

Crash Course Philosophy: A Christian Look

Block I Videos 1 through 8 (Basics)

Introduction: Crash Course Philosophy is one of several works the Green brothers (John and Hank) have done under the Crash Course umbrella produced by PBS. They are designed for college students and can best be described as a modern day video *Cliff Notes* for various "101" college courses. This particular series is hosted by Hank and consists of 46 lessons of philosophy, each 8 to 10 minutes long with introductory and concluding remarks. While the link I'm including here (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKEhdsnKKHs&list=PLq5rFUzhsrBXuE0wxECMeTYSV-_52fGt5&index=2) covers the entire series, each lesson can be found as a stand-alone and is easy to access. Just do a search for Crash Course Philosophy and the video number you want to watch on YouTube, and you will find it at the top of the list (example, one can type "Crash Course Philosophy 1" to see the first lesson only, and I will hereafter refer to lessons as "videos"). At the end of each Blocks discussion, I will include the URLs of all videos discussed in the Block, all one has to do is copy and paste into a search engine.

This series was written by Doctor Ruth Tallman, who is a Professor of Philosophy at Barry University, Florida. Barry is a Catholic school, so I find the somewhat hostile attitude toward religion in this series quite surprising, and the gross lack of knowledge of Christian beliefs (**videos 12** and **33** in particular) to be nothing short of startling. She, however, is not the editor, nor can she control what Hank says or what the producer captures. So I have no idea how different the finished product was compared to the text she originally provided.

As I mentioned before, this series targets college students, which are the most vulnerable to losing their Christian faith (according to the Pew Research Center, 67% of Protestant and 80% of Catholic leave the faith during this time, most never come back). It is my hope that at least some of them will get to read this or similar material to give them something to think about when confronted with the prevailing trends in the education community today. As C.S. Lewis pointed out in *The Abolition of Man*, it is not enough for a teacher to simply present a student with a negative example of a concept; all that does is encourage skepticism in the student to an unhealthy degree. A student needs to have a positive example with which to contrast the negative. I hope I have succeeded in doing both in the following document.

In all fairness to Hank, this is a massive field he is covering, and the content of any one video could easily fill a week or more of classroom study. Many ideas could be the subject of an entire college course. I appreciate that much simplification is necessary, and I have struggled to minimize my own notes here myself. But I feel that, at best, the minimization here is misleading. More serious problems of the series include information inconsistencies, omission of important information, hypocrisy and providing erroneous information. These range in seriousness from being understandable to being outright deceitful.

A) My Goals for the Series:

1) Fix the "Math Problem"

They which play with the devil's rattles, will be brought by degrees to wield his sword

-Thomas Fuller, *The Profane State*

If I may use an analogy of a complex math problem, making an error early on will mean never getting the right solution by simply going forward. One must backtrack to that point, fix it, and then move on. In a video series, this is not possible. My solution to this dilemma is to try to point out where the early mistakes are, and then show how they influenced further problems later on. As a result, early in the series I will be making points that may seem to be "nitpicking" and even redundant. But as the series progresses, we reach a point where, if left unchecked, we are seduced into thinking the bigger errors are reasonable because we accepted minor errors to be true. The first really large example of massive errors comes as early as **video 12**, with an equally bad example in **video 33**. By the time we get to the end of the series (**videos 42 - 45** in particular), we see just how extremely bad the faulty logic can take us.

2) Expose the Extreme Rationalistic Influence: There are two important philosophical ideas that are never discussed (rationalism and empiricism) that are absolutely essential to understanding why the series progresses as it does. There is also a third philosophy that is just as important but only gets two spoken sentences in the whole series: nihilism (**video 16**). Rationalism is a means of seeking truth through reason alone; empiricism is based on finding evidence to support truth. Rationalism is, of course, a sound method, but like any other tool it can be misused. There are those who take it to an extreme, and disregard any "real world" consequences that might happen. A man named Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi saw this fallacy for what it was, and used the word nihilism to explain where this extreme rationalism must lead us to: a loss of value and meaning. If there is no "real world" basis in which to ground philosophy, then all we are left with are ideas and no means to judge (or value) one idea over another. Jacobi offered God (Jehovah in particular) as the solution to this extreme rationalism. But rather than disagree with Jacobi on what a world without Jehovah would be like, the rationalists accepted this loss of value as being a necessity for truth, and atheism flourished with the philosophers (**Topic B.3**). This acceptance of meaninglessness is personified in Friedrich Nietzsche, who is the most famous and influential philosopher concerning nihilism.

Now, I certainly don't oppose the idea of attempting to find a truth through rational thought. I do this in my own way quite often, and I wouldn't have accepted Christianity if it wasn't rational. But if one cannot apply a "real world" situation to the conclusion reached, then it is merely a parlor game with no practical application. And while it is healthy entertainment among friends, it is a toxic point of view for the rest of the world. Jean-Paul Sartre basically admits as much in *Existentialism is a Humanism* when he warns that his philosophy is not for the common person, but rather for specialists. In a similar vein, if an idea, no matter how well thought out, cannot be made to work successfully in the "real world," then it should be humbly discarded as a mistake and one should move on to new ideas (**video 2**).

That said, please pay attention to what era a particular philosopher comes from. As we move from Ancient Philosophers to those from the 19th and early 20th Centuries, philosophers become less concerned with the consequences and more so with the intent. By the late 20th and early 21st Centuries, consequences are not just ignored, they are discouraged from discussion.

3) Expose the Socialist Teachings of the Series: To be clear, Hank never claims to be a socialist here. But one does not have to stand under a red flag to be a socialist, nor does one need to read out of a work of Karl Marx to teach socialism. I will address this concept when I talk about the "Duck Test" in **Topic II.E.4.i**. Hank is quite hostile to theism in general, and to Christianity in particular. That part does not bother me so much, but the last Block of the series (**Block VIII (Ethics)**)

presents an extremely one-sided point of view, and it is without question the view of socialists. As we progress through the series, we can see a clear progression towards this point. In **Block II (Religion)**, we see the series not only attempting to remove Jehovah from consideration, but claims it is dangerous to believe in Him (**video 14**). In the following four Blocks, there are subtle cases that, while innocent in themselves, nonetheless begin to lay a foundation for accepting socialism. But it is in **Block VII (Morality)** that we see a real push for it. When we get in **Block VIII (Ethics)**, socialism is virtually taken as a given in the way the lessons are presented. While I will go into greater detail there, for now I just want to briefly explain what is going on.

Christianity tells us that man is inherently evil; we are born with it like a genetic disease. We only learn how to be good through the working of the Holy Spirit. As I will talk about in the **Topic B.3**, atheists believed that morality was evolutionary and that man will be good if he is allowed to be good (I address this in **Topic II.D.6**). Both claim to seek to create a better life for everyone by sacrificing one's benefits for others (consider Utilitarianism in **video 36**). But when the inherent evil of man inevitably shows itself, Christians have a faith and hope that their efforts in this life will be rewarded in Heaven. Atheists, on the other hand, only have this one life to make things better. Therefore, they have no recourse but to establish a set of rules (or laws) to preemptively ensure all people are treated equally. Hence socialism.

B) A Brief History of Philosophical Movements:

I am not attempting to describe any particular theory or idea here, but want to point out a pattern of development that I hope the viewer keeps in mind as the series progresses. Generally speaking, the series moves chronologically within each Block, with ancient philosophers discussed early, Christian ones after that, then the "Fathers of Atheism," and finally contemporary ones. This makes sense, as newer philosophies build on older ones. There are, of course, many exceptions as necessary cross-referencing takes place as well as a need to coordinate different disciplines of philosophy. Still, knowing this pattern and which era a philosopher comes from can help in understanding how the ideas presented were formed.

1) Ancient Philosophers: For the most part, Christianity does not have a problem with the ancients. The fact that their ideas have survived over two millennia is strong testimony to the truth they found. As I will talk about in detail in **Topic II.E.6**, the ancient philosophers were not associated with their pagan religions, and the religions themselves had little or nothing to do with morality as we think of it. Instead, philosophers and priests coexisted with each other, neither intruding on the others sphere of influence. While these philosophers did not know *of* Jehovah, neither did they *deny* Jehovah. They often arrived at conclusions that were remarkably similar to Christianity. Christianity believes that Jehovah's wisdom was shared with the whole world, although a special and more direct relationship existed with the Hebrews. Therefore, these philosophers' views are considered "incomplete" or "distorted" instead of "wrong" by Christians. The teachings of ancient philosophers were greatly sought after by early Christians. Followers of Epicurus and Stoic are mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (17:18), and it was they who invited Saint Paul to the Areopagus for his famous speech. The doctors of the Catholic Church based their philosophies on the greats of the Mediterranean world, and the first religious missions to Asia were sent to learn the eastern philosophies firsthand (for centuries, only tantalizing hints of them arrived through the silk trade). The missionaries in the east were delighted to discover that these philosophies, like those in the west, were not religions, so there was no inherent conflict with the Christian faith. This isn't to say that every ancient thought was accepted (Aristotle's idea of materialism is in conflict with the creation), but by and large the Catholic Church saw God's presence in the great thinkers before the time of Jesus.

2) Christian Philosophers: The series gives Saints Anselm and Thomas Aquinas well-deserved (although incomplete and sometimes misleading) attention. These men, and others, were truly great philosophers and whose ideas survived over a millennia of debate (despite the claims in **Block II**). Other Christian philosophers, Catholic and Protestant, are discussed (with Rene Descartes, Blaise Pascal, Soren Kierkegaard, John Locke and Immanuel Kant being the most prominent within the series), but they are better understood when compared to the Fathers of Atheism in **Topic B.3**. The philosophers I mean here span from about 50 A.D. to the early 17th Century, and created most of the philosophical thought that is commonly known as Christian Theology today. My defense of Christianity owes much of its reasoning to the work done during this time.

3) Fathers of Atheism: While there always have been and always will be those who doubt or deny theism, as an organized brand of faith, it is technically only about 350 years old and did not become a major force until about 200 years ago. The Protestant Reformation (about 500 years ago) had the unintended consequence of fathering modern atheism: if one can question the authority of Jehovah's truth as told by the Catholic Church, then the questioning of Jehovah Himself becomes acceptable as well. After all, if Jehovah really exists, then why would He allow the Church He said could not be overcome to splinter so badly? Indeed, while not discussed in the series, the Protestant Reformation itself endorsed rationalism over empiricism, as is evident in the writings of Martin Luther, John Calvin and other early Protestant leaders. And as Protestantism has continued to fracture over the centuries, so to has rationalism taken on more and more extreme a nature in many of the new Churches. Today, many "progressive" Churches are little more than a union hall with a band and a man reading from the Bible (but I won't waste time on that). The video series does focus heavily on the true Fathers of Atheism and only rarely mentions their Christian counterparts. Even when Christian philosophers are mentioned, they tend to be those whose theology is either questionable or harmless (more on that soon). I do find it interesting how many Christian philosophers included in this series who were both widely influential, yet orthodox in their thinking, are never identified as being Christian.

The era of the Fathers of Atheism generally spans from the mid 18th Century to the 1960s. Sartre and his contemporary, Albert Camus, are considered the last two such Fathers and they will get special attention as they represent the time of transition to contemporary atheism. Sigmund Freud, who died in 1938, was the next most recent one. I personally recognize Ayn Rand as a Mother of Atheism for reasons not important to this document. She was a contemporary of Sartre and Camus, and she was possibly the only great atheistic thinker who was a professed capitalist since the time of Marx (which was based on her experiences as a child in Socialist Russia; she was the only Parent of Atheism who had to live with the consequences of a socialistic government). All the Fathers (and Mothers) had a belief in the materialism of Aristotle, which suggested that matter had always existed.

With such a belief, evolution was the answer to every reality they did not want to address in detail. With infinite time, all possible combinations of things eventually will come to pass, and will come back again an infinite number of times. Evolution was applied to everything, including free will (**Block V**), imagination (**Block VI**), morality (**Block VII**, and **video 37** makes this claim explicit) and ethics (**Block VIII**). To the Father's way of thinking, how these things came about was not an important consideration, as they felt evolution certainly would explain it once enough facts were known (an idea Hank sometimes accepts as legitimate and sometimes as illegitimate, depending on the topic at hand -- this is a major cause of the inconsistencies in the series). But it is very important to understand that they thought morality was evolutionary. They did not believe Jehovah taught man morality, but rather that the early Christians, like a lucky prospector, were fortunate enough to find it first and then claimed rights to it. The Fathers of Atheism did not resent the moral teachings of the

Church; they resented what they thought was an unmerited monopoly over the teachings.

This is why nihilism was such a turning point (**Topic III.A.1**) for atheists. Their search for mathematical solutions to every question of life was leading them to a binary outlook: things either existed or they did not. With nihilism, they could accept valuelessness as a philosophical ideal that matched the "yes" or "no" discoveries of their science. Yet we see a clear paradox to this, as classic materialism suggests that no free will (called determinism, **Block V**) is possible, which means there is no belief, just an illusion of belief. Rather than deny this paradox, the Fathers simply accepted the absurdity (**video 16**) of it.

It is for this reason that I place Descartes, Pascal, Kierkegaard, Locke and some other religious philosophers in this era. It is not that they were atheists, but rather that the culture had focused on those who were either quite defensive in their theology (such as Descartes and Pascal) or whose ideas fractured Christianity even more (such as Kierkegaard and Locke). Powerful Christian philosophers (Bishop George Berkeley, Minister George MacDonald, G.K. Chesterton and C.S. Lewis) were often ignored (although Berkeley gets a brief mention in the series without mentioning his priestly duties, and Kant, who gets a whole video to his ideas, was very religious but no mention of this is made) or had their views perverted by those with atheistic views (such as what happened when Nietzsche endorsed Jacobi's nihilism). I do want to mention that while culture in general and this series in particular have downgraded the Christian philosophers during this era, the fallacy of this type of atheism has been proven by science and history while the strong Christian ideas from this era (Berkeley, MacDonald, Chesterton and Lewis) have proved to be enduring.

While it is easy for me to show the errors of the Father's thinking, much of what was said from them will make sense to most viewers because they were not at odds with Christian teachings. They had the Christian dream in mind; they just didn't think the Church was necessary to teach it. But this came to an end with Sartre and Camus (and, in my mind at least, Rand). In his famous book *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* (**video 46** focuses on Sisyphus), Camus goes to great lengths describing just how devastating it was for him when science let him down. Meanwhile, we find Sartre in *Existentialism is a Humanism* wishing for a God he denies exists. Only Rand (as can be seen in *Atlas Shrugged*) seemed to be unphased by these changes in science, but this came at the cost of assuming a self-evident (in other words, does not need to be proved) moral foundation for her own ethics, and by coming up with perhaps the most advanced science fiction technology ever mentioned in popular culture (a machine capable of creating almost unlimited power from the air, yet not affecting the air quality in doing so).

Three things happened between the 1930s and the 1960s that undermined the teachings of the Fathers. The first was the acceptance of Quantum Physics, which brazenly defied the Newtonian Physics which were the logical means of explaining Aristotelian materialism (and Sir Issac Newton was a very devout, if unorthodox, believer in Jehovah himself). The second was World War II. The major aggressors of the war, Germany and Russia, were socialist nations, and the brutality of this type of atheistic government could no longer be hidden. The excesses in China and Cambodia were even worse than this, and no socialist government can honestly claim any respect of the dignity of its people. But I think the final blow was the acceptance of the Big Bang Theory, which showed that matter was not infinitely old. Big Bang is incompatible with classical materialism and favors the creation (indeed, it was a Catholic priest who formulated the theory). Without an infinite time for morality to evolve (or anything else, for that matter), much that was taken for granted by the Fathers needed to be re-evaluated. This has yet to be done in a practical matter. In the meantime, Sartre and Camus tell us, in different ways, to embrace the absurdity of it all and Rand simply drives on with no concern

whatsoever.

4) Contemporary Atheism: With atheism clearly on the defensive after the 1960s, Christianity actually began to recover in the 1980s with the loving examples set by Saint Teresa of Calcutta and the unquestionable magnetism of Saint Pope John Paul II. C.S. Lewis had no small impact on preparing the way for these future saints and is one of the greatest apologists in Christian history. Christian preacher Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., likewise affected the world with his peaceful protests. But then the terrorist attack on 9/11 brought to the world a fear of religious zealotry. This fear spread irrationally to religion in general and has refueled the relentless pursuit of rationalism to destroy religion (especially Christianity) from the inside. It is here that we see a departure from the extreme rationalism that fueled previous atheist theories in favor of *absolute* rationalism.

But what is different from this type of atheism is a disgust over *anything* associated with religion (Christianity in particular). We no longer have atheistic philosophies that assume Christian morals can exist without the Church, but rather an atheism that challenges any moral concept that has Christian connections. As such, these "philosophers" are better described as zealots. No amount of empirical evidence will dissuade them from their point of view, but any evidence, no matter how pathetic, that testifies against Christianity will serve as a rally point for adherents of the theory. They are not so much attempting to teach a better way of life, but directing others to destroy anything that has traditionally been held as a valid way to live. This is quite a strong accusation to make, I know, but if one watches the whole series we will see concepts that simply boggle the mind that I dare not mention at this time lest one think I'm exaggerating.

C) Video Block 1 (Basics): These videos generally provide core concepts to be used throughout the rest of the series. Except for **video 7**, they are pretty good. My biggest complaint is what is left out, and we see immediately how seriously the rationalistic approach (**Topic A.2**) will be taken. I am not so much worried that it is present in this Block, as at this point it is fairly harmless. What I do hope is that the viewer can pick up on the lack of consequences explained here so as to be better prepared for what will come later. For those who want to "jump into the action," please be patient. For this Block, I will be laying the foundation for all future work. **Block II (Religion)** will be quite lively but the bulk of my efforts will begin in **Block III (Life and Death)**.

1) Video 1 (What is Philosophy?): Overall, this is a good background for what philosophy really is. I don't have any problem with the video; I only wish Hank would abide by the ideals he presents in it. As the videos go on, I think the attentive viewer will see what I mean. But I do want to highlight a few points here.

i) Extreme Rationalistic Influence: Hank clearly mentions that this will be less empirical than science. As I mentioned before, I accept this, just not to the point of abandoning the empirical altogether. Most of the "empirical" examples that will be given in the series stretch reality to fit the theory as opposed to actually proving a point (we see this as early as **video 2**), or do a better job in describing a tangential point instead of the intended one (beginning with **video 3**).

ii) Disregarding Assumptions: I will propose in **video 5** that at least one assumption is necessary for any search of truth. But we don't have to wait quite that long. In **video 3**, we see just how limited a purely deductive approach is. The promise made here (min 1:22) to disregard assumptions is, in practice, kept rather selectively. Perhaps most notably is the assumption of infinite regress and ultimate causation (discussed in **video 10**). The series steadfastly holds on to infinite regress as being true when speaking of Jehovah, but lets it slide when talking about free will versus

determinism (**Block V**) and with language and imagination (**Block VI**).

iii) Evil: A promise is made to explain evil (min 0:20). This promise is superficially kept at **video 13**, but in that video he really uses this topic as an effort to discredit Christianity rather than to honestly talk about the nature of evil. I will attempt to address this deficiency when we get there.

iv) Meaning of Life: He breaks his promise to give life "meaning" as early as **video 16** and, rather than revisit meaning, actually builds on what meaninglessness means for most of the rest of the series. It is only at the end of the series (**video 46**) that this topic is really brought up again, and it primarily focuses on Camus' ideas, which is to accept the absurd (defined as "to find meaning in a meaningless reality" in **video 16**).

v) Trying to Understand: Beginning at min 8:14, Hank says "First, we'll really try to understand. You're not gonna to agree with all the ideas that I present to you, and I won't agree with them either. That's not the point. The point, in step one, is to really try to get inside of an idea, to understand it as charitably as possible." When it comes to religious ideas, Christianity in particular, we see the series fail on a catastrophic level. The whole of **Block II** is testimony to this failure, with **videos 12** and **14** being erroneous to the point of gross incompetence. **Video 33** shows a similar degree of extreme ignorance of Christianity, and the whole of **Block VIII** shows very little concern for what is commonly called the "religious conservative" point of view for social matters.

2) Video 2 (How to Argue): There are some comments I think need to be highlighted and remembered for future videos. Also, if one looks closely at the diagram at min 5:38, we see that there are five philosophical arguments. We speak of the first one in this video (deductive reasoning) and two more (inductive and abductive reasoning) in the next video. Argument from analogy is briefly described in **video 11**. *reductio ad absurdum* is not mentioned by name in this series at all, although it is sometimes used (**video 14** has a notable, although flawed, use of it). I will address these last two arguments below.

i) The Case for Free Will: I want the gentle reader to remember the introduction here when we get to **Block V (Free Will and Determinism)**, and some other videos afterwards. Notice how everything Hank says in this video can only make sense if we have free will. If we have no choices, then we cannot really do things that involve choice (such as making an argument, thanking someone for doing something, or even desiring to be a better persuader). Such activities would be illusional. I go into more detail at **Topics V.A** and **V.B**.

ii) Plato and Religion: I believe this is the first time religion is called "irrational," and it won't be the last. Rest assured this will be debunked later (**videos 9 - 12** and **14** in particular), but for now I just want to point out that while Plato might have heard of Jehovah (or at least of the Jewish nation), I have no reason to expect that he really understood the uniqueness of Jehovah. He probably assumed that Jehovah was just another pagan god, if he thought of Him at all. For Plato to call belief in the Greek gods as "irrational" is indeed a fair statement, but it is a flawed premise to assume it applies to other gods. But this supports my observation that ancient philosophers did indeed have wisdom from Jehovah, only that it was an imperfect understanding (**Topic B.1**). For more details on this, see how Jehovah, Allah, Brahman and pagan gods compare in **Topic II.A - II.D**.

iii) Humanity: I do want to call out Hank on his claim that most people don't buy into the idea that some people can be less human than others (min 3:29). We see this claim challenged as

early as **videos 20** and **21** and very much so in **video 45**. There is widespread willingness to call some less human than others when it comes to the matters of abortion and euthanasia today, just as there once was widespread willingness to call slaves, women and entire ethnic groups less human in other times.

iv) Thought Bubble: One of the problems I have with so many of the more modern philosophies is that they have to struggle so hard to give us a demonstration of their theories. It is like they are admitting that their theories have no practical value. The example given here of the barber may help prove the point the philosopher tried to make, yet is quite a preposterous scenario. Why would a government make a law that all men be shaved? Sadly, this is the most lucid question I have concerning it. Why would a barber create a shop policy that put himself in legal peril because of the apparent dilemma? Why focus on a town so small that only one barber could support himself there?

v) Argument from Analogy: This is perhaps the most common form of argument made, as humans do it all the time without thinking about it. The argument suggests that if one can find similarities between two objects, that there must be additional similarities between them. Suppose I went to a movie that I liked and it had a distinctive poster advertising it in the marquee. If the next time I go to the movies and see a new poster that reminds me of the first poster, then I will likely assume I will like this new movie as well. The whole advertising industry thrives on this argument. But it can be taken too far. This form of argument is a gateway to Acedia (intellectual laziness), as it is basically an argument to make assumptions. A major part of my preliminary discussion in **Block II** is directed to destroying the fallacies made by assuming that Jehovah is just like other gods, and that all morality is the same.

vi) Reductio ad Absurdum: This is Latin for reduction to absurdity. In this argument, one tries to prove one's argument by showing how the opposite is contradictory, impractical or absurd. Notice, however, that the absurd is actually endorsed by Sartre and Camus (**video 16**). This series actually uses *reductio ad absurdum* several times in its efforts to discredit religion. We see it used in suggesting the 5 Minute Theory (**video 5**), in an effort to discredit the ultimate causation theory (**video 10**), in proposing Teapotism (**video 15**), and even in the dilemma of the Euthyphro Problem (**video 33**). In **video 14**, we will see argument from analogy combined with *reductio ad absurdum* by comparing the religious to anti-vaxxers and then discrediting the anti-vaxxer's position. While not mentioned in this series, Last Thursdayism (the belief that the universe was created last Thursday) is also a popular example of *reductio ad absurdum* being used to discredit Christianity.

3) Video 3 (How to Argue - Induction & Abduction): Again, no serious disagreements, but I do have some observations.

i) General Comment: Note that inductive reasoning could be used as an argument *against* Christianity (how likely is it that Jesus left the tomb on his own power after dying). But the very premise of inductive reasoning admits that it may not be right, as it is based on probabilities and educated guesses. Science and history, however, seem to side with Jehovah when looked at in detail. Theory after theory that attempts to explain things without Jehovah are failing, whereas the Christian theories are able to accept all new evidence that seekers of truth find.

ii) Thought Bubble: The Thought Bubble did indeed prove a point: that we do not know with certainty that emeralds won't one day turn blue. I frequently use a similar concept concerning gravity when trying to explain the difference between the literal definition of "proof" versus having very strong confidence. As time only moves in one direction for our consciousness, we can only offer proof with regard to past events, and even then with great difficulty. But this was not the

point the Thought Bubble was really supposed to be proving. The point was that inductive and abductive methods are prone to failure. In this case, we were supposed to be warned that while all things made of Grue will someday change from green to blue, we cannot assume that all things green are Grue. I think the popular example of "everyone who lives in Atlanta lives in Georgia, but not everyone who lives in Georgia lives in Atlanta" does a better job with this.

iii) Socratic Method: This was well explained, but I disagree strongly that we can just admit there is no right answer. Now, don't construe my claim as saying the truth can be known in its entirety; I do believe there are still mysteries in life. How well or poorly a given theory explains truth can be used as a measuring stick for the value of truth found, and empirical evidence is the means of measuring. To accept the idea of truth means one acknowledges some ideas must be untruth. In any case, if both sides have run out of facts and still no consensus is reached, or (more likely) one party is too emotionally attached to an idea to give it up no matter what the facts are, then to "agree to disagree" may be appropriate for the time being. But at the very least, an unsettled argument means at least one party needs to reconsider his position.

Two very dangerous conditions come from simply assuming it is okay to not reach a consensus. The first is that the idea of voluntarism (something is true because I want it to be true) is acceptable. The second is the idea that skepticism (I doubt what someone else says because I don't like it) is the ultimate counter-argument. The goal of any debate should be to reach a decision on what to believe in as truth. One should admit when the other party has the better argument. At this point, the loser should either accept that the interlocutor has a better understanding of the truth, or do additional research and contemplation to provide a better argument for a future debate. If both parties leave the debate with contrary opinions, yet both feel they won, then the debate was a failure.

4) Video 4 (Leonardo DiCaprio & the Nature of Reality): This is an excellent video, and three of the next four are quite good, too. In this video, we see a foundation upon which an argument for Jehovah is possible, although the series never builds up on it.

i) Unintended Irony: I think that it quite ironic that practically this entire video is dedicated to seeking a higher truth that seems unimaginable, while the series steadfastly not only rejects Christianity (**videos 12 and 33**), but mocks it with Teapotism (**video 15**). And the irony does not end there. Did anyone notice that only *one* of the *three* slaves in the cave (beginning at about min 2:06) "saw the light"? Christians, who often use the expression "see the light," represent about one third of the world's population. Furthermore, to discover the unimaginable goes hand-in-hand with Imagination. My strongest case *for* Jehovah will be made using imagination (**Block VI**). Finally, the idea that those who see the light see a fuller, deeper reality has been adopted by many Christians, with C.S. Lewis's book *The Great Divorce* being an excellent example.

ii) The No Cat Riddle: This is the real gem of the video. I will refer to it many times as we go through the series. The joke, as explained, rests on the idea of "No Cat" being used as the name of a species of cat, as opposed to the concept of such a cat not having existence. There is a famous argument to prove Jehovah cannot exist. It basically goes like this: God is all good and God created everything. Yet there is evil in the world, therefore God cannot be all good and also have created everything. From here, we can backtrack and deny that God is truthful and therefore the entire Bible is based on a lie. Since the Bible is based on a lie, we can't believe in God. The error of this line of reasoning is, just like the "No Cat" joke, that evil was assumed to have an existence all its own, rather than as a concept of the non-existence of good. Since evil has no existence in creation, we have no paradox of God creating evil and this argument falls apart.

5) Video 5 (Neo, Meet Rene Cartesian Skepticism): Another great video, and it is the most respectful video to Christianity in the series. Which is sad considering that, in this video, we are told that a Catholic couldn't believe that an "evil genius" could possibly exist (min 6:37).

i) Descartes: As we can see from Descartes, any meaningful understanding of truth must have at least one rational assumption to build upon. To create any meaningful truth completely on *a priori* is doomed to fail because the only knowledge we have with complete and unquestionable certainty is our own existence. At best, "I think, therefore I am" can only be followed by "I am, therefore I do," and "I am, therefore I feel." But in what context can we "do" or "feel" anything? We need at least one assumption (and often more) about reality to say *this* is what we are doing or *this* is what we are feeling.

Descartes's assumption that Jehovah was real allowed him to claim that Jehovah would not deceive him. Since there was no deception, then any "do" or "feel" that Descartes did or felt must be real and not an illusion. Descartes admitted to needing to make an assumption about God (Jehovah) to move forward. The Fathers of Atheism likewise have needed assumptions for their theories, but not all of them have been so forward in admitting it.

ii) The "5 Minute Theory": This was well explained, although I question exactly why it was mentioned that Descartes didn't believe in the "evil genius." As a Catholic, he would have believed in the great corrupter, Satan. In normal circumstances, I would be inclined to see what Descartes actually meant by that, but considering the grievous errors the series makes concerning Jehovah (**videos 10 - 12 and 33**), I instead question the research done concerning Descartes here.

I do not think a rational Christian can believe in the 5 Minute Theory (or Last Thursdayism, the 6,000 Year Theory or any other similar concept), as Jehovah is unchanging (**Topic II.A.1**). By being unchanging, He can't be deceitful. The 5 Minute Theory indicates either a deceitful Jehovah, or a world grossly corrupted by Satan. But while Jehovah does allow Satan to corrupt this world, the corruption implied by the 5 Minute Theory would be on a scale so massive as to suggest that Satan is a near (or actual) equal to Jehovah. This, of course, is quite contrary to Christian beliefs. Sadly, many well-meaning Christian fundamentalists encourage this when trying to reconcile the "6,000 Year Theory" that they claim the Bible supports with the Four Billion Year Earth Theory of science. This concept might be possible with Allah (**Topic II.A.2**) or Brahma (**Topic II.A.3**), but not for Christians.

iii) Idealism: Much of what is taught here laid the ground work for idealism as taught by Berkeley (after whom the famous school in California is named). In fact, I think this video overstated the contributions of Descartes to the movie *The Matrix* while ignoring Berkeley's much more obvious influence. What Hank called "the evil genius" is also known as "the mad scientist with a brain in a jar." Some of these ideas are promoted more in the next video. But while Descartes needed to assume Jehovah in order to validate his knowledge, Berkeley turned this around and assumed his consistent perceptions must be "proof" of Jehovah. As such, Berkeley has been scorned by the Fathers of Atheism. While the Fathers rarely mentioned Berkeley by name in their works, many of their works were clear efforts to discredit the conclusions of Berkeley.

6) Video 6 (Locke, Berkeley & Empiricism): Another great video, although what is left out is a great loss to the viewer. As I said before, I am sympathetic to the constraints this series must deal with, but some things are best left unsaid altogether if not properly explained.

i) Empiricism: Empiricism as used in this video is not as I defined it earlier (**Topic A.2**). Words can have many meanings, and even words within a single profession are not immune to this reality, which is why I take time to define certain words. I look at empiricism as a way to prove the validity of a theory made by rationalism, but Locke used it as a means to gain knowledge. This is a subtle but powerful difference when trying to understand knowledge. Unfortunately, this series does not do a good job on explaining knowledge, despite the next video being dedicated to it.

ii) Locke and the Clean Slate: Generally speaking, I look at Locke's efforts here much in the same way as I will Saint Aslem's efforts later (**video 9**): as someone breaking new ground. I don't expect Locke to have all the answers right as he is essentially formulating tough questions and starting a philosophical discussion that others will enter into with the advantage of different insights.

I do, however, question if we are truly born with a "clean slate." Do we not perform certain functions on instinct, even while prenatal? No one teaches a fetus how to start its own heart, and the concept of "nature vs nurture" (called instinct vs reflex here) is well accepted by natural scientists. These scientists do not debate the *existence* of either nature or nurture, but rather how to attribute a particular activity to one or the other. I think it is here that we see for the first time in the series how extreme Rationalism, being isolated from reality, can go wrong.

iii) Idealism: I feel *The Matrix*, used for **video 5**, would have been much better off here, as it perfectly explains how Berkeley's theory (idealism) works. Also, note that Berkeley not only took exception to Locke's empiricism, but to classical materialism as well. By suggesting that reality only consists of ideas and perceivers (Hank failed to address the role of "ideas" in the video), all one is left with is a *belief* that material things exist. No real argument can discredit this, because any measure we take of matter must be perceived. But while Berkeley was attempting to prove Jehovah as the only rational explanation for consistency in our perceptions, the "mad scientist with a brain in a jar" does provide an alternative explanation. *The Matrix* is a trilogy (a 4th movie is expected in December of 2021) based on this "mad scientist" concept and, interestingly enough, for there to be any internal logic to the trilogy, the Matrix itself had more similarities to Jehovah than differences (although presented in a distorted way because the protagonists of the movie would be servants of Satan).

iv) Parting Shot: In the previous video, we were told that philosophers sought the truth regardless of the pain. To claim that Berkeley must be wrong because philosophers don't like the idea of giving up classical materialism (clearly implied at min 8:35) tells me that philosophers have a *very* low threshold of pain. It's also a case of voluntarism: I don't believe in idealism because I want materialism to be real. When we get to free will and determinism (**Block V**), we will again come to a similar situation, as we spend two videos discussing how determinism seems to be right yet we don't want to give up the idea of free will.

Video 7 (The Meaning of Knowledge): Sorry, I have to be blunt here. This video was short but pointless. The rapid fire definitions show just how flexible definitions can be. This problem is not always one philosopher using a word one way while another uses it in another way, either. Quite often, even if accidentally, any given philosopher might use words in different ways within a single piece of work. This is why I often define or explain terms before I begin my argument.

i) Justified True Belief: Contrary to what is presented in this video, the Justified True Belief (or JTB) is a relatively new invention; being formulated in the early 20th Century. Not only that, but JTB was articulated by those who sought to contradict it (a classic example of what is known as "straw manning": create an argument with intentional flaws and then attack the flaws). Being a 20th

Century invention, where the Fathers of Atheism had greatly embraced nihilism and the lack of value, what we see here is a curious example of imbuing "value" into something (JTB) and then proving no value can exist.

JTB itself is an oxymoron. If something is known to be true, then, by definition, it is not a belief anymore. The idea that something is justified as being true suggests to me there is no reasonable doubt, but we still fall short of knowing with absolute certainty. This is just another way of saying "belief," albeit a belief with a very solid foundation. But even if "justifiable truth" can be something we look at with certainty, did we not see Descartes attempting this in **video 5**? All he came up with is "I think, therefore I am." Everything after that required a belief in something that could not be proven.

ii) Thought Bubble: The Thought Bubble did very little to clarify JTB. Indeed, I think it gives us a greater insight into how 20th Century philosophers (where *extreme* rationalism was on the brink of becoming *absolute* rationalism) were thinking than into what they concluded. In this Thought Bubble, we see an example of *both* warnings I made concerning where losing touch with reality must lead us: unrealistic examples *and* doing a better job proving points tangential to the intended point.

The first example of the job was an even greater stretch of reality than the barber example (**video 2**). The sheep example was better, but still far from saving the JTB premise from itself. It does a much better job explaining the difference between inductive reasoning (looking at most of the land and assuming it is a representative sample) and deductive reasoning (verify all facts to be true) as found in **videos 2 and 3**. Inductive is easier but more prone to error, while deductive is harder but more reliable. But neither the job or the sheep examples from the Thought Bubble addressed "justification" as described.

iii) Parting Shot: This video attempted to tell us what knowledge is, and then told us that this description was not very good. Sadly, the rest of the series follows this lead. But more importantly, we can see how rationalism can be used to corrupt our ability to reason at all.

Video 8 (Popper, Science and Pseudoscience): This video was very good. I actually learned quite a bit here about Karl Popper and was quite happy to do so.

i) Irrefutable Proof: I want to make the assertion that irrefutable proof simply does not exist. I made this assertion in **video 3**, and this series alluded to it in the previous video. Even something so common we take for granted (e.g. gravity) is not an absolute proof, as cosmologists are finding evidence that gravity may not be consistent throughout the space-time of our universe. It is more accurate to say that scientists do not believe in absolute proofs, but rather theories that have consistently been tested and shown reliable. And there is little in the world that has been tested as much as the Jewish-Christian faith for the past 3,4000 years.

ii) Popper's Proof: Popper was not trying to suggest that science has all the answers correct, only that they gain confidence in their beliefs by attempting to prove them wrong. Ironically, the extreme rationalistic philosophy this series endorses is the polar opposite of science. As we progressed from the Fathers of Atheism (**Topic B.3**) to contemporary atheists (**Topic B.4**), we see less and less concern over the actual consequences of the theories, and more and more concern over what is hoped for. Christianity is somewhere in between. Christians do not have the "conclusive" empirical evidence that science wants, yet the evidence that does exist is very compelling.

iii) Scientism: Although this word is not mentioned, to suggest that science can

provide us with irrefutable proof is what scientism is about. The problem is that science, being primarily Empirical, is not a philosophy. Since scientism is *not* science, it discredits itself.

iv) Parting Shot: At min 7:44, Hank tells us we must be willing to give up beliefs when evidence suggests or proves otherwise. I agree wholeheartedly. By the tone in his voice and knowing what comes ahead, it is pretty easy to tell he was directing this towards theists. In any case, Hank's own inability to let some ideas go do become all too evident as the series goes on. Perhaps the most disturbing example is his obvious emotional appeal to stop animal cruelty based on the pain we cause animals (**video 42**), and his deceitfully one sided attitude towards abortion (**video 45**) where he ignores the pain the unborn child goes through. If it is wrong to abuse animals because of pain caused, then the pain unborn children endure while being aborted should be wrong as well. I'll address this in some detail then.

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video 1 link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A_CAkYt3GY
video 2 link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKEhdsnKKHs
video 3 link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wrCpLJ1XAw
video 4 link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IV-8YsyghbU
video 5 link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLKrmw906TM
video 6 link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5C-s4JrymKM
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video 8 link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-X8Xfl0JdTQ