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Metaphysics
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TOPIC 2

Class 3.2:
The Metaphysics
of Persons

Metaphysics of Personhood

- Substance: needs no other thing to exist
- Dualism: there are two sorts of substance, mind (or soul) and matter
 - Mental properties are properties of a mental substance
- Materialism: there is just one sort of thing, matter
 - Mental properties are properties of a material substance
- Monism: Only one type of substance

Being



Personhood

1 Existence

2. Nature or essence of a person

1. Dualism
2. Idealism
3. Materialism



Plato on the soul: I

- The soul is unseen.
- All unseen things are unchanging and 'simple', i.e. they don't have parts.
- Therefore, the soul is unchanging and simple.
- To destroy something is to break it into parts.
- Therefore something without parts cannot be destroyed.
- So the soul cannot be destroyed.
- Objection: there can be other forms of destruction than 'breaking into parts'.



Plato on the soul: II

- Everything comes about from its opposite.
 - When something changes, it changes from what it is to what it currently is not.
- Life changes into its opposite, not-life, or death.
 - Death is the separation of soul and body.
- To become alive is a change from not being alive.
 - Life must be the *joining* of soul and body.
- So our souls must exist before we are born.
- Objection: Changing from not existing to existing is not a change in properties.

Mind body problem

What is the relationship between mental states and the physical world?



**René Descartes
(1596-1650)**

Descartes' cogito

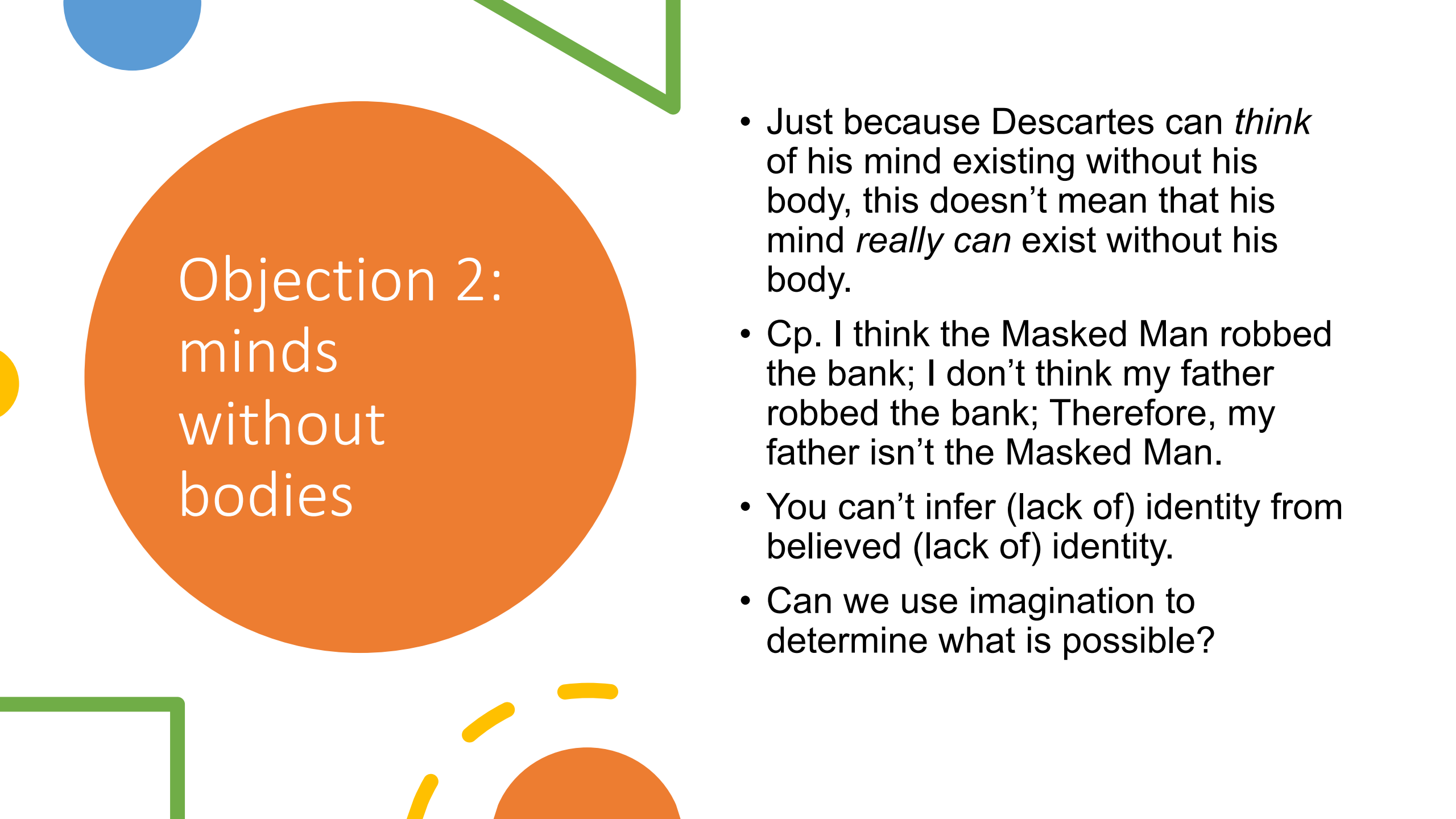
- 'I think' cannot be doubted.
- What am I? I am a thing that thinks. I cannot doubt this, yet I can doubt whether I have a body. So I can be separated from a body.
- The mind is a separate substance from the body.





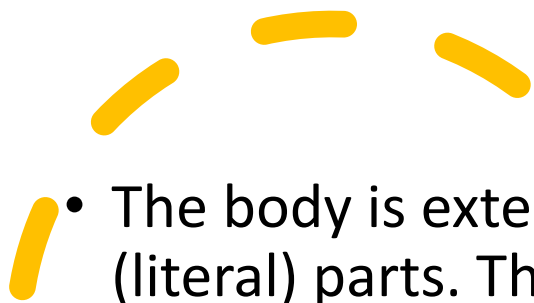
Objection 1:
thinking
thing

- 'I think' - is there an 'I'? What does this mean?
- If I exist - as a substance - from one thought to the next, Descartes has not shown this; only that 'there are thoughts'.
- If I exist as that which thinks *this* thought, Descartes has not shown I exist for more than one thought.



Objection 2: minds without bodies

- Just because Descartes can *think* of his mind existing without his body, this doesn't mean that his mind *really can* exist without his body.
- Cp. I think the Masked Man robbed the bank; I don't think my father robbed the bank; Therefore, my father isn't the Masked Man.
- You can't infer (lack of) identity from believed (lack of) identity.
- Can we use imagination to determine what is possible?

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- The body is extended in space; it has (literal) parts. This is part of its essence.
 - The mind has no (literal) parts. This is part of its essence, thought.
 - Therefore, mind and body are essentially different.
 - Objection: this assumes there are minds as substances, rather than just mental properties.




Descartes on
parts

The mind-body problem

- ‘I am not only lodged in my body as a pilot in a vessel, but...I am very closely united with it, and so to speak so intermingled with it that I seem to compose with it one whole.’ (*Meditation VI*)
- I am a person - an embodied soul.
 - The soul takes on bodily experiences as its own, i.e. we refer our sensations, emotions, etc. to our *selves*.
- Can Descartes account for this?



Idealism

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- Idealism: nothing exists that exists independently of minds.
 - Berkeley: To be is to be perceived (or to perceive): *esse est percipi (aut percipere)*
 - What is a material object, exactly? We think it is ‘mind-independent’, but does this make sense?

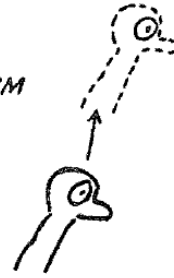
Why idealism?

- Objection to naïve realism: secondary qualities are subjective, so we don't perceive objects just as they are.
- Objection to representative realism: primary qualities do not 'resemble' objects any more than secondary qualities do.
- So no qualities of 'material objects' are mind-independent; we perceive only 'ideas'. Material objects are just bundles of ideas.
- If we are not idealists, we will fall into confusion or scepticism.

INTERACTIONISM



EPIPHENOMENALISM



MATERIALISM



IDEALISM



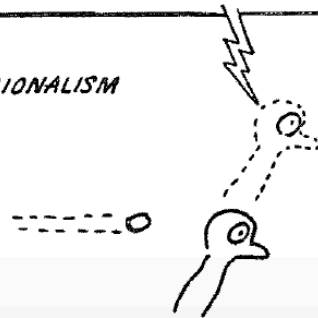
DOUBLE ASPECT THEORY



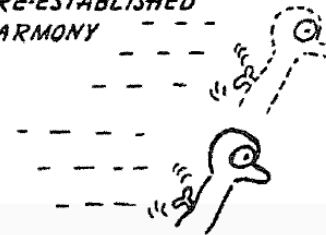
PARALLELISM



OCCASIONALISM



PRE-ESTABLISHED HARMONY



RMC