



Descartes on Somatic Health (and Psychosomatic Well-Being)

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March 31, 2016

11:30 AM

Harmon Room

Light lunch will be served

It is not uncommon among philosophers working on Descartes's medical, physiological, and "biological" thought to identify the mind-body union as *the* (robust) source of normativity and teleology in human physiology, grounding concepts of human health and proper function. In this paper, I will problematize this interpretation, distinguishing epistemological and explanatory facets of Descartes's approach to physiology. Then, attending especially to Descartes's *Passions of the Soul* and *Meditation Six*, I develop a superior interpretation of Cartesian somatic health and explore its relation to Cartesian psychosomatic well-being.



Peter Distelzweig is an assistant professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of St. Thomas, Minnesota. He specializes in early modern philosophy, ancient philosophy, and history and philosophy of science. His present research explores the philosophical import of interactions between philosophy, science, and medicine in the early modern period.