



David Roemer &lt;david@dkroemer.com&gt;

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**Re: Philosophy**

17 messages

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**David Roemer** <david@dkroemer.com>

Tue, Apr 19, 2016 at 3:53 PM

To: Jim Shelton &lt;jshelton@uca.edu&gt;

Dear Jim,

You are correct. A metaphysical principle is a concept, not a real thing. But I am a real thing. I exist. I am the same being now that I was 10 years ago. I am a being that changed in time. How can I be the same and different?. The metaphysical solution is that I am a composition of two incomplete beings or principles: substance and accidents. What is your solution to the paradox?

David

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 On Tue, Apr 19, 2016 at 6:39 PM, Jim Shelton <jshelton@uca.edu> wrote:

David,

Boy! You just re-state what I objected to, but throw out more terms that I cannot understand. [You make no attempt to explain how an actuality, a real thing, could be simply "infinite" (rather than having some property infinitely). You ignore the use of an adjective rather than an adverb. I guess you want to say that the thing you call "God" has no properties at all; it just exists. If so, I cannot understand how it could do anything, for any capacity that it has would be a property or characteristic. Having power of some sort or to some degree, for example, is a property (part of its "essence" to use an archaic expression). I think that what makes something an ape is the set of genes that it inherits from its parents. This goes for all the species. Is what you call a "soul" just another word for the genetic inheritance of every member of a species? If so then the soul of an alligator would be part of its body, namely that part (the genes) it shares with all other alligators.. And do all humans share the same soul and all chickens share the same soul? But if genetics is the "soul" then you are wrong to say that it makes us equal since there are many genes that do not just determine our species membership but also often affect how we differ from one another.

Then you call the soul a "principle." Principles seem to be concepts rather than existing things.

If by "free will" you mean the ability to do something you want to do, then many animals have free will. My dog, for example, seems to enjoy doing what she wants to do and to do so without interference against her own desire. In those instances, she is acting "freely." If by "free will" you mean that our desires are not the result of causal conditions, then it seems you are mistaken. For conditions in our bodies often cause us to have hunger, thirst, sexual desire, etc. Or you might mean that whatever our desires, we can still choose to do something that we do not want to do at all. Why on earth anyone would want that I have no idea. It sounds more like slavery than freedom.

I do not know what you mean by the term 'spiritual' when applied to something that is supposed to be a real thing in the universe.

Jim

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 On Tue, Apr 19, 2016 at 4:13 PM, David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com> wrote:

Jim,

In metaphysics, a being that changes is a composition of substance and accident. A member of a class of beings is a composition of form (soul) and matter (body). A finite being is a composition of essence and existence. A finite being's essence limits its existence. An infinite being is a pure act of existence.

Human beings are superior to animals because we have free will and the conscious knowledge of humans. The principle or incomplete being that makes us equal is called the soul. The principle that makes us different is called the body. The human soul is spiritual because we can comprehend free will, but we can't define it.

On Tue, Apr 19, 2016 at 5:06 PM, Jim Shelton <jshelton@uca.edu> wrote:

David,

I have no idea what an infinite being is. Does that mean it is infinitely long? infinitely short? Infinitely small? Infinitely fat? Infinitely cruel? Infinitely stupid? Etc. It seems to say that "an actual thing is infinite" is to say that "X is infinitely Y, or infinitely Z or infinitely something or other." It makes no sense to say simply that a real or actual thing is "infinite." Of course non-real things or abstract mental creations, such as the counting numerals, are said to "be" infinite. Nor do I understand what is meant by "a pure act of existence without a limiting essence." Does that mean that it has no properties whatever? For any assigned property necessarily limits a thing. For example, if something has the property of being five feet tall then that limits it. It cannot be less than five feet tall. And if it has the property of being as big as the universe then it cannot be as small as an atom. Your seem to be speaking nonsense. I have no idea why you say that if everything is finite then the universe would not be intelligible. Of course, the universe is not completely intelligible. At least we have not got there yet, and it looks like we never will. But why adding a thing that is in some undefined sense "infinite" makes it intelligible I have no idea.

Jim

On Tue, Apr 19, 2016 at 2:51 PM, David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com> wrote:

Dear Jim,

I exist and you exist but we are different beings. We are finite being. God is an infinite being, that is, a pure act of existence without a limiting essence. If only finite beings existed, the universe would not be intelligible. Assuming or hoping the universe is intelligible, means that an infinite being exists. In Western religions, we call the infinite being God.

David

On Tue, Apr 19, 2016 at 2:30 PM, Jim Shelton <jshelton@uca.edu> wrote:

In your view, what are the necessary characteristics a thing must have to be properly called "God"?

Knowing those characteristics that you require would enable one to detect the reality of such a thing. For example, what are the necessary characteristics of a blobop? Once they are specified, one will have some indication of how to go about deciding on evidential grounds if there are any blobops. But without such, there is simply no meaning to the term. The same holds for the term 'God.' One might think that among the necessary characteristics is to be very powerful, to be very aggressive, to be tall, to be fat, to have buck teeth, to have no teeth, to be cruel, to be green, and so on. This is another way of asking what do you mean when you use the term 'God'?

Jim Shelton

On Sun, Apr 17, 2016 at 8:03 PM, David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com> wrote:

Dear Dr. Shelton,

What would make a great article, in my opinion, is a melding of these three article that I have written and are available online:

<https://shroudofturin.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/roemer.pdf>

[https://www.academia.edu/23340072/WHY\\_PEOPLE\\_BELIEVE\\_GOD\\_CAUSED\\_THE\\_BIG\\_BANG](https://www.academia.edu/23340072/WHY_PEOPLE_BELIEVE_GOD_CAUSED_THE_BIG_BANG)

[https://www.academia.edu/20939526/An\\_Analogy\\_Between\\_Nazi\\_Germany\\_and\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://www.academia.edu/20939526/An_Analogy_Between_Nazi_Germany_and_the_United_States)

The first explains why the Shroud of Turin was probably created by Gnostics in the 1st or 2nd century using methods that have been lost in history. See "Canonical Complaint Against Cardinal Dolan: Science and the Catholic Church" (<http://www.dkroemer.com>).

The second gives a psychological explanation for why people think the scientific arguments for God's existence make sense. See "Rational Arguments For God's Existence: Evangelizing Is Good and Proselytizing Is Bad" (<http://www.newevangelist.me>).

The third tells about an absurd article about evolutionary biology in a peer-reviewed physics journal.

See "Pseudoscience in the American Journal of Physics" (<http://www.pseudoscience123.com>).

Very truly yours,  
David Roemer  
<http://www.newevangelization.info>

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**Jim Shelton** <jshelton@uca.edu>  
To: David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

Tue, Apr 19, 2016 at 7:08 PM

David,

The old substance-accident distinction, while useful for some descriptions, seems inadequate for modern understanding of the human personality. I don't know how you can determine if there is a "substance" that remains the same over time. Scientists say that over time the chemicals that make up one's body are being replaced by others, cells are dying and being replaced with new ones, etc. so that over seven years or so virtually every atom of one's body has been replaced. There is no identifiable "substance" that endures over time. How are you the same? Its the same as if you had an automobile and over ten years replaced every single part with another one. The automobile is the same one only in terms of its history and legal identification. That is the case your body. We differ from the auto in that the structures of our brains (as opposed to the molecules that make up the cells of the various parts) remain the same so that our conscious states (memories especially) are similar to the conscious states that we formerly experienced. So we, as conscious beings with some degree of self-identity remain the same in spite of being in totally new bodies in terms of the stuff that composes the body, These structures tend to remain somewhat the same over time. Our self-identity is especially affected by those brain structures that stimulate memory states. When memory goes, our self-consciousness also goes, until with some people there is nothing left so that they cannot have any self-identity.

Jim

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**David Roemer** <david@dkroemer.com>  
To: Jim Shelton <jshelton@uca.edu>

Tue, Apr 19, 2016 at 7:24 PM

Dear Jim,

We differ from autos and animals because we have free will. Free will means we possess a center of action that makes us unified with respect to ourselves. An automobile is a collection of parts, and animals do not have free will. There is no "substance" and "accidence" as you say. It is just an attempt to explain how a single unified being can change. What makes humans different from animals is "self-consciousness" not "consciousness." Consciousness can be defined. The self-consciousness of humans can not be defined except with the metaphysical jargon that turns you off.

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**Jim Shelton** <jshelton@uca.edu>  
To: David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

Wed, Apr 20, 2016 at 5:08 AM

David,

You have abandoned the original question of what you mean by the term 'God.' You just will not face the issue in a clear manner but shift around to other subjects. Now you define 'free will' in a totally vague way. Your definition would seem to apply to any organism with a brain. I think you need to study philosophy and get some idea of how to go about defining words in a clear and helpful way. Pick up a book on the various problems in philosophy and read of the many attempts to work out concepts.

Jim

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**David Roemer** <david@dkroemer.com>

Wed, Apr 20, 2016 at 5:57 AM

To: Jim Shelton &lt;jshelton@uca.edu&gt;

Dear Jim,

You asked: What do you mean by the term "God." I explained what this means, and you pointed out the shortcomings of my explanation. Perhaps, I failed to acknowledge that your comments were reasonable. I apologize.

Let us suppose I am a teacher of metaphysics and you are my student. Metaphysics is a method of inquiry, like geometry. Your job is to understand metaphysics, not to question it. If you want to question metaphysics, you should take a course in the philosophy of metaphysics.

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**Jim Shelton** <jshelton@uca.edu>

Wed, Apr 20, 2016 at 9:36 AM

To: David Roemer &lt;david@dkroemer.com&gt;

David,

I am sorry but I do not understand what you mean by saying that metaphysics is a method of inquiry. Can you give the basic elements of such a method? I do not think there is such a method and that you are just blowing. My "job" is to question everything that I have any problem with. A good student should question anything they wish to about their teacher's teachings. If the teacher cannot answer serious questions or admit they have no answers, then he or she is a bad teacher.

If you admit there are shortcomings in your definition, why do you not try to correct them? Actually, the term 'God' is often used as an honorific title, like "Master" or "President. One should be able to indicate what qualities a thing must have before he or she would honor it with a title, and that applies to the term 'God.'" What necessary characteristics must the thing you call 'God' have, in your definition? So far I have no idea whatever what those characteristics or properties are that you require for you to call a thing 'God.'

And then I would need some specification of that thing so that one could make some determination if it is reasonable to believe that it exists. For example, if someone said that to call something 'God' it must have a very high degree of physical power (as just one such possible property). Then if they say that Hiram is God, we need some specification about Hiram so that whether or not Hiram exists can be reasonably determined. Many would say that the story-book Yahweh is God. But why believe that Yahweh is anything other than a mythological story book character? This is a difficult task and you just dismiss it instead of trying to think through it clearly.

Jim

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**David Roemer** <david@dkroemer.com>

Wed, Apr 20, 2016 at 9:57 AM

To: Jim Shelton &lt;jshelton@uca.edu&gt;

Dear Jim,

The human mind is structured like the scientific method. At the lowest level are observations. At the level of inquiry we ask questions about what we observe. We want to know the cause of things, the relationship between things, and the unity between things. Extremely intelligent people invent theories to answer the questions. The third level is gathering the evidence and deciding whether a theory is true or just probable. This level requires being rational. The fourth level is deciding what to do with our bodies, which requires being responsible.

Science is the method of inquiry that arises from out sense observations: Why is the sky blue? Metaphysics is the method of inquiry arising from question we ask because we can make ourselves the subject of our own knowledge: What is knowing the sky is blue?

Knowing the sky is blue means more than that light is entering the eye and a signal is going to the brain. It means an *awareness* of this. What is this *awareness* is a metaphysical question.

With science there is a tremendous track record of success. There is nothing like that in metaphysics. However, you can prove from metaphysics that the human soul is spiritual. There is also an argument, not a proof, for God's existence.

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**Jim Shelton** <jshelton@uca.edu>  
To: David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

Wed, Apr 20, 2016 at 11:21 AM

David,

You still did not describe what the metaphysical method is. I would think that the question of what is awareness is similar to other questions. One pays attention to it, asks questions about it and then may form a theory about it which is then subjected to observational test. There has been a lot of developments over time in answer to the question. Now it seems that the most promising answer is that awareness is a brain state that has been developing over many thousands of years from lowly organisms to the much more complicated human brain states. Even Planaria worms, with no more than a light sensitive nerve cell at the top of their "head", respond to light, causing them to move into shade. Over time, there were many stages (and still are in various organism) of increasingly complicated collections and organizations of such cells until the various forms of eyes developed. Visual experience is one bit of the total awareness that organisms have. At some point in the development, internal representations of the world around the organism came to be what we identify as a visual experience. All this aided them to survive. Something like this seems to be a much more testable theory than that something one cannot even define (a "soul") is responsible. All the defender of the "soul" theory says is that somehow, how we do not know, the soul does the representation instead of the brain process. The appeal to a "soul" is nothing but a pseudo-explanation. We need a theory as to what that is and just how it "has" thoughts or awareness. There has never been any such theory.

Again, until I know what you are referring to when you speak of God, I, nor you, have no way of evaluating any supposed arguments for the existence of one. If you cannot understand the conclusion, it will not be a very interesting argument. And, stronger, there is no argument (or evidence) for the existence of God if that term remains undefined. Can you provide a clear definition for the term? If not, then you might as well mumble.

Jim

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**David Roemer** <david@dkroemer.com>  
To: Jim Shelton <jshelton@uca.edu>

Wed, Apr 20, 2016 at 12:27 PM

Jim,

Your statement, "All the defender of the 'soul' theory says is that somehow, how we do not know, the soul does the representation instead of the brain process" is a criticism of dualism. There are two variations of dualism, both of which are inconsistent with the metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas, as understood in the 20th century. Cartesian dualism is that there is a spiritual "little man" behind our eyes that controls our body like a stagecoach driver controls a team of horses.

The other variation of dualism is human beings have souls, that is, that there is something "spiritual" about the human mind. According to this idea, when a sperm connects with an egg God gives the zygote a soul. Also, when a person dies his soul goes to heaven. Both of these views are inconsistent with the theological doctrines taught by the Catholic Church.

Human beings are superior to animals because we have the conscious knowledge of human beings not the sense knowledge of animals. Also, human beings have free will. This means all human beings are equal to one another and at the same time different from one another. This paradox is resolved by saying a human is a metaphysical composition of body and soul. The soul is spiritual because we can't define free will and conscious knowledge. Another way of expressing this is to say that humans are embodied spirits or spirited bodies. Another way is to say humans are indefinables that become conscious of their own existence.

This is a proof, not an argument, because all religions are telling us we pay for our sins after we die. If you respond to this by saying science will figure out what free will is at some point in the future, I will call you a fool because you may not have a future. You may be in a car accident in a few years and find yourself in hell.

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**Jim Shelton** <jshelton@uca.edu>  
To: David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

Wed, Apr 20, 2016 at 1:22 PM

David,

If I wanted to hear such dogmas, I could go to a church. Why believe something "all religions" (or the Catholic Church) says? One idea of a proof is a demonstrative (logically valid) argument with unquestionable premises. I see no argument in your statement about souls. So therefore no proof. It is not up to science to "figure out what free will is." Free will is, first, what you define it as, in a good definition. Once that is done then perhaps scientific investigation may give evidence for it or against it. But, as I have already pointed out to you, the term 'free will' has several different meanings.

I think this discussion is a waste of my time. You seem unwilling (or unable) to define your terms in any responsible manner. The terms 'God,' 'free will,' 'soul,' 'spiritual,' 'hell,' 'survival of death,' and others (even 'humans' since you say that humans are indefinabilities) need definitions. By the way, we do not generally speak of things being "definable" (or indefinable) in the same sense that we speak of words being definable. Humans can be described. The word 'human' can be defined, as you (contrary to your claim) tried but failed by using undefined words in your definition.

I suppose you think that when I "die" I will continue to be alive but will be confined to a hell. And I suppose you think that I deserve to be there. On what grounds do you think that I deserve such punishment? And, in the first place, do you seriously think that there is a place called "Hell" occupied by once dead human beings? (Where is it?) I know some preachers preach that dogma but I see no evidence whatever to think that it is anything more than a fantasy.

Jim

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**David Roemer** <david@dkroemer.com>  
To: Jim Shelton <jshelton@uca.edu>

Wed, Apr 20, 2016 at 1:35 PM

What is your definition of free will? My definition is that it can't be defined. We can comprehend free will because we have it. But there is no answer to the question: What is the relationship between myself and my body?

What upsets you is that you are finding out you don't know what you are talking about, like most atheists. The following quote is from an atheist who knows what he is talking about, but he is a liar. He is lying because he says that dualism is a tradition concept. You are one of the victims of his lie.

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

As to your going to hell, I needed that to prove you are wrong. Suppose I said I can prove England is an island and I show you the maps. You reply, "It is only highly probable." I can't call you names for saying that. But, suppose I offer to pay for your vacation in England and you turn it down saying England is not an island. Then I can call you names. I can then say I proved England is an island.

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**Jim Shelton** <jshelton@uca.edu>

Wed, Apr 20, 2016 at 5:18 PM

To: David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

I did not ask you to define free will. I asked you to define the term "free will." If a word cannot be defined then it is meaningless. One way to define a word is by using it in an actual situation such as naming and pointing to the thing pointed to. In such a case the thing referred to must be present to our senses in some manner. The other way to define a word is to describe the thing referred to in other words. Since presumably the thing referred to by the term 'free will' is not observable, the word must be defined by the use of other words. If the word cannot be defined, then it is meaningless.

One use of the term 'free will' is to say that one is free from any obstacle, any compulsory force, that prevents that one from doing what they want to do. In this sense people have free will to varying degrees and depending on the circumstances. There are other definitions that work along these same lines. Another use of the term is to refer to choices that are not caused by any antecedent conditions, including one's desires, so that one can choose to do what they do not want to do. Yet another definition of the term is that one acts from free will when they act solely from rational considerations independent of emotions, desires or inclinations. You may have a different definition (though you say the word is indefinable).

I am puzzled about what you are talking about, not what I am talking about. I am indeed an atheist if you mean by 'theist' one who believes in an all-powerful, all-morally good, all-wise creator of the universe from nothing. But if you mean by the word one who does not believe in God you are sadly mistaken. Depending on how the term 'God' is defined, I certainly do believe in God. In fact I believe in several, again depending on the definition. If you would give me your definition, I might believe in whatever you are calling God. But so far you have not given an understandable definition.

I am not a theist because, first I have no evidence that such a being exists and, secondly, there seems to be a lot of negative evidence in the form of suffering children. No one who refuses to help a suffering child when one is all-powerful, all-wise and morally good is a logical self-contradiction. Theism, defined in that way, is simply inconsistent with the way the world is. Nor would this concept of God make it remotely possible that hell exists. Hell may indeed exist. But if it does, its existence would be the absolute proof that theism (as defined) is false. So I am a non-theist. But this does not rule out the existence of God under a different definition of the word.

You are confused. Dualism is a traditional concept. It has been around since Plato and was taken up by Augustine and by many in the present world. I would say that far and away most people in the world are dualists. For your information, I do not agree with Thomas Nagel on this matter, nor with his basic position taken in his book you refer to.

I have no idea what you are saying in the third paragraph. It is gibberish. How does your saying I am going to hell prove me to be wrong? About what?

Jim

[Quoted text hidden]

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**Jim Shelton** <jshelton@uca.edu>  
To: David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

Wed, Apr 20, 2016 at 5:28 PM

By the way, here is a short thing I wrote a long time ago on Nagel. You might find it interesting.

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 **Nagel.rtf**  
10K

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**David Roemer** <david@dkroemer.com>  
To: Jim Shelton <jshelton@uca.edu>

Wed, Apr 20, 2016 at 5:44 PM

"If a word cannot be defined then it is meaningless." This is some kind of rule. Why should I follow it? I do not follow it because I say, "Humans have free will and animals don't." However, I don't define free will because it can't be defined.

"I am not a theist because, first I have no evidence that such a being exists and, secondly, there seems to be a lot of negative evidence in the form of suffering children. " The evidence God exists is that humans humans have free will. Since it is a mystery what the relationship is between ourselves and our bodies, humans are embodied spirits or spirited bodies. The suffering of children is evidence that God does not care about our welfare if He does exist.

" For your information, I do not agree with Thomas Nagel on this matter, nor with his basic position taken in his book you refer to." I do agree with Thomas Nagel's position. His position is the same as Thomas Aquinas's position. Unity is a property of being. To be is to be one. I am a single unified being, not a collection of molecules. Nagel calls this "some form of monism."

"I have no idea what you are saying in the third paragraph. It is gibberish. How does your saying I am going to hell prove me to be wrong? About what?" I am not criticizing your character for thinking the argument for God's existence is not persuasive. However, I am criticizing your character for not admitting that Nagel is right.

Suppose a person is collecting minerals and arranging them according to their color. He builds a chest of drawers and labels them the colors of the rainbow. He puts a green mineral in the green draw, a red mineral in the red drawer, etc. One day he finds a white mineral. He goes to his chest of drawers and says, "White minerals don't exist." Such a person is irrational. This is exactly what you are doing. You think the universe is made up of atoms and molecules. When it is pointed out that human beings have free will, you say: Free will is an illusion. Or, it is meaningless to talk about free will because it can't be defined.

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**David Roemer** <david@dkroemer.com>  
To: Jim Shelton <jshelton@uca.edu>

Wed, Apr 20, 2016 at 6:02 PM

Thank you. I was struck by this quote:

But that is still fair enough right now since the current materialist or physicalist theory cannot explain the mental. Of course, it may be that also there can be no postmateriealist explanation, whatever that would be, of the mental. This would leave us with the possibility that the mental is just an irreducible mystery, like being itself.

I am saying it is absolutely true that the mental is an irreducible mystery, just like the concept of being. You are admitting it is a possibility. What exactly is our disagreement? Is it like the insularity of Great Britain? I am saying Great Britain is an island, and you are saying it is only highly probable it is an island.

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**Jim Shelton** <jshelton@uca.edu>  
To: David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

Thu, Apr 21, 2016 at 5:26 AM

You miss the "right now." But I do not think this is all that you were saying.

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**David Roemer** <david@dkroemer.com>  
To: Jim Shelton <jshelton@uca.edu>

Thu, Apr 21, 2016 at 5:46 AM

Jim,

Is there a disagreement between us or not? We both have human minds and consider ourselves paragons of rationality. How can there be a disagreement? If there is a disagreement, what is it?

I have the gift of faith from God and you don't. But this is not a disagreement because there are two kinds of knowledge: faith and reason. In reason you know something is true because there is evidence supporting it. In faith, you know something is true because God is making you believe it. There is no evidence for life after death.



I consider it perfectly intelligent to say that the argument for God's existence has no content and is contradictory.

[Quoted text hidden]



David Roemer &lt;david@dkroemer.com&gt;

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## Our Disagreement

15 messages

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**David Roemer** <david@dkroemer.com>

Fri, Apr 22, 2016 at 8:19 AM

To: Jim Shelton &lt;jshelton@uca.edu&gt;

Dear Jim,

You are apparently unable to explain what the conflict or disagreement is between us. This is my explanation. You are suffering from cognitive dissonance because you think life ends in the grave. The aspect of reality this conflicts with is that all religions, east and west, say we pay for our sins when we die. This causes you mental and emotional stress, and you make yourself feel better by being ignorant, dishonest, irrational, and stupid about the question: What is sin? What is free will? What is the relationship between myself and my body?

This is called the mind-body problem, not the self-body problem, because there are mental beings (e.g. dreams, past and future, images, concepts, etc.) and the conscious knowledge of human beings as opposed to the sense knowledge of animals. There are only two solutions to consider: materialism and the insight that the question is an unsolvable mystery. To me the probability that materialism is true is like the probability that England is not an island. There is no track record of success in answering questions that arise from our ability to make ourselves the subject of our own knowledge. You, on the other hand, don't want to think about it. What makes you happy is denouncing dualism because dualism is obviously irrational.

Very truly yours,

David Roemer

<http://www.newevangelization.info>

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**Jim Shelton** <jshelton@uca.edu>

Fri, Apr 22, 2016 at 4:54 PM

To: David Roemer &lt;david@dkroemer.com&gt;

In your view, what are the necessary characteristics a thing must have to be properly called "God"? Knowing those characteristics that you require would enable one to detect the reality of such a thing. For example, what are the necessary characteristics of a bloobop? Once they are specified, one will have some indication of how to go about deciding on evidential grounds if there are any bloobops. But without such, there is simply no meaning to the term. The same holds for the term 'God.' One might think that among the necessary characteristics is to be very powerful, to be very aggressive, to be tall, to be fat, to have buck teeth, to have no teeth, to be cruel, to be green, and so on. This is another way of asking what do you mean when you use the term 'God'?

[Quoted text hidden]

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**David Roemer** <david@dkroemer.com>

Sat, Apr 23, 2016 at 5:54 AM

To: Jim Shelton &lt;jshelton@uca.edu&gt;

Dear Jim,

I can prove that the human soul is spiritual, but there is only an argument for God's existence. Your questions to me are unanswerable, so you are refuting the argument for God's existence.

However, a stopped clock is right two times a day. Do you agree that the human soul is spiritual? If not, why not? This is the proof: Humans are superior to animals because we have free will and animals do not. This means all humans are equal to one another, but at the same time different from one another. There is a contradiction or paradox. A possible solution is that a human being is a composition of body and soul. The body is the principle or incomplete being that makes humans different, and the soul is the principle or incomplete being that makes humans equal. The soul is spiritual because we can comprehend free will but can't define what free will is.

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**Jim Shelton** <jshelton@uca.edu>

Sun, Apr 24, 2016 at 6:08 AM

To: David Roemer &lt;david@dkroemer.com&gt;

In your view, what are the necessary characteristics a thing must have to be properly called "God"? Knowing those characteristics that you require would enable one to detect the reality of such a thing. For example, what are the necessary characteristics of a bloobop? Once they are specified, one will have some indication of how to go about deciding on evidential grounds if there are any bloobops. But without such, there is simply no meaning to the term. The same holds for the term 'God.' One might think that among the necessary characteristics is to be very powerful, to be very aggressive, to be tall, to be fat, to have buck teeth, to have no teeth, to be cruel, to be green, and so on. This is another way of asking what do you mean when you use the term 'God'?

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**David Roemer** <david@dkroemer.com>  
To: Jim Shelton <jshelton@uca.edu>

Sun, Apr 24, 2016 at 8:52 AM

Dear Jim,  
I think you should write up what you learned from our discussion:

- 1) There is no disagreement between us about religion because the Catholic Church teaches that there is no evidence for life after death and that the argument for God's existence can be considered lacking in content and contradictory.
- 2) We both agree that there is no evidence for dualism and idealism.
- 3) There are only two possible solutions to the mind-body problem: A: All that exists is the brain. B: It is an unsolvable mystery.
- 4) What one might call hard-core atheists consider the probability of A 100% and the probability of B 0%
- 5) In my judgment, the probability of A is 0% and the probability of B is 100%.

Very truly yours,  
David Roemer

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**Jim Shelton** <jshelton@uca.edu>  
To: David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

Sun, Apr 24, 2016 at 9:01 AM

I have learned nothing from our discussions.  
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**David Roemer** <david@dkroemer.com>  
To: Jim Shelton <jshelton@uca.edu>

Sun, Apr 24, 2016 at 9:29 AM

You always knew that the Catholic Church taught there was no evidence of life after death and that the argument for God's existence was contradictory?  
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**Jim Shelton** <jshelton@uca.edu>  
To: David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

Sun, Apr 24, 2016 at 12:03 PM

No, and I still don't. What is "the" Catholic Church anyway? Is it the Nicene Creed? Or the Papal statements over the centuries? Or the present College of Cardinals? Or is the Catechism? Or is it what the majority of Catholics believe today or in the past? Are you referring to the teachings of Thomism? As usual, you do not define your words. I have no idea what you are talking about. My wife of many years was a Catholic and she surely believed those things that you seem to be denying the Church teaches. You are not very knowledgeable about Catholic doctrine. And who cares what the Church, however you (do not) define it anyway? I do not care what priests or popes or Catholics say unless it is clear and backed by evidence, in which case we do not need their authority. So get your head out of whosever ass you have it in and think for yourself for once in your life..  
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**David Roemer** <david@dkroemer.com>  
To: Jim Shelton <jshelton@uca.edu>

Sun, Apr 24, 2016 at 12:14 PM

You seem to forget that the ball is in your court: What is it we disagree about:

A human being is either a collection of molecules (CM) or an embodied spirit (ES)

Me: The probability of CM is 0% and EB 100%.

Fanatics: The probability of CM is 100% and EB 0%.

Jim: ???????

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**Jim Shelton** <jshelton@uca.edu>  
To: David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

Sun, Apr 24, 2016 at 3:38 PM

No. I put the ball into your court long ago and you have still to deal with it:

n your view, what are the necessary characteristics a thing must have to be properly called "God"? Knowing those characteristics that you require would enable one to detect the reality of such a thing. For example, what are the necessary characteristics of a bloobop? Once they are specified, one will have some indication of how to go about deciding on evidential grounds if there are any bloobops. But without such, there is simply no meaning to the term. The same holds for the term 'God.' One might think that among the necessary characteristics is to be very powerful, to be very aggressive, to be tall, to be fat, to have buck teeth, to have no teeth, to be cruel, to be green, and so on. This is another way of asking what do you mean when you use the term 'God'?

Now you use another undefined word, 'spirit.' I have no idea what you mean by that term.

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**David Roemer** <david@dkroemer.com>  
To: Jim Shelton <jshelton@uca.edu>

Sun, Apr 24, 2016 at 4:36 PM

Your questions about God indicates that you don't understand the argument for God's existence. I won't explain the argument, it is not a proof, unless you agree that the human soul is spiritual. I'll answer any questions you have:

- 1) Humans are superior to animals because we have free will.
- 2) Humans are equal to each other but at the same time different from each other.
- 3) Humans are a composition of two principles: body and soul. The body is what makes us different from each other. The soul is what makes us the same.
- 4) The human soul is spiritual because we can't define free will.

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**Jim Shelton** <jshelton@uca.edu>  
To: David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

Sun, Apr 24, 2016 at 4:44 PM

You must find emotional comfort in saying those so far meaningless words. But you cannot think clearly. In one of my freshman students, I would not expect such ignorance. Even my five-year -old grandson can recognize the need for definitions. He often asks for them and is not satisfied until he understands the meaning of the word. You are an ignorant ass.

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**David Roemer** <david@dkroemer.com>  
To: Jim Shelton <jshelton@uca.edu>

Sun, Apr 24, 2016 at 5:22 PM

This is standard metaphysics. See "the One and the Many" by Norris Clarke. Are you denying that humans have free will? Are you saying that you can define free will? If your grandson steals a cookie, will you not spank him and say, "You are responsible for your actions." What will you say if your grandson says, "What do you mean by this."

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**Jim Shelton** <jshelton@uca.edu>  
To: David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

Sun, Apr 24, 2016 at 6:21 PM

Again, you refuse to define your words. Don't write to me anymore until you seriously wish to think clearly by providing understandable definitions.. That is the first responsibility for good critical reasoning.

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**David Roemer** <david@dkroemer.com>  
To: Jim Shelton <jshelton@uca.edu>

Sun, Apr 24, 2016 at 6:32 PM

If you are a positivist, you define your words. I am not a positivist. Why should I be? All of these statements are equivalent:

- 1) Human beings are indefinabilites that become conscious of their own existence.
- 2) Humans are embodied spirits.
- 3) The human soul is spiritual.
- 4) "some form or monism" to quote Nagel.
- 5) Humans are finite beings.

I've attached a developmental lesson I just wrote for High School Students that explains why God exists.

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**HandoutHighSchool.docx**

273K