



David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

Phone Conversation

David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>
To: Mark Kiley <kileym@stjohns.edu>

Mon, Oct 5, 2015 at 2:18 PM

Dear Mark,

There is an insight I have about the arguments for God's existence that I want to share with theologians to make sure the insight is valid. I got it by reflecting on these four quotes, which can be found at one of my websites: <http://www.newevangelization.info/fifteen/al-jahiz.html>

Among the traditional candidates for comprehensive understanding of the relation of mind to the physical world, I believe the weight of evidence favors some form of neutral monism over the traditional alternatives of materialism, idealism, and dualism. (Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False*, location 69 of 1831)

And certain properties of the human brain distinguish our species from all other animals. The human brain is, after all, the only known collection of matter that tries to understand itself. To most biologists, the brain and the mind are one and the same; understand how the brain is organized and how it works, and we'll understand such mindful functions as abstract thought and feelings. Some philosophers are less comfortable with this mechanistic view of mind, finding Descartes' concept of a mind-body duality more attractive. (Neil Campbell, *Biology*, 4th edition, p. 776)

However, having started with the empirically quite unsupported postulate of atheism, the materialists are practically forced to call a variety of empirical facts "illusions"—not facts that are in front of his eyes, but are behind his eyes, so to speak, facts about his own mind....None of this is to deny that there are some very hard questions that arise from the idea that the human mind is not entirely reducible to matter. There certainly are. For instance, if there is something immaterial about the mind, how does it affect the brain and body? (Stephen M. Barr, *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith*. 2003, location 4612)

Acts of self-consciousness (awareness of awareness) are difficult to explain through regular space-time models (one act of awareness capturing itself, as it were). (Robert Spitzer, *New Proofs for the Existence of God: Contributions of Contemporary Physics and Philosophy*, 2010, location 2211)

You can see from the title of Nagel's book that he understands the mind-body problem. However, his quote is dishonest because he describes "dualism" as a "traditional" theory. My understanding is that "neutral monism" is consistent with the metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas and "dualism" is just a bright idea with no supporting evidence.

Most biologists, as you can see from Campbell's quote, think there is more evidence for materialism than for dualism. They are quite right to think this. Their problem is that they don't even know the theory that humans are embodied spirits or spirited bodies. Most biologists are ignorant.

My interpretation of the quotes from Stephen Barr and Fr. Spitzer is that they believe in dualism. They think there is more evidence for dualism than materialism, however, they can understand how someone would think there was more evidence for materialism than dualism. They don't think of "most biologists" as being ignorant, stupid, irrational, or dishonest.

Barr and Spitzer are suffering from cognitive dissonance. They believe in dualism, but the reality is that there is no evidence for dualism. This causes them mental and emotional suffering. They make themselves feel better by promoting arguments for God's existence based upon unsolved scientific questions (the Big Bang and fine-tuning of constants).

I'll give you a call tomorrow at 12:45.
Very truly yours,

10/6/2015

New Evangelization Mail - Phone Conversation

David Roemer
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David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

Phone Conversation

Mark Kiley <KILEYM@stjohns.edu>

Tue, Oct 6, 2015 at 10:40 AM

To: David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

Before we talk, I think you have a long road ahead. Define the terms and their relation to each other. Submit the thesis to Speculum, Philosophical Quarterly, and eventually the Thomist. Their editors can help you sort this out.

Then we can talk.

Mark Kiley

From: David Roemer [david@dkroemer.com]**Sent:** Monday, October 05, 2015 2:18 PM**To:** Mark Kiley**Subject:** Phone Conversation

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