

The Mind/Body Problem and some solutions proposed by famous philosophers

The Mind/Body Problem is that mind and body seem to have such radically different natures that it seems impossible for them to interact with each other. But in our everyday experience they appear to interact. How do we explain this?

One proposed solution to the mind/body problem is **interactionist dualism**. Interactionist dualism holds that mind and body both exist and they interact with each other, even if we cannot explain how. Some philosophers who take this view are Descartes, John Locke, and David Hume.

Another solution to the mind/body problem is **non-interactionism**: that mind and body do not really interact. Non-interactionism admits that mind and body *appear* to interact, but the belief that they do interact is false.

Kinds of non-interactionism:

One kind of non-interactionism is **non-interactionist dualism**: mind and body *both exist*, and appear to interact, but *they do not actually interact*.

Some examples of non-interactionist dualism come from Nicolas Malebranche and [Gottfried Leibniz](#). Malebranche's view is called "[Occasionalism](#)"; it holds that, for example, my willing my arm to move is the *occasion* for God to move my arm. Leibniz's view is called "[Pre-established Harmony](#)"; it holds that mind and body follow separate, synchronized programs which were established by God.

Another kind of non-interactionism is **monism**: mind and body may appear to interact, but they do not really interact, *because only one substance really exists*.

Kinds of monism:

One kind of monism is **materialist monism (materialism)**: everything is material; mental substance does not exist, and therefore mind and body cannot interact. One philosopher who holds this view is [Thomas Hobbes](#).

Another kind of monism is **immaterialist monism (sometimes called idealism)**: everything is mental/spiritual; material substance does not exist, and therefore mind and body cannot interact. One philosopher who holds this view is [George Berkeley](#).

Another kind of monism is **dual-aspect theory**: mental and physical things are just different "aspects" of one substance. [Baruch Spinoza](#) holds this view; according to his "pantheism," there is only one substance, God.