LIFE’S ULTIMATE QUESTIONS
by Ronald Nash
Chapter 18: Human Nature: The Mind-Body Problem and Survival After Death
About Nash’s Approach

- Philosophers aim for clarity and objectivity
- One way to assure these goals are met is to
  - Present all, or the most popular, positions on a particular topic, and to
  - Show that only one of those positions is adequate
- A careful stating of adversarial positions is required for the philosopher to be free of the charge of the Strawman fallacy
- The student’s job
  - Read positions which the author does not support, and
  - Evaluate the reasons for that lack of support
The Adversarial Method

Nash presents seven theories about the mind-body problem, and shows that only the Dualistic Interactionism position will satisfy.

If we accept Nash’s presentations of the other six theories, and his refutations of them, we will have no choice but to accept the seventh theory.
The Seven Theories about the Mind/Body Connection

Monistic Theories
1. Crude Materialism
2. Epiphenomenalism
3. Moderate Idealism
4. Absolute Idealism
5. Mind-Brain Identity

Dualistic Theories
1. Parallelism
2. Interactionism
What theory rules today?

Crude Materialism?
Evidence that this is the one believed:
- __________________
- __________________
- __________________

Mind-Brain Identity?
Evidence that this is the one believed:
- __________________
- __________________
- __________________

Both are variations of the same core belief about human nature: monism
Why No Form of Monism Satisfies

Human Existence is too complex to be explained by only one substance.

- Matter alone is an insufficient explanation of
  - Emotion
  - Morality
  - Spirituality

- Mind alone is an insufficient explanation of
  - Sensed physical objects
  - Body
  - Physical drives
    - Hunger
    - Thirst
    - Fatigue
Why Dualism is Appealing

Is there anything true of your body that is not true of your mind?

- _________________________
- _________________________
- _________________________

Is there anything true of your mind that is not true of your body?

- _________________________
- _________________________
- _________________________

Dualism makes more satisfying explanations possible than does monism
What about Parallelism?

- Mind and Body are two distinct substances
- Mind is non-material
- Body is material
- “Since a non-material substance has no physical dimensions, it cannot make contact with any material substance”

- There is a correlation between mental events (thoughts) and physical events (actions)
  - A thought occurs, and then an action occurs, or vice versa
- “God must be the One who bridges the two parallel tracks”
Parallelism: An Insufficient Explanation

- Diminishes God’s moral nature
  - Bad actions become events facilitated by God’s direct intervention

- Who’s to say that the non-material cannot interface with the material?
  - Our non-material God *created* the material universe
  - Occam’s Razor applies here
The “Ghost” in the “Machine?”

- Your spirit is not a tourist vacationing in a flesh cabin on planet Earth
- You are a mysterious unity of matter and spirit
  - Spirit animates matter
  - Spirit experiences through the body
- You are designed to exist as one person
  - At this time, and
  - After the resurrection of the dead
  - 2 Corinthians 5:1-10
  - Luke 24:39
  - 1 John 3:2
  - 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 49, 51-53
  - Revelation 20:6, 12-13
What is a “self?”

Remember your first memory

Who is remembering right now?

Who had the experience that led to that first memory?

A self is an enduring continuity of consciousness of existence as one being
You Exist as a Self

The you that is merely material is replaced with new material every 7 years

What of you persists?

Moral accountability is impossible unless you exist as a self

Enduring identity is a necessary condition for any

- Praise, or
- Blame
Substance Dualism

The meaning of “I”

- An immaterial soul that **owns**
  - My experiences
  - My mental states
  - My body

- Without this belief, there is no basis for an afterlife

Our worldview leads us to believe in a life after death
Food for Thought

- How will you recognize your friends in heaven, before the resurrection?
- How will you have feelings, before the resurrection?
- What kind of body will you have, in the resurrection?