to the notions and pictures and why?

- | Notion  |
|---|
| A "God ensures that the body and mind work together in all things."               |
| B "The mind exists independently from the body."                                  |
| C "There is a close links between the body and the mind."                         |
| D "Your behaviour is only governed by your brain! There is no mind."              |
| E "We can understand the mind to be a side effect of the body."                   |
| F "The mind and the body are two sides of the same coin."                         |
| G "Everything we experience physically, is no more than an illusion of our mind." |
| H "Mind and body act in synchronous."   |



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## Question 5: Answer

Solution	Theory	Notion
1 & C	<b>Interactionism</b>	"There is a close links between the body and the mind."
2 & E	<b>Epiphenomenalism</b>	"We can understand the mind to be a side effect of the body."
3 & D	<b>Eliminativism / Behaviorism</b>	"Your behaviour is only governed by your brain! There is no mind."
4 & G	<b>Idealism</b>	"Everything we experience physically, is no more than an illusion of our mind."
5 & F	<b>Double aspect theory</b>	"The mind and the body are two sides of the same coin."
6 & B	<b>Parallelism</b>	"The mind exists independently from the body."
7 & A	<b>Occasionalism</b>	"God ensures that the body and mind work together in all things."
8 & H	<b>Parallelism and the view of pre-established harmony</b>	"Mind and body act in synchronous"

- Figure 6 and 8 difficult to distinguish: The notions don't make a strong difference and 'pre-established harmony' can be seen as specific type of parallelism, or just as an explanation of parallelism.

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## Question 6

Some philosophers criticized that 'the official doctrine' of dualism or argued that the entire question of mind-body is problematic. What are these critiques?

### Answer

- Asking the question of mind and body is already a mistake
- Category mistake (a less radical view)

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## Critique: John Dewey (1859–1952)

- asking the question of mind and body is already a mistake
- rejected the absolute disunity
- tradition** in philosophy and science of **separation and isolation**
- Example* from personality psychology
  - person and environment/situation treated as "separate" entities
  - as a result, it becomes necessary to explain how these separate separate can be related.
  - conceptual, rather than an actual, separation



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## Gilbert Ryle (1900–1976)

- criticized (Cartesian) dualism
- the mind-body problem was a valid question (in contrast to Dewey)
- refutes substance dualism as well as monism (idealism and materialism)



### Category Mistake

- Body and mind are different categories (or levels of description) of same thing
- Examples of this logical mistake
  - Visitor at the University of Oxford. After seeing everything there he ask “...and where is the university?”
  - Why is it was wrong to say “there are 3 things in a field: two cows & a pair of cows”

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## Discussions

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### Discussion 1

We discussed various views on the mind body problem. Which of the positions on the mind-body problem do you prefer? What are the consequences for psychology?

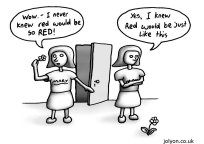
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### Discussion 2

‘Mary’s room’ by Frank Jackson (1982; 1986) is a famous thought experiment related to the mind body problem. In this thought experiment we are asked to imagine a scientist, named Mary, who has lived her entire life in a room with no colors. She learns everything there is to physically know about colors, but never really experiences these colors.

The question is asked whether Mary would learn something new when she leaves the room and enters the colored world. Jackson argues that Mary would learn something new, being what it’s like to experience color (*qualia*). This thought experiment can be considered a problem for most materialistic views. Explain why.



### “Answer”

According to **materialistic** views Mary should learn nothing new when she leaves her room, because she already knows everything there physically is to know. Hence *qualia* are a problem for most materialistic views.

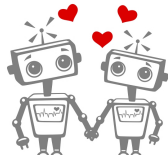
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### Discussion 3

Some materialist views such as the identity theory claims things like:

- *Mental states are functional states and merely the result of what has changed in the body/environment.*
- *Mental states are pattern of activation (of neurons).*



If these statements are correct, doesn’t it mean that robots could also have mental states (emotions). Their activation pattern is just on a silicon chip and not in an neuronal network.

**Do you agree with the claims? And what do you think about this view?**  
**Can robots fall in love?**

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## Questions?

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