

SG Academy episodes, October 15th 2014 through June 2015

Episode #1: What is the point? Why question culture at all?

Text: Excerpt from The Trial and Death of Socrates (totally copyrighted)

Episode #2: What is satan?

Video: Claymation of Mark Twain's "[The Mysterious Stranger](#)" which shows an unusual depiction of satan as creator and destroyer without knowledge of good and evil.

Episode #3: What is a real job?

Article: "[On the Phenomenon of Bullshit Jobs](#)" Pretty much all modern jobs are meaningless bullshit according to this anthropologist.

Episode #4: What is magick?

Documentary: Excerpt from "[The Mindscapes of Alan Moore,](#)" who wrote V for Vendetta and The Avengers. Magick is the use of language and symbolism to alter people's sense of reality.

Episode #5: What is the origin of humanity and human consciousness?

Article: "[The Mystery of the Human Intelligence Explosion](#)"

Episode #6: Who is in control of world politics and the course of history?

Interview: Excerpt from [Everything is Under Control](#) with Robert Anton Wilson on the different kinds of conspiracy theories and how likely or unlikely they are.

Episode #7: What is the value and purpose of mythology?

Interview: Episode "The Message of the Myth" from The Power of Myth with Joseph Campbell (you might find it on YouTube if you're lucky).

Episode #8: Who wants to save the world?

Stand up comedy: Excerpt from a George Carlin [stand up](#) routine. Spoiler: he doesn't think the world needs saving. But he has an interesting perspective on why we're here.

Episode #9: What is the origin of Christmas and monotheism in general?

Documentary: excerpt from astrotheology segment in [Zeitgeist \(Part 2 here\)](#). Controversial theory that claims most religions are based in astronomy and sun- and starworship.

Episode #10: What is the matrix?

Article: On using Oculus Rift virtual reality glasses to make life awesome for meat industry [chickens](#). In which case humans would do to chickens what the machines did to humans in The Matrix.

Episode #11: What are rights?

News article: On the British man who keeps getting imprisoned for [walking around naked](#). Apparently, control over your own body is not a human right.

Episode #12: What is the value of satire?

Articles on [The Daily Show](#), [Charlie Hebdo](#), and [artwork](#) on BoredPanda.

Episode #13: What does Schrodinger's Cat mean?

[Short video](#), the [Wiki](#) page, and an excerpt from RA Wilson's book "Quantum Psychology." This thought experiment calls our conceptions of reality and the difference between life and death into question.

Episode #14: Why on Earth are we leaving this planet?

Artwork from [NASA](#), articles from a [former NASA](#) scientist, [Buzzfeed](#) on why you shouldn't go to Mars, and [Science20](#) on the same.

Episode #15: What is solipsism, and how do you know that anyone other than you is real?

The [Wiki](#) page on solipsism was contrasted with the medieval theologian's quote, "God (or the universe) is an intelligible sphere whose circumference is nowhere and center is everywhere." Mostly because being a solipsist is argued to make you evil or insane.

Episode #16: How do you identify yourself, philosophically speaking?

Make the futile attempt to describe your own philosophical position, if need be with help from [Wiki](#).

Episode #17: What is the end goal of evolution?

A short graphic comic story called [Darwin's Defeat](#), by RG Llarena and Axel Medellin. Is the evolution of the cosmos cyclical? If so, what's the best stage of evolution to be in? Human or waterbear?

Episode #18: Can we improve language?

Various [articles](#) and a [video](#) by RA Wilson on [E-Prime](#), or English without the verb "is" or "to be", is an update to the English language that is meant to be make language more scientifically accurate and philosophically honest, and to reduce the stress and violence that comes with trying to express the truth.

Episode #19: Can you unbrainwash someone?

A [Youtube video](#) in which activist and former US marine Adam Kokesh interviews people on the street after watching "American Sniper" and asks them what they think about the movie and American foreign policy, patriotism, war, propaganda, etc. Bonus video: Rammstein's '[Amerika](#)'.

Episode #20: How do you deal with suffering?

An internet phenomenon loosely known as [The Shit List](#), a satirical look at how different religious groups and ideologies frame their suffering.

Episode #21: Should public figures get psychologically evaluated?

A selection of online forms for psychological self-testing. [Emotional intelligence](#), [IQ](#), [team roles](#), [psychopathy](#), Myers-Briggs [personality](#). Psych evals get used for job applications, pilots,

police, and soldiers. Who else should be tested? And how is this information used to shape our society

Episode #22: How much room for love is there in modern life?

An [article by philosopher Roman Krznaric](#). He shortly describes how diversely the ancient Greeks thought about love. What is love? What kinds of love do you experience? For who, and for what, and why?

Episode #23: What is the relationship between math and reality?

An excerpt (pp. 128-137) from RA Wilson's Cosmic Trigger II on the weirdness of imaginary numbers, infinities, and the fact that there are multiple conflicting – and so far, unsatisfying – theories about why mathematics 'works' in predicting patterns in nature. Bonus video: [Donald Duck in Mathmagic Land](#).

Episode #24: When is a coincidence not just a coincidence?

A short video introducing the psychologist Carl Jung's concept of [synchronicity](#): acausally related but meaningful coincidences. And a host of Wikipedia articles on the [23 enigma](#), [synchronicity](#), [apophenia](#), and the [axiom of causality](#).

Episode #25: Why do we accept economic inequality?

Three critical articles on the [wealth and income gap](#) in the United States, which is now apparently the most unequal Western society. One article is from a [grad student](#), one from [Robert Reich](#), a former Harvard economics professor and former US Secretary of Labor, and one from [Joseph Stiglitz](#), Nobel Prize winner in Economics. They all talk about the fact that, especially since the current financial crisis, the rich have gotten richer, the poor have gotten poorer, and the middle class is disappearing.

Episode #26: What would happen if we abolished government?

American anti-political activist, Larken Rose explains [in this video](#) why he thinks government is an irrational racket set up to give some people the authority to threaten you and take your money. Plus Wikipedia article on [anarchy](#) and [voluntary association](#).

Episode #27: Is logic true to reality?

A text Klaas wrote for the Academy, summarizing the nature of the common sense logic of dualism as we use it in Western (and many other) cultures. What is true, and what is false? The text describes what some of the limitations are of logic, especially in this commonly used system, and how that determines much of our behavior.

During the episode Klaas introduced some alternatives, different kinds of logic like quantum logic, maybe logic, fuzzy logic, and [Jain paradoxical logic](#), that try to overcome those limitations and fundamentally change the way you think.

Episode #28: What drives us?

A [short video](#) animated by the creators of South Park, with a voice-over by the British Zen philosopher Alan Watts on the exterior, social drive of human beings. Plus a fragment from a book by Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek (*Looking Awry*, pg.22), who writes about the purely impassionate drive of a robot like The Terminator. This type of drive is less social, and more existential. The question is not just what drives us to be human beings, but: what drives us to be or do anything at all?

Episode #29: How do you model human consciousness?

An [episode from Avatar](#), The Last Airbender. It's a kid's show. In about ten minutes, the show gives a brief introduction to the Hindu concept of [chakras](#) as a model of human consciousness. There are more modern models like the [Eight Circuit Model of Consciousness](#) developed by Timothy Leary. But there are lots of different models out there, from psychologists like [Freud](#), Jung, Adler, Skinner, and [Maslow](#), to ancient Maya, Inca, or Egyptian models, or [esoteric models](#) from Kabbalism, the Tarot, or the Ennead. Which models do you know and use? And how would you map your own consciousness?

Episode #30: What is the meaning of The Matrix?

We watched [The Matrix](#). 'Nuff said.