The Mind/Body Problem
Food for thought...
Question: How do you know a Platonic Form if you’ve never seen one?
Argument from Recollection
Plato argues that we recognize the Forms because our souls existed in Platonic Heaven before we were born.
What is knowledge?

Empiricism Or Rationalism?

Does God exist?

Possible Solutions:
1. Free Will
2. Morality
3. Eastern Philosophy

Do we have free will?

Do we only act from self-interest?

Kant or the Utilitarians?

Is morality relative?

Do we have souls?
The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil
The Problem of Free Will
The Problem of Evil
The Regress Argument
DILEMMA #8

Do we have souls?
Important Concepts
In his excellent introduction to the philosophy of cognitive science, Andy Clark (2014: 250-8) provides a rough-and-ready survey of historically important positions in the philosophy of mind. Cognitive Science tends to pick up where these positions leave off...
Dualism is the view that there exists two distinct types of things in the world, material things (bodies, tables, chairs) and immaterial minds/souls.

Materialism is the view there only exists material things; i.e., our brain is a sophisticated material thing that produces consciousness.
DUALISM
Descartes' Argument from Introspection

I can doubt the existence of my physical body (and all other material objects), but I cannot doubt the existence of my mind. This shows there are two distinct types of things in the world.
Kant’s Objection
Although there is a unity to my present consciousness, it tells me nothing about the kind of thing that my consciousness is.
Although there is a unity to my present consciousness, it tells me nothing about the kind of thing that my consciousness is. It is “quite impossible, by means of... simple self-consciousness, to determine the manner in which I exist, whether it be as substance or accident [i.e., property]” (Critique of Pure Reason (2e): 420, interpolations are mine).
“To study the peculiarities of our self-awareness is, then, to study no item in the world. It is rather to explore that limiting point of [subjective] empirical knowledge...

It is no more possible for me to make the ‘I’ into the object of consciousness than it is to observe the limits of my own visual field” (Scruton 2001: 71; interpolations are mine, emphasis in original).
Other Arguments for Dualism
Some argue that the existence of paranormal phenomena suggests that spirits/souls must exist.
But the truth of the phenomena in question is (very) contentious...
MATERIALISM
Hobbes’ Argument

Hobbes argued that he can explain all the workings of the mind through material things alone. If this is possible, by Ockham’s Razor, we should choose materialism over dualism.
THE CORRELATION/DEPENDENCE ARGUMENT

It looks like our mental events are explicable through, related to, or dependent on some physical event. For example,

i. pain corresponds to the stimulus of a- or c-fibers;

ii. memory is purely material (which is why you get amnesia if you get hit really hard in the head); and

iii. physical substances, eg drugs and alcohol, affect our mental experience.

It seems like the mental *just is* the physical.
**The Mind/Body Problem**

1. If dualism is true, then the soul (which is non-physical) controls the body (which is physical).
2. But it is physically impossible for a non-physical thing to interact with a physical thing.
3. Therefore, dualism is false.
The Mind/Body Problem is largely regarded as the greatest skeptical challenge to Dualism...
Storytime!
Garry Kasparov, World Chess Champion (1985-2000)
Garry Kasparov, World Chess Champion (1985-2000)
Garry Kasparov beats 32 computers simultaneously (1985)
Deep Blue plays and loses against Kasparov (1996)
Deep Blue defeats Kasparov (1997)
Here are three *materialist* positions on how the mind works...
Behaviorism is an umbrella term for a family of views that claim that:

a. either mental states don’t exist or they might as well not exist (since they cannot be studied directly), so

b. we should focus research instead on behavioral dispositions (see Clark 2014: 253 for more).
“[M]ental talk [only] picks out behavioral dispositions.

It isolates what so-and-so is likely to do in such and such circumstances.

It does not pick out a state of an inner mental sanctum” (see Clark 2014: 253; emphasis added).
Identity Theory is the view that mental states are brain states.
The Correlation/Dependence Argument

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One of the most common responses to identity theory is the empirical demonstration that similar mental states are not always realized in the same brain state. This is because of neuroplasticity, the brain’s capacity to perform the same mental function in a different part of the brain (Carter 2007: 37-42).
Functionalism is the view that what makes something a mental state has nothing to do with what it is made out of, but rather has to do with the role that it plays in the system of which it is a part.
According to computationalism (a version of functionalism), “mental operations are held to be computations. So to have a mind... just is to be engaged in certain computational processes” (Carter 2007: 95).

brain ≈ computer

mind ≈ program
DILEMMA #9

Can computers think?