

4 Logical Paradoxes That Will Blow Your Mind

Nothing fascinates quite like the good old classical paradox. Am I right?

A couple of my favorite writers—G.K. Chesterton and Oscar Wilde—distinguished themselves as arguably the top writers of their day in literary paradox. So when I stumbled on a YouTube video (see below) exploring mind-bending logical paradoxes—those puzzles that seemingly offer no solution—I had to click and watch.

In the impressively produced video, Jake Roper, host of Vsauce3, breaks down in colorful fashion the following 4 paradoxes:

1) The Ship of Theseus

A thought experiment that explores the point at which an object, when it loses part of itself, ceases to be that object. E.g. Is Anakin Skywalker still Anakin Skywalker after he becomes Darth Vader?

2) Sorites Paradox

Derived from the Greek word *soros* (“heap”), the puzzle explores at which point a small number of things become an actual pile. E.g., How many grains can you take away from a pile of 100 grains of wheat before it ceases to be considered a “pile”?

3) Grelling-Nelson Paradox

A modern paradox created in 1908 by Kurt Grelling and Leonard Nelson related to the self-referential nature of certain words. An autological word describes itself, e.g., "pronounceable" is "pronounceable" and a "noun" is a "noun." There are also heterological words, e.g., "hyphenated" is not "hyphenated." As you'll see in the video, the paradox applies in particular to the word "heterological."

4) Teletransportation Paradox

A thought experiment first published in 1984 by Derek Parfit, the paradox explores the problem of what truly makes you "you." In Parfit's example, if you were transported to Mars, and the transporter re-created all of your atoms in the same position, would it still be the same person?