THE DUALIST THEORY OF MIND

THE THEORY
1. A person is made of two different substances: mind and body.
2. It was the view of Socrates and Plato, was championed by Descartes, and seems basic to religions that believe in immortality.
3. There are three versions, depending on the causal link between the two substances:
   - **Mind-body Interactionism**: the commonest view, held by Descartes, that mind affects body, and body affects mind
   - **Epiphemomenalism**: (“the smoke over the factory”) body affects mind, but mind is a side-effect which can't affect body
   - **Parallelism**: mind and body are not linked, but coincide, by chance or God’s will (like two clocks keeping perfect time).

LEIBNIZ’S LAW
This law says that if two objects are identical, they must have identical properties. Most arguments in favour of dualism attempt to show that the mind has some property which the body or brain does not and could not have, and so the two have to be different.

DESCARTES’ ARGUMENTS FOR DUALISM
In Meditation Six Descartes puts forward four arguments in support of mind-body dualism, each one relying on Leibniz’s Law:
1. **Necessity**: The mind necessarily exists when thinking (the Cogito), but the body can be doubted (p.156)
2. **Unity**: The body is divisible, but the mind is an indivisible unity (p.164)
3. **Thinking**: The mind has the property of thinking, but that isn't a property of physical matter (p.156)
4. **Space**: Thoughts exist in a non-spatial world of ideas, but the body exists in space (p.156)

MODERN ARGUMENTS FOR DUALISM
1. **Privacy**: no amount of science or surgery could ever penetrate the total privacy of another mind/brain (unlike any other object)
2. **Leibniz’s Mill**: if you could walk around inside an enlarged brain (like a mill) you would see no sign at all of any thoughts
3. **Qualia**: it is impossible to explain the fact that experiences have raw qualities (like redness) in physical terms
4. **Knowledge**: if someone had complete information, but then added a quale, this is extra knowledge, which is non-physical
5. **Inverted qualia**: which actual experiences we have for colours or sounds seems arbitrary, so presumably could be inverted
6. **Zombies possible**: it seems logically (if not naturally) possible to have a replica of a human, but without the awareness
7. **Blindsight**: patients can acquire visual knowledge without 'qualia', showing that the consciousness is more than processing
8. **Intentionality**: thoughts have a non-physical characteristic of being about other things; they have content, and meaning
9. **Reason and rules**: unlike physical objects, minds are normative (following rules, reason and logic), and pursue truth
10. **Unity and grainless**: unlike brains, consciousness seems smoothly unified, and shows no trace of being composed of cells
11. **Holism**: unlike brains, parts of minds make no sense on their own, because each area contributes to a greater whole
12. **The Self**: unlike physical objects, minds have an inner identity, making them concerned for their own future and interests
13. **Free Will**: it is self-evident to us that we have free will, but true freedom is only possible if the mind is outside of physics
14. **Other people**: we consider other people to be quite different from physical objects, just because we assume they have minds
15. **Unpredictable**: nothing in current physics, chemistry or biology suggests that brains should be conscious
16. **Out-of-body experiences / ghosts**: some witnesses claim experiences that could conclusively prove dualism
17. **Spirit**: if there is a God, then spiritual substance exists outside of man, so why not inside?

OBJECTIONS TO DUALISM
1. **Interaction problem**: if mind and body are defined as being entirely different substances, they shouldn't be able to interact
2. **No unity**: split-brain surgery seems to split the mind, and we may have different 'modules'; we have mental conflict (R 439b)
3. **Doubt isn’t possibility**: Descartes can't claim body is inessential because he doubts it; he is trying to imagine an impossibility
4. **What are bodies for?**: if we are essentially minds, why have we got bodies, and why is the brain so complex?
5. **No inversion**: maybe inverted qualia are impossible, and the experience necessarily follows from the brain structure
6. **No zombies**: maybe zombies are logically impossible, and any world which contained our structure would contain our minds
7. **Reification**: we may be treating the mind as if it is a thing, simply because we happen to have a word for it (Category Mistake)
8. **Double causation**: if we are two substances, we must have two different causes of our actions. Could they conflict?
9. **Correlation**: scanning, surgery, drugs and brain injuries suggest that mind and brain are very closely linked at every point
10. **Disembodied minds**: a mind with no body would (apparently) have no senses, which would surely cripple its activity
11. **Science**: the dualist theory of mind seems the only thing left in the way of achieving potential closure for physics
12. **Evolution**: Darwin presents a picture of humanity evolving from simple chemistry, but mental substance would be a misfit
13. **Space-Time**: current physics says that if the mind exists in time it must also exist in space (as the two are inseparable)
14. **Elimination**: 'life’ was once a big mystery, but is now seen as entirely physical, and the same will happen with the mind
15. **Reduction of intentionality**: maybe intentionality can be explained instrumentally, or is just composed of brain events