

- 1  **DESCARTES, LECTURE #3**  
Concerning the Existence of **Material Things**, and the Real Distinction between **Mind and Body**
- 2  **I. FIRST THINGS FIRST: SUMMARY OF WHAT THE MEDITATOR KNOWS.**
  - A. The Meditator exists and understands his essence (thinking).
  - B. God exists and is not a deceiver.
  - C. Clarity and distinctness indicate truth.
  - D. Because his will is free and unlimited (infinite), he can make errors (his volition outruns his judgment).
  - E. A cause must be adequate to create the effect.
- 3  **II. WHAT THIS MEDITATION WILL DO**
  - A. Ask whether the material world exists
  - B. Establish the distinction between mind and body
- 4  **III. DOES THE MATERIAL WORLD EXIST?**
  - A. The difference between imagination and intellection
    - 1. Can you imagine
      - ▶ a triangle
      - ▶ a chiliagon (1000-sided figure)
      - ▶ a myriagon (10,000-sided figure)
    - 2. To understand, the mind "turns toward itself" (93).
    - 3. To imagine, the mind "turns toward the body" (93).
- 5  **III. DOES THE MATERIAL WORLD EXIST? (CONT.)**
  - A. [The difference between imagination // intellection cont.]
    - 4. Imagining is not part of the Meditator's essential identity (essence).
  - B. God has given the Meditator a body in order to experience the material world.
  - C. Since God is not a deceiver, the material world exists.
- 6  **IV. DISTINCTION BETWEEN MIND & BODY**
  - A. The mind is a thinking thing, *res cogitans*.
  - B. The body is an extended thing, res extensa.
  - C. The mind and body are tightly joined (commingled) (98).
  - D. The body is divisible; the mind is indivisible (101).

- 7  V. THE LAST WORDS ON DOUBT
- A. Hyperbolic doubts are “ludicrous,” but human beings are prone to error and must watch for it (error).
  - B. The meditator rejects the dream hypothesis, because dreams lack memory.
  - C. The infirmity of our nature and why it matters.
- 8  VI. REFLECTIONS ON DESCARTES’ PROJECT
- A. The urgency of the project
    - Psychological & intellectual doubt
  - B. Descartes’ significance
    - 1. The isolated *res cogitans*
    - 2. A persuasive interiority
    - 3. The thinking self: a subject invulnerable to skeptical critique
    - 4. Elevation of present moment of inquiry over the legacy of the past
    - 5. The non-gendered quality of “I” exist
- 9  VII. HOW HAS YOUR THINKING CHANGED?
- A. What does the first thesis mean to you now?
    - “Descartes demonstrates that thinking is itself the source of knowledge.”
  - B. Has anything surprised you?
  - C. What questions do you have?