

Block IV Videos 18 through 23 (Essence)

The morbid logician seeks to make everything lucid, and succeeds in making everything mysterious. The mystic allows one thing to be mysterious, and everything else becomes lucid.

-G.K. Chesterton

Introduction: While we briefly talked about essence in **video 16**, much of what needed to be said then is discussed here more fully. In this block, we will begin to talk about what makes something what it is, and then we will talk about how it applies to the concept of "personhood." As the series progresses, personhood will come up quite often, but is used rather loosely. What I hope to do here is give a more focused definition so we can have a more consistent discussion in the future.

A) Essence and Accidentals: While Hank did a good job explaining essence in **videos 16 and 18**, we quickly see that we still need more in order to fully understand **videos 18 and 19**. If I may make an analogy of a violin, Hank has taught us how to press on some strings while pulling a bow across them to affect a sound. We know the mechanics of playing the violin, but we still do not know how to affect these sounds in a meaningful way. My guidelines below are not a Christian teaching, but I believe they are very useful as we go deeper into the series.

1) Guidelines:

i) All living things have an essence unique to themselves. This essence is the basis for the dignity (or respect) that each living thing has. While dignity and essence are indeed separate concepts, for living things they are intricately intertwined. The series is rather vague at best on this distinction, and this vagueness really impacts the final two blocks.

Animals have a dignity above that of plants. There is a hierarchy of dignity between different species of animals, with human dignity being the highest. Christians believe that humans are made in the image of Jehovah, so human dignity is equal among all humans.

ii) All nonliving things have an essence based on their function, and the dignity of this essence is beneath any living thing. Any dignity a nonliving thing has is based on the subjective needs of the [living] observer (in other words, "value" is a subjective accidental). For example, a given fruit may be critical to one animal's diet, yet can be poisonous to another species (note that I do not equate value with desirability). Also, a chair with the accidental of being padded might be more valuable to an observer than a bare wooden chair.

iii) The essence of a nonliving thing can change, while living things will retain the same essence (and therefore dignity) from conception to death. I base this on potentiality (**Topics D.3.ii and D.4.iii**).

iv) An accidental may very well have, and most often will have, an essence of its own. Hair is accidental to a human, yet if trimmed off it still remains hair: its essence of "hairness" prevails. This leads to the next one:

v) Different essences can coexist as one, yet still be distinct. Furthermore, this greater existence has its own essence. The Ship of Theseus in **video 18** is a great example of this (**Topic D.1.i**).

2) The Role of Language: In **video 26**, Hank will talk about language, but I don't think he covered it well. Be that as it may, I do have some comments on language here. The reason why we use language so much, to the point we take it for granted, is because it is both practical and has been tried and found true for generations. While most animals have means to communicate, none of them have language (as I will note in **video 26**). Without language, there would be no philosophy or math. So, my final guideline is:

When in doubt about what is an essence or an accidental, look to language. Essence is closely related to nouns; and accidentals are closely related to adjectives. This actually makes the process rather intuitive. For one example, consider the following:

The fact that dogs evolved from wolves is well known. So, do we say that dogs have the same essence as wolves or not? I say no, because over the 40,000 years since the first dogs evolved out of the grey wolves, every culture has recognized that there is still something inherently different between the two species. The wolf has "wolfness," while dogs have "dogness," despite many obvious similarities. Indeed, Native Americans (who were interested in an animal's essence and knew wolves quite well) actually called horses "big dogs" because, despite the obvious accidental of size, the horses seemed to have more "dogness" than the essence of any other animal they knew. Likewise, no culture looks at the body of a human as still being human after death. Despite retaining most of its accidentals, it has nonetheless lost the "selfness" that made it "someone" as opposed to a mere collection of organic matter.

Now, I'm sure this last point will bring up a counter-argument that reflection or discovery might result in finding a given word to be inappropriate after all. For example, hyenas are considered closer to cats than to dogs by scientists, yet most people seem to think they are related to dogs. But this is the exception that proves the rule: one has to search hard for an example of an exception, and the facts behind why it is an exception are almost always obscure to the casual observer. It is a fool's errand to rigidly categorize all intellectual knowledge anyway; some greyness and equivocality will always exist. At what point did our prehistoric ancestors first realize that the "wolfness" was gone and begin to see "dogness?" It is better to have a set of guidelines that works well 99% (or better) of the time than to have no guidelines at all.

3) Existentialism: I would like the gentle reader to review what I said in **Topic III.B.1.iii** concerning existentialism.

B) Identity and Identical: I do think that the accidentals of time and space should have been discussed. Two pennies, made from the same mold and the same batch of molten metal, would be (for all practical purposes) completely *identical*, yet they both have their own unique *identity* because they cannot occupy the same space at the same time. This is actually the key to understanding most of the "dilemmas" presented in **video 18**. Space and time are important accidentals, as without them there is no change. The reverse is also true: without change, there is no time or space. This is an important premise for Jehovah being unchanging (**Topic II.A.1**).

C) Dignity: This word will go by a lot of names and is an important concept for almost every video from this point on. As I said above (**Topic A.1.i**), an object's dignity is tied to its essence. To be more specific, dignity is the respect the object deserves based on its essence. I propose that any species that can show imagination must likewise be made in the image of God, and therefore would have a dignity equal to humans. This may be a bit much for some ultraconservative Christians, but unless and until

another species is found with imagination, this is a moot point. But this series, especially this block, does speculate on such things (as will be seen in **video21**). Christians must be able to answer it in a manner consistent with Christian teachings.

D) Video Block IV (Essence):

1) Video 18 (Batman & Identity): I'm really not interested in the philosophers mentioned in this video. All they did was prove Hank was not making things up on his own, and none of the quotes added anything new to the discussion. What we do have is several good examples to discuss essence and accidentals with, although it would have been better to talk about them *before* identity. By talking about identity first, I think the discussion became needlessly complicated. Furthermore, I think the given definition of identity was too vague to be useful. In any case, no discussion was made on the difference between identity and being identical. I reject that they are the same because I can find examples of two virtually identical items that still have unique identities due to time and space (**Topic B**).

i) The Ship of Theseus: The purpose of the ship was to move people and/or materials over water. That was its essence. We start with a single vessel that slowly had parts and crew members replaced, yet at no time did the collection of existing boat and crew parts ever serve a different purpose. The returning ship had a 100% change in its components (human and otherwise), so we must say that the returning ship was not identical to the one that left. Yet it never lost its identity or essence. Furthermore, while the crew was an accidental to the ship, it nonetheless had its own essence (to operate and maintain the boat). The accidentals of the crew are the individual crew members, who likewise have their own individual essences.

ii) The River: A river level rises and falls, its course can change as some soil is eroded while other soil is deposited, and certainly individual molecules of water within it are constantly being added to and removed from it. But the source of a river doesn't change, nor does the fact that massive amounts of water flow through it. Even after course changes, it still remains in the same geographical area. The accidentals of the river do change, but the essence of the river stays the same. While a given river stepped into today is not identical to the one yesterday, it still has the same identity.

iii) The Batman: This example highlights how the roles of essence and accidentals can be reversed based on where the focus is (something Hank alluded to yet did not develop). Batman has his own essence (fight crime in Gotham City), and who takes the role of the Batman is accidental to this. But the accidentals (persons) which took the role of the Batman have their own essences as well, and being the Batman is one of their shared accidentals.

iv) The Statue: The statue of clay is perhaps a foreshadowing of what is to come later in the series, but is presented here as a rather innocent example. Just like when I questioned where the wolf ends and the dog begins (**Topic A.2**), we are asking when a lump ends and a statue begins? Even in this case, the question only comes about during the transformation process; we do not question the essence before it was worked on or after the work was done. It is examples like this that prove the maxim Chesterton claimed in the quote at the beginning of this block. Far better to assume one thing to make everything else clear than to assume nothing and therefore know nothing at all. As for this example's creator, Alan Gibbard, note that he is being equivocal in his definitions. At min 4:18, he is quoted as saying, "The same exact thing, just in different shapes." If we look at the clay, then he is right as a lump and a statue are accidental to its being clay. But when we ask the difference between a lump and a statue, then clay becomes the accidental. Gibbard is therefor begging the question: To assume

that shape does not matter and then claim there is no difference between the two is a circular argument. Unfortunately, society seems to be accepting this flawed example of logic, and I am basing this observation on the number of commissioned rocks sitting in front of theaters, art galleries, libraries and other public buildings.

v) The Tree: What we have here is a massive play on words to detract from the matter at hand. Like all living things, a tree has the essence of a tree from conception to death. Once it dies, it is no longer a tree but lumber. To call it a "dead tree" means the same as "former tree," as the essence of treeness can only exist when it is alive.

vi) Hank's Personal Property: Hank's personal examples (the money, the dog and the coffee cup) are good, but he uses misapplied logic that confuses rather than clarifies. This is because he is not being consistent in his arguments. Furthermore, the concept of fungibility is too narrowly defined. For this concept to work, we must have *absolute* interchangeability between items. Value is subjective; therefore, two physically identical things are only fungible if the observer has not placed additional value upon them. If one is getting back change from a purchase, one probably won't care which \$20 bill comes out of the till. When another takes that same bill out of one's wallet (presumably without permission), and replaces it with another \$20 bill, the replacement does not have the same value as the first one because the first bill represented a sense of security that is now forever gone. In a similar manner, the affection (storge, **Topic VIII.A.2**) one has for a dog or souvenir adds value to it that cannot be made up for with a merely physically identical replacement.

2) Video 19 (Personal Identity): Philosophically, I think I covered all that is presented here in the previous video's comments. But note that, in this video, we are simply assuming that Jean-Paul Sartre was right and that we have no essence. Nowhere in this video (or the rest of the series) do we assume Sartre was *wrong*. As a Christian, I believe I have a soul given to me by Jehovah, and that I have a purpose in life to fulfill. That would be my essence. But even though the series closed the door on Jehovah, I think we can still answer this question with imagination and potential, as I will talk about shortly. Our memories and body tissue are mere accidentals that can, and should, change with time. Yet our selfness (identity) remains the same. And while our accidentals can change drastically, even to the point we are no longer recognizable, we still have our identity. While one may argue that this is not the same as essence, this at least allows human dignity. The approach Hank is using poses a lot of questions, but none of the answers given are ones a thinking person really wants to be true.

i) Getting Paid by the Employer: An employer does not hire one because of one's essence or dignity; he hires because of one's accidentals: skills, education, experience, intelligence, talents, etc. If the accidentals one possesses are gone (even temporarily, such as from being sick), then the employer has no need of that person, and it is in the employer's interest to get a replacement. This is true even if it is the employer's fault one is unable to work, such as an unsafe workplace (remember **video 14** where the ship sank because the owner failed to repair the ship?).

Perhaps a short-term absence (such as from a minor cold) is not worth the pain of hiring and training someone new, but what about long term issues? These can include late term pregnancy and postnatal responsibilities. The protections we have against losing a job in such a way (such as sick leave and worker's compensation laws) are not based on our accidentals; they come from respecting our essence (human dignity). The same can be said for marriage, friendship, etc. It appears to me that by failing to really understand the relationship between the essence and the accidental, we have opened the door to accepting Sartre's position to deny the essential. But if all we are is a collection of accidentals, then security is impossible. If others only take care of us because our accidentals are valuable to them,

then we will no longer be taken care of when we no longer have these accidentals. But we *can* find security if others value our dignity, because that will not change.

ii) Personhood: We have two ideas presented on what might make a person a person. If we hold that personhood is the essence of any given person (at this point we are still limiting ourselves to humans), then the whole "body" argument is seen for the shell game it is. The physical attributes of a body are merely the sum of accidentals attached to the essence of the person by whatever name we choose to give it (soul, human dignity, personhood, personal identity, etc). Hair cut from our head is not a person, and neither do we lose our personhood when it is cut off.

John Locke's argument is greatly flawed for the same reason. He is basically making the same argument, but he switched from physical accidentals to mental ones. Our thoughts, memories, experiences, and whatever else one cares to add to this list are both nonphysical and unique to us, yet they are still accidental to us. I feel the idea of switching brains to be a distraction. There is no physical thing in the world more important to our essence than the brain, but even the brain is an accidental to us. This distinction will be important when we get into **video 22**. It will carry over into **Block V (Free Will and Determination)**, and pop up a few times after that as well.

iii) Parting Shots: I was quite excited at min 4:40, when Hank talked about how one's mother remembers one's first day of kindergarten, but not the way one actually experienced it. Remember this when watching **video 22**, and the thought experiment of What Mary Doesn't Know.

At the end of the video, Hank tells us that whatever decision we make on determining what personal identity is, it should be based on reason. Is it not reasonable to seek an answer that will provide security for us when we need it the most? Something as commonplace as a stroke could deny us our job, spouse, children, parents, friends and even citizenship using any of the ideas presented in the video. Just when one needs others the most, the others have no reason to be there.

3) Video 20 (Arguments Against Personal Identity): This video builds on **videos 18 and 19**. It presents even more complicated versions of what was discussed before, but without adding anything new. Indeed, all the practical considerations for being unable to define a lasting means of identity before are only multiplied here. What is different, however, is that now we can see some real attacks on society as we know it, particularly the examples of marriage at the end of the video. We also see how easily it is for our everyday lives to be overturned by denying that we have an essence given by Jehovah. My main counterargument lies in the concepts of identity and being identical as explained in **Topic B**, and I will build on it with the concept of potentiality.

i) Potentiality: While I disagree with the implications made in this video, there are very real and important matters presented that should be discussed. A six-year-old girl is certainly not identical to her 20-something-year-old self, yet the 20-something-year-old self can only exist because the six-year-old self once existed. Furthermore, in the context of this argument, the six-year-old self only has two possible futures: to either become a 20-something-year-old self or to die beforehand. The two selves are unquestioningly connected in a way that goes beyond what even Locke claimed in the previous video. They are not just connected, they have the same identity. But this video rejects this concept (min 7:50).

ii) Culpability: This will be discussed in much greater detail in **Block VII**, but I'll summarize here for now. Because of human dignity, to lie is always wrong to some degree because it dishonors Jehovah, who is reflected the other person. It is therefore wrong for the 20-something-year-

old self to not keep the promise she made as a six-year-old (the concept of justice, **Topic VII.B.2.ii**). But this "wrong" is not on the same level as breaking her wedding vows. The degree of "wrongness" is greatly influenced by one's knowledge of how wrong it is, and the seriousness of damage done (called culpability, and is a matter of prudence, **Topic VII.B.2.i**). A six-year-old playing grown-up, quite naive of what life has in store for her, does not have the same degree of culpability as a young woman who has completed her education, has had a chance to live without the direct influence of her parents and has realistic expectations as to what will bring her lasting happiness. Of course, one could claim that a 30-something-year-old self would know even better than the 20-something-year-old self, but that is beside the point. A six-year-old knows almost nothing while most 20 something-year-olds should know enough to make most lifelong decisions.

Furthermore, the damage done by breaking the promises of the six-year-olds (both of whom have likely forgotten all about it, but so what if they do remember?) can hardly compare to the damage done by abandoning a spouse, especially if children are involved. So, the virtue of temperance (**Topic VII.B.2.iii**) needs also be considered. This example is interesting at several levels, and I will return to it twice more before I move to the next video.

iii) David Hume: If I believe, like Sartre, that "is" is an absurdity, then I would have to agree with David Hume. The part beginning at min 2:15 is an excellent example of what I said concerning how close the Fathers of Atheism came in reproducing Christianity (**Topic I.B.3**). I agree that a box with a bunch of things in it representing someone is a good analogy on how humans change over time. However, I fail to see what removing that box has to do with this understanding. It appears to be an illustration of what he was talking about (the lack of essence for a person), not an actual argument to support it. And since there was no argument, I have no reason to accept his assertion that there is no "self."

iv) Thought Bubble: I have no problem with the first half of the Thought Bubble, but the second half goes too far. Derek Parfit is trying to base one theory on another, untested, theory. At some point, speculation must remain speculation until science can catch up (if it ever can). Furthermore, whether one believes in Jehovah or not matters greatly here.

In the first half, if we deny the existence of Jehovah, then my theory of imagination and potential remains unaffected. The moment the old body was destroyed, its potential was redirected to the new body, and, by the definition of the experiment (identical reconstruction), imagination would exist in the new body. As for second half, where two bodies come into existence, they would each have their own identity, but will cease to be identical as they will immediately have new and different experiences. As imagination is interactive with one's surroundings, and they no longer share the same time and space, they now have two distinct essences.

The only way Parfit's ideas have a problem is if Jehovah exists, as we now have to answer the question of the soul. The soul is bound to the body, but is also transcendental to it (another example of the Mind-Body problem in **video 22**). Will the soul follow the body in the first example? In the second example, will the soul be split, will one of them be without a soul, or will Jehovah grant another soul? Christians will need to consider this should such technology ever be available, although the likelihood of such is quite remote. Until such time, the question is moot and I can't blame Christians for putting their mental energies into projects with a lot more promise.

v) Derek Parfit: Note that, after the Thought Bubble, Parfit basically returns to Locke's theory from the previous video. And since I already addressed the matter (**Topic D.2.ii**), there

is no point in restating it here. Hank does provide legitimate consequences on what Parfit's view of reality would look like, but I feel they were grossly understated.

vi) The Promise: We see a 6-year-old girl making an innocent promise to a friend being held to the same standard as her grown-up self making a marriage vow to her intended husband. Yet notice that the emphasis of the video was not the moral obligation to keep a promise, but rather to determine at what point breaking the promise is acceptable. Rather than discuss the importance of keeping promises in our society, here we are seeking ways to circumvent the glue that holds society together. We are only five videos past closing the door on religion (Christianity in particular) and have 26 more to go, and we see the family unit coming under attack because of the incompleteness of the series' teachings (the extent of this attack is fully realized in **video 43**).

vii) Marriage: To describe a marriage the way the video did, the logical conclusion of an either/or mentality (considered a fallacy in **video 44**), makes marriage meaningless. In this perspective, it is not a union of two people that cherish each other; it is a contract of convenience. A Christian marriage is supposed to be two people giving up the "I" for the "we" in pursuit of a common good. What is presented here is a social contract with tax benefits, and each member is out for their own pleasure. This is not an act of selfless unity, but rather a selfish means of personal advancement. In other words, both parties are using each other. This may work as long as both parties are healthy and/or the love of eros (**Topic VIII.A.3**) is strong, or the loves of philia and storge (**Topics VIII.A.1 and VIII.A.2**) are stronger than any routine displeasures or inconveniences. It falls apart when serious troubles are introduced, and when selfish demands increase while the benefits received diminish. The Christian view of marriage, where Jehovah is the third member of the union, brings all four loves together (**Topic VIII.A**).

4) Video 21 (Personhood): This video is perhaps the most deceptive in the whole series. Hank constantly uses personhood in the context of one having legal rights in society, even though only one of the several theories presented suggests this (min 6:20), and this theory is not even given a name. It is just thrown out there without even a philosopher to support it. What I find most disturbing is that this video clearly wants to promote aliens and machines with artificial intelligence (**video 23**) as being persons, while unborn children and those in ill health are "iffy" at best (the unspoken but real consequence of the Cognitive Criterion). We will see Peter Singer and his very extreme ideas on personhood a lot in **Block VIII (Ethics)**. I also want to point out that while we may one day find nonhumans who are persons, so far the only persons we know of are human.

i) Morality: To begin with, I have a problem with how the word morality is used here. I addressed morality already in **Block II (Religion)** and will do more in **Block VII (Morality)**. **Block VII** is followed by a seven video block on how to act based on moral knowledge (ethics). This is almost half of the whole series, and yet not one word is mentioned on what this might mean. In the given context, he seems to mean "good behavior."

I find it extremely disturbing that this video freely interchanges personhood with morality. I would agree that morality only has meaning to those *with* personhood, but that does not make them one and the same. The fact that not a single famous philosopher could be found to support the ideas presented in this video should speak volumes. To grant Superman personhood simply because he is agreeable, while denying Lex Luther personhood because he is disagreeable, is insane. Consider this everyday example: If one is drunk at a bar, does one's friend become less of a person because they become disagreeable when demanding one's keys? Is it therefore ethical to allow a friend to drive drunk for the sake of avoiding a disagreement? Ultimately, this code of morality is foreign to my

Christian code of morality, so I cannot make judgments on any behavior that is consistent with this code. But I can point out the consequences of what this idea of morality means, and I can judge if one's ethics are consistent with it. To have a moral system based on "agreeability" must accept that stopping a friend from driving drunk is unethical. Furthermore, if we assume "personhood" is determined by being agreeable, then trying to stop a friend from driving drunk means one loses their personhood and legal rights.

ii) Christian Perspective on Personhood: In **Topic A.1.iii**, I proposed that the essence of a living thing begins at conception and ends at death. I also held that respect of something's essence measures its dignity, and that human dignity was superior above all other earthly things (**Topic C**). If man is to be held higher than all other earthly things, then it must be based on something unique to man, and Christians believe that this comes from man being made in the image of Jehovah. But I understand that this is not a satisfactory explanation for skeptics, so let us see if there is secular reasoning that gets us there as well.

iii) Secular Perspective on Personhood: As I mentioned above, if we want to hold man as superior to all other living things, we need to find something truly unique in man. I propose that this is imagination (**Block VI**). Everything we see in science fiction concerning aliens and artificial intelligence that might make us want to classify them as "persons" invariably comes back to whether or not they have imagination. Imagination is the root of the cognitive criteria. But one could argue that a person who is asleep may not meet the cognitive criteria, so I think there is one more aspect we need to address for a secular argument: potentiality.

As we talked about in **video 20**, the potential of the 6-year-old is either to become a 20-something-year-old version of herself or to die beforehand. Of course, her older self could turn out in untold number of ways, but whatever older self actually comes about, it could only have come from the specific 6-year-old. No other 6-year-old girl has the potential to be this 20-something-year-old young lady. We can take this chain of potentiality all the way back to conception. It is only at conception that I feel we can draw the line, because before conception she was actually two separate entities, not one. The sperm did not have the possibility to become the 6-year-old girl, as it had to die for this girl to exist. Same thing for the egg. Even Hank suggests this, as at min 0:40 he proudly claims that to be human means to have human DNA. Neither sperm nor eggs have a full [i.e., diploid] set of DNA.

I have already suggested that imagination (and the potential for it) is the only [secular] accidental that can define personhood. If it is based on any other accidental, then any moral outrage against heinous activities such as the slave trade, child pornography, genocide, rape, etc., is groundless, as any other accidental can be rationalized away. Perhaps one of the most profound things Hank says in the entire series was made here at min 7:59: "As you think of the factors that are important, be careful how you cast your net. Be sure you include everyone you think should be included and exclude those you think should be excluded." To claim personhood based any other accidental may come back to harm you.

iv) Nonhuman Personhood: While all the ideas presented in the video seem to be stumped on whether or not this could be possible, the Christian and secular perspectives I talked about take it in stride. If Jehovah made alien races in His image as well, then they have the dignity of personhood that is equal with human dignity. Likewise, if a species can be found that has imagination, then it should likewise be considered a "person."

v) Abortion, Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide: Although abortion was specifically mentioned here while the others were only hinted at, I will talk specifically on these topics in **video 45**.

vi) Social Criterion: This is essentially a legal definition, yet the emphasis is unduly placed on "being cared for." It has to be legal, not emotional like the video suggested. If it were emotional, then one million babies a year in the U.S. would be spared horrifying deaths in abortions on grounds that there are actually many people who care that such children are being murdered. Furthermore, since "care" itself comes back to one being able to meet certain legal requirements in order to save the child's life, we see it was really a legal issue after all.

vii) Law and Philosophy: I would like to point out that philosophy should not be created to justify a law (that is exactly what slavers did in times past), but rather law should be based on sound philosophy.

5) Video 22 (Where Does Our Mind Reside?): To start off, this video is out of place. It might have done well after **video 6**, where Berkeley's idealism was all too briefly discussed. It *might* have found a place after **video 18** and bridged the gap between essence/accidentals and personhood (but I'm not certain of this). I think having it included with **Block V (Free Will and Determinism)** would have been interesting. But while there were many good places to put this video in the series, placing it here was a mistake. It needlessly interrupts the steady progression made since **video 18** and does not contribute anything to this block's theme.

If we get over the misplacement, however, then I think we will find this video to be one of the better balanced of the series. It does a great job explaining *why* there is a great debate over free will (as we will see in the next block, there is a logical progression of point and counterpoint, and we see a fair treatment of both sides the whole time.

i) Idealism Expanded: In **video 6**, we talked briefly about George Berkeley's ideas, yet failed to give these ideas their proper name. He championed what is known as idealism and, if you remember, suggested that "reality" only exists in ideas and perceivers. No argument can dispute this, as all information must come from our senses, and everything we claim to know comes from how our mind perceives what our senses tell us. The only real question that needed to be answered by Berkeley to have a coherent theory was why ideas are so consistent over time and between different perceivers? In the video, this question was presented by asking why everything continues to exist while we sleep? Materialists would say that it is because matter actually exists and cannot be destroyed. But Berkeley pointed out all the contradictions and inconsistencies of materialism (what is called "reductive physicalism" in this video) in order to refute this. Instead, he claimed that an omniscient Jehovah is what keeps our reality consistent.

ii) Free Will versus Determinism: Soon we will talk about free will versus determinism properly (**Block V**). While I have much to say later, for now please accept my premise that free will is essential to having a mind-body problem. Determinism suggests that our memories, thoughts and desires are merely impulses beyond our control. In other words: illusionary. Determinism *does* answer why we can behave so differently when our brains are affected by outside factors, including brain damage. But this theory does not allow the mind to exist as a separate entity.

So, with this said, we can approach the mind-body problem from the idealism and materialism perspectives. If we go with the idealism perspective, we need to address what provides the continuity of ideas necessary for it. We can go with Jehovah without further complication and show that there is no mind-body problem because there is no body, only the mind. If we go with the "mad scientist with a brain in a jar" theory (as seen in the movie *The Matrix* (**videos 5 and 6**)), then we might think we are

still in the same situation of being all mind and no body. But there is the question of, "What is the reality of the mad scientist?" So this really doesn't answer the problem, it merely pushes the problem back one step. I think that the "mad scientist" theory ultimately must either bring us back to materialism or to Jehovah. So idealism favors Jehovah.

If we look at the mind-body problem from the materialistic perspective, then it comes down to whether one believes in free will or determinism. If one believes in determinism, then there is no mind-body problem because the mind does not exist, only the body. If one believes in free will, then one must believe in the supernatural because nature cannot account for it. If it is the supernatural, then we will naturally not be able to understand it scientifically because it cannot be examined scientifically. In this case, we come to what is known as compatibilism (**video 25**). We live in deterministic universe, yet we can create a new chain of cause and effects through our free will. Of course, accepting the supernatural aspect of compatibilism brings us back to Jehovah.

I realize that none of these answers are easy to accept, but as this video pointed out there is no way of knowing for sure. The best we can do is to see if there is evidence that either free will or determinism is the best choice, which I will do in **Block V**.

iii) What Mary Doesn't Know: Like all analogies, it does fail at a certain point (Mary should have at least been able to see the color of her skin and hair). But other than that, it is perhaps the best explanation I have heard concerning a very complex idea. Especially for when we get to the end of the series in **Block VIII**. We should be very wary of trusting a handful of people to do what is "good" for the world based solely on the "knowledge" they profess to have.

In the case of Mary, this example concerning color is innocent enough. It is easy to say, "So what?" But what about something more serious? Do we really want someone dictating our diet if he knows everything there is to know about nutrition, but has never experienced hunger? Do we really want someone with full knowledge of the human body to perform surgery on us if they never practiced on cadavers? Do we really want someone sentencing us for a crime committed under emotional distress if he knows everything about criminal law, but has never experienced fear? I could go on, but I hope this proves the point.

iv) Begging the Question: I find it quite interesting that Frank Jackson's idea is attacked as "begging the question." If we look at min 4:53, we remember that Hank began the discussion with, "Here's the question: ..." Asking a question is not a "proof;" it is a challenge. Jackson certainly holds on to a belief based on a reasonable observation, but he is not offering it as proof. Instead, he is asking those with a different set of beliefs to account for this observation. Contrary to what Hank says at min 5:55, Jackson is not assuming that Mary learned anything, but is asking for clarification on the matter. The fact that physicalists are (so far) unable to do so does not prove them wrong, but one should be careful with how much credibility one gives them until their theory can account for such an obvious fact of life.

v) Parting Shot: As one watches the video, note that the whole debate actually came down to an apparent failure of scientism (**Topic V.D.1.iii**). Substance dualism was not given up because it wasn't rational, but because it cannot be proven falsifiable. The mind, if it exists, is outside of the physical, therefore science cannot be used to determine the truth of it. This is a scary thought for atheists, as to admit that truth can exist outside of the physical is a major step on the road back to theism.

6) Video 23 (Artificial Intelligence & Personality): Although this video in many ways is a logical extension of what was seen in **videos 19-21**, I think we should have had the videos of free will (**Block V**) shown before now. Nevertheless, all that really needs to be said concerning personhood of AI has already been said when concerning personhood of aliens (**video 21**). For a computer to be considered a person, it must have imagination and its attendant reason, free will and the need for a moral code. For AI to truly be considered a person, it must reach a point where it can override its own programming. It must make a specific response to a specific stimulus while taking into consideration circumstances outside its programming. Hank claims this at min 5:05. My only complaint with this statement is that he implied Harry could already do this. He presented no evidence whatsoever in the video that Harry transcended his programming, only that he can do what humans can do.

i) Thought Bubble: The Thought Bubble did a wonderful job explaining why programming, no matter how advanced, is not really reason or free will. The counterargument to the Chinese Room, in my opinion, fails in epic fashion. It doesn't matter if the entire room or only the man inside the room is considered the "system." In both cases, a specific stimulus will unfailingly produce a specific, predetermined response. Nothing has changed by redefining the system. To truly have free will, there needs to be at least two possible outcomes for a specific stimulus. This would have been a more appropriate counter to the Chinese Room theory, but even in this case, it needs to be more than simply rolling dice to determine the choice. More on how randomness is not the same as free will in the next block.

ii) Artificial Intelligence: I don't know at what point free will can be measured (but I can offer a guess, see below), but the more computers are programmed to behave more "human," the harder it will be to know when we do cross that point (if we can). As we have not discussed free will in this series yet, I will reserve most of my comments on it for later. But I do not buy into the idea that we are all merely "programmed," as claimed from minute 4:38 to 5:07. I can certainly appreciate the similarities between education and programming, but remember that Hank admitted to our ability to transcend what we take in. While I may be nit-picking here, I think this ability to transcend this input to form our own opinions is a subtle but powerful distinction between education and programming.

My guess as to when Strong AI has been achieved will involve a criminal case. If something with AI is used to commit a crime, we will normally arrest whoever programmed or directed this machine, not the machine itself. When it can be demonstrated in a legal fashion that something with AI committed a crime that was not the responsibility of someone else (and this will undoubtedly cause much controversy), when it is proven that the machine committed a crime of its own accord, then I believe we will have determined that Strong AI exists.

iii) Souls for Computers: The concept of Jehovah has been briefly brought back, although the ignorance of what Christians believe about Jehovah in this series remains astonishing. Just because Jehovah *can* do something does not mean He *will* do it. This is after all, what free will means at its simplest terms. I have no doubt that Jehovah *could* provide a soul to a computer, although if He does it will be on His terms, not ours. But man should be wary of this ever happening, as this means computers would be our equals as opposed to our servants.

iv) Parting Shot: While the personhood of fetuses and infants are not specifically discussed here (it took place in **video 21**), I find it sad that there is obviously more interest in giving personhood to computers than to unborn children (or even children under 18 months or so). In this video, Hank is essentially arguing "potentiality" to justify discussing the idea of personhood for

computers. This is hypocritical, as potential was not used to justify fetuses or for those in comas as deserving consideration for personhood previously, or in the upcoming **video 45**.

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video18 link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-TFCMK4i2lo&t=481s>
video19 link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=trqDnLNRuSc>
video 20 link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17WiQ_tNld4
video 21 link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxM9BZeRrUI>
video 22 link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3SJROTXnmus>
video 23 link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39EdqUbj92U&t=495s>