

- 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. Epistemology a 1st step to philosophizing
 - 2. The thinking self: a subject invulnerable to skeptical critique
 - 3. Isolated thinker & a persuasive interiority
 - 4. Elevation of the 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?