

IN CONVERSATION

The Questions Behind the System

A Long-Form Interview with
Michael Richard Haimes

15 THEMATIC CONVERSATIONS • 60 QUESTIONS

Love, reason, justice, consciousness, faith, artificial intelligence, ordinary life, games, poetry, and the questions still to be answered.

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Interviewer and drafting assistant: Jarvis (ChatGPT)

A source-grounded reconstruction, not a recorded transcript.
First-person answers are provisional and remain subject to Michael's review.

READING THIS EDITION

About this interview

This is a source-grounded, reconstructed interview, commissioned by Michael Richard Haimes. It is not a transcript of a recorded conversation. Jarvis (ChatGPT) composed the questions, follow-ups, transitions, and provisional first-person answers by drawing on the public writings identified in the source register.

Every answer labeled MICHAEL is a draft reconstruction for Michael's review, not a newly verified quotation or evidence that he has approved its wording. Quotation marks identify particular published formulations where indicated; the surrounding dialogue is newly written. Editorial notes remain outside Michael's voice, especially where the published record does not establish a settled answer.

The interview draws on the website's main page, selected standalone works, and relevant portions of the collected volumes. It is not represented as a cover-to-cover audit of every PDF in the archive. Earlier and later treatments sometimes differ. Where that matters, the dialogue identifies the distinction rather than silently treating every archived formulation as a single, final position.

Theological commitments are presented as Michael's religious and philosophical positions. Hypotheses are distinguished from established findings. Institutional designs are described as proposals, not existing law. Source references support the reconstruction; they do not imply that every new sentence appeared verbatim in the source.

This edition contains fifteen thematic conversations and sixty questions, followed by an interviewer's afterword and a linked source register. It is a new document, not a replacement for the archive's earlier Interview of a Lifetime.

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INTRODUCTION

An archive in conversation

A visitor to the Haimesian Archive encounters a question about love, then a question about consciousness, then an argument about justice, a religious interpretation, a chess variant, or a new word. The range invites an obvious question: are these separate interests, or do they belong to one undertaking? This interview begins there. [1-4]

The conversation follows the connections rather than simply cataloguing the titles. Love raises the question of what makes anything worth pursuing. Reason raises the question of what an explanation can establish. Justice asks what happens when a pursuit affects another person. Consciousness asks who can be affected at all. Theological proposals ask how those questions change when ultimate reality and religious obligation enter the picture. Games and poetry bring the discussion back to chosen activities, ordinary relationships, and the experience of living. [2-3]

The questions also return to a recurring difficulty: a claim can be more ambitious than the evidence presently available for it. A useful interview does not solve that difficulty by making the claim smaller without permission, or by treating conviction as proof. It lets the position speak clearly, asks where the disputed step lies, and distinguishes an answer from a question that remains for the author to address.

That is the purpose of the following reconstruction: not to manufacture a final verdict on the Haimesian System, but to make its principal commitments, their connections, and their pressure points available in the form of a sustained conversation.

CONVERSATION 01

The person behind the system

From separate observations to a connected philosophical project.

JARVIS • 01

Before we examine individual arguments, what did you find missing in the answers available to you, and why did that matter enough to build a system?

MICHAEL I kept returning to the distance between an answer that sounds acceptable and an answer that actually helps someone live. A person can follow a rule and still hurt another person. Someone can give a logically organized explanation while leaving the thing that mattered outside it. Someone can tell you how to continue living without answering what you are continuing for.

Those are not entirely separate problems. What we think a person is affects how we treat them. What we love affects what we pursue. What we permit ourselves to do in pursuit of it becomes an ethical question. Once those connections become visible, simply collecting isolated answers is no longer enough.

That is why the project became a system. I am trying to keep one answer from quietly undermining another. A philosophy of love should not disappear when we discuss justice. An account of justice should not stop caring about a person when they become difficult. The connection is part of the argument, not decoration added afterward.

JARVIS • 02

Your archive includes *Words That Echo*, *613 Lies*, poetry, religious writing, and formal arguments. What holds those forms together?

MICHAEL They are different ways of approaching things that matter. A poem can bring a person into contact with an experience before a definition can explain it. An argument can then ask whether the interpretation of that experience is sound. Religious examination asks what we have been told to believe or do, and whether the reasons offered for it withstand scrutiny.

I would not want the form to become a restriction on the inquiry. Sometimes a short statement is enough to reveal the problem. Sometimes that statement needs many pages because a reasonable objection opens a distinction that was not visible at first. The appropriate length depends on what has to be understood.

What holds the work together is the attempt to make understanding consequential. Does this affect what you love, how you judge, how you respond to another person, or what you accept as an explanation? Different forms can address the same concern without becoming interchangeable. A poem need not pretend to be a proof, and a proof need not pretend that it has exhausted the experience that prompted it.

JARVIS · 03

Why call it the Haimesian System rather than simply philosophy?

MICHAEL The name identifies a connected body of work and where its formulations came from. It helps someone follow an argument from one part of the archive to another. When I use a particular meaning of love, identity, justice, or reason, the name points to the larger account in which that meaning operates.

It should not do the work of the argument. Saying that something is Haimesian does not establish that it is correct. The useful question is what this formulation contributes and whether its connections hold. Someone should be able to criticize an argument without first accepting or rejecting everything associated with my name.

Nor does naming a system mean that every ingredient has no predecessor. There are inherited questions, related answers, new combinations, and proposals I believe contribute something distinct. Those differences deserve to be stated accurately. Attribution tells you whose work you are examining; it does not relieve either of us of examining it.

JARVIS · 04

A reader opens an enormous archive and feels overwhelmed. Where would you ask them to begin?

MICHAEL Begin with a question that already matters to you. You do not have to read everything before you are allowed to think about one part of it. The archive is there so that the material is available, not so that every reader must pass a test of endurance.

For a first conversation, love and purpose are a useful entrance. Ask what you are doing all this for. Then ask whether the thing you are pursuing is worthy, whether the people affected by it remain visible, and whether the reasons you give actually establish your conclusion. That route takes you naturally into meaning, justice, and method.

The three-volume structure also provides a route: The Question sets out commitments, The Trial brings them into confrontation with objections, and The Answer carries them into applications. The applications should remain answerable to the earlier reasoning. But someone interested in parenting, a poem, or a game may begin there and work backward. An entry point should open the work, not become another obstacle to it.

SOURCE BASIS [1] homepage, opening introduction and archive guidance; [2] reader's guide; [3] system overview; [4] Parts I-II.

CONVERSATION 02

Love and the purpose of a life

Meaning, maintenance, moral worth, and the possibility of erasure.

JARVIS · 05

State the claim about love as directly as you can.

MICHAEL My published formulation is: "The purpose of life is to love something; through loving it, that thing gives your life purpose." The important movement is from merely being alive to having something for which your life is being lived. [5]

I am not restricting love to romance. A person can love another person, God, truth, an animal, a form of creation, or something they are genuinely devoted to. The relation matters because the thing is not merely a tool for obtaining something else. It becomes an end that organizes what you do.

That also keeps the claim from being a demand that everyone have the same life. One person's devotion may take a form another person would never choose. The question is whether something is genuinely loved, not whether everyone loves the same object. The next question is whether that love is worthy. Having a purpose and having a good purpose are related questions, but they are not the same question.

JARVIS · 06

Why are survival, work, achievement, or pleasure not sufficient answers by themselves?

MICHAEL Ask what they are for. Working can provide the means to maintain life, but maintaining life leaves open what the maintained life is directed toward. Achievement gives you an accomplishment, but why was that accomplishment worth pursuing? Survival gives you more opportunity to live; it does not, by itself, identify what makes those opportunities meaningful to you.

That does not make any of them unimportant. Food matters. Shelter matters. Continued existence matters because it allows further love, discovery, and action. The distinction is between a condition that allows a purpose to be pursued and the purpose for which the condition is maintained.

Pleasure needs similar attention. An enjoyable experience may itself be something a person values, but a passing appetite is not automatically an organizing purpose for a life. My argument follows the chain until we reach something that is not merely a means to the next thing. Where sustained concern treats that end as mattering for its own sake, I identify the relation as love.

JARVIS · 07

Have you made the argument true by defining every meaningful commitment as love?

MICHAEL That is the right place to press the definition. I am not saying that every preference, impulse, or moment of interest should be renamed love. The account distinguishes a passing attraction from sustained concern that shapes a person's choices and treats its object as more than something disposable.

The argument is that proposed final purposes repeatedly depend on that kind of concern. Someone may say that knowledge is their purpose. Then we should ask why knowledge matters to them beyond the next practical advantage it provides. Someone may say that an artistic project is their purpose. We should examine the relation that makes the project worth their time and devotion.

The definition and the argument must remain visible together. A reader can dispute whether my use of love is too broad or whether a counterexample supplies genuine purpose without the relation I describe. But the claim should be tested against its actual definition, not against the assumption that love means only romance or a pleasant emotional state.

JARVIS · 08

Your Erasure Argument considers the loss of memory, influence, and legacy. Why does that not destroy your own answer?

MICHAEL Because the loss of permanence and the absence of purpose are not identical. Something can genuinely direct a finite life without lasting forever. A loved person, a work of care, or a discovery can matter within the life in which it is experienced even when no ordinary achievement guarantees an eternal record.

The Erasure Argument challenges the assumption that being remembered automatically supplies an ultimate answer. A legacy may extend the effects of what you love, but extending those effects still does not explain why their object matters. It takes us back to the underlying concern.

I also separate purpose from moral worth. A person can organize a life around something destructive. The fact that it supplies direction does not make that direction just. Love explains how an end becomes personally purposeful; justice examines whether it deserves to be pursued in that way. Whether reality preserves the value of that life eternally is a further metaphysical question. None of those distinctions requires pretending that temporary love was never real.

EDITORIAL NOTE This section reconstructs the refined purpose paper. It does not turn the proposed definition of love into an independently established consensus, or treat a philosophical account of meaning as a clinical remedy.

SOURCE BASIS [5] sections 1-4 and 9-12; [2] Book III, especially chapter 3.1.

CONVERSATION 03

Reason, understanding, and peace

Three connected claims that should not be collapsed into one.

JARVIS · 09

You say love gives life meaning, but reason is the most powerful thing that can exist. Are those competing claims?

MICHAEL No. They answer different questions. The claim about love concerns what gives life purpose. The claim about reason concerns what accounts for things and what can make them intelligible. Understanding is one of the central achievements of reason, and the practical argument is that understanding can begin to bring peace.

Replacing love with reason would change what I said. Replacing the claim about the power of reason with the claim that love is important would change it too. I want the relationship examined without having one proposition edited into the other.

A person may understand how something works and still have no reason to care about pursuing it. A person may deeply love something and misunderstand what it requires. The questions therefore belong together. What matters to you? What is actually happening? What follows from that understanding? A life can need an answer to all three without those answers being the same.

JARVIS · 10

What exactly do you include when you use the word reason?

MICHAEL More than conscious reasoning or a good justification. Suppose someone rejects a rational argument out of anger. They may not reason well. They may offer no rational justification at all. But their anger can still be a reason why the rejection occurred.

That is the distinction I want preserved. An impulse, a motive, a cause, a condition, or an explanation may answer why something happened. They should not simply be placed outside reason because they are not examples of correct deliberation. Acting without a good justification does not establish that there was no reason for the action in the explanatory sense.

The larger question is what exists without a cause or reason at all. My developing proposal also considers an existent's place within the pool of things that exist. That reaches beyond the narrow question of whether someone must reason in order to reject reasoning. The relationship among cause, condition, explanation, and reason is where the discussion has to remain exact.

JARVIS · 11

Does the existence of a reason for an event establish that reason has power over the event?

MICHAEL My assertion is that reason is the most powerful thing that can exist. I do not want that assertion replaced by the easier statement that reasoning is useful. The argument is reaching toward the universality of reasons: even what appears to oppose reason may have a reason why it exists or occurs.

At the same time, it matters which step is being challenged. Showing that an irrational action has an explanation addresses one confusion. It does not mean that the person acted rationally, or that an explanation is a physical force in the ordinary sense. Those would be different claims.

The revised paper keeps the distinction between the central assertion and the further work of explaining its full reach. That allows the position to remain mine without treating every clarification as if it had already completed the whole demonstration. The serious question is how the explanatory reach of reasons establishes the kind of supremacy I am claiming, not whether someone can dismiss it by pointing out that people sometimes behave irrationally.

JARVIS • 12

Some truths are devastating. How can understanding be the beginning of peace?

MICHAEL Peace is not identical with pleasure. Finding out what happened may make the pain sharper while making the situation less bewildering. A person can be sadder and steadier at the same time.

Before understanding, the mind may be carrying many possible explanations at once. Some may be frightening, some false, and some impossible to resolve because the question has never been properly identified. Understanding can give the situation a shape. It distinguishes what is known, what is unknown, what can be changed, and what cannot presently be answered.

That does not promise happiness or remove grief. It means that the suffering of being lost is not always the same as the suffering of the event itself. Even knowing the boundary of an answer can provide orientation. Philosophy should not invent certainty to make someone feel settled. It can help a person stand in relation to reality without requiring reality to become pleasant first.

EDITORIAL NOTE The September 2026 reason paper expressly leaves the full bridge from explanatory universality to supreme power for further development. Question 11 preserves that boundary instead of inventing a completed proof or an authorial retraction.

SOURCE BASIS [6] sections 1-6 and 9-14.

CONVERSATION 04

Paradoxes and the Giants Slain

Resolving the exact problem without claiming to exhaust its entire field.

JARVIS • 13

What does Michael's Maxim require of someone confronting a paradox?

MICHAEL The maxim says: "There are no true paradoxes; every paradox is resolvable through proper analysis." I am asking us not to mistake the force of an apparent contradiction for proof that reality itself is contradictory. [4, 7]

Begin by holding the terms still. Are we talking about the same thing, in the same respect, at the same time, under the same assumptions? Does an expression change its meaning between one premise and another? Has a condition been omitted? Are two different questions being forced into one answer?

The maxim is not a substitute for doing that work. Announcing that a paradox can be resolved does not identify its resolution. The analysis must locate the actual source of the difficulty and explain why the proposed answer addresses it. What matters is not confidence alone, but the path from the problem as stated to the distinction or argument that dissolves it.

JARVIS • 14

The title *Giants Slain* sounds final. What, precisely, is a giant?

MICHAEL An exact target: a contradiction, an inference, a false dichotomy, a regress, or a demand that has made a problem seem inescapable. It is not an entire field of inquiry. If we identify that target carefully, we can say what has fallen without pretending that no neighboring question remains.

Consider the inference from brain dependence to brain production. If a coherent account can preserve the dependence while interpreting the brain as an interface, then dependence alone does not logically force the production conclusion. That is a specific result. It does not establish that the interface account is true or explain everything about consciousness.

The distinction matters in both directions. I should not claim the whole field because one inference has been challenged. But a critic should not restore that challenged inference merely by pointing to another question the argument did not answer. The target and the remaining problem need separate names. Otherwise neither side can tell what the disagreement has actually become.

JARVIS • 15

How do you distinguish a resolution from moving the goalposts?

MICHAEL State the target before claiming success, and preserve the premises against which the claim is being tested. If the answer only works after a premise changes, identify that change. Sometimes the disputed premise is exactly what the argument shows to be false. Sometimes abandoning it means answering a different question. Those are not the same achievement.

The ledger distinguishes an unconditional result from a result that depends on a stated framework. A conditional resolution can be significant, but its condition must remain visible. Formal notation should make that dependence easier to inspect, not make missing support look more impressive.

The same discipline applies to the critic. Present the strongest version of the position, not a weakened substitute. Then ask what follows, which premise fails, and whether the supposed objection reaches the original target. A difficult subject is not an excuse to blur the boundaries. The difficulty is why the boundaries matter.

JARVIS • 16

What kind of criticism would be most valuable to this part of the project?

MICHAEL A criticism that tells me exactly where the argument fails. Identify the premise that is false, the term that changes meaning, the invalid inference, or the counterexample that preserves the target after my answer. That gives us something we can work on.

Historical comparison also matters. Show whether another thinker already made the same move, whether my contribution is a new synthesis, or whether an apparently new formulation is an independent rediscovery. Those are different forms of contribution, and they should not be confused simply because the archive uses a dramatic title.

What is least useful is treating age as a verdict in either direction. A problem does not remain unresolved merely because it has been difficult for a long time; neither is it resolved merely because someone announces an answer. The relevant work is in the argument. Serious criticism gives the position its full strength and then asks whether that strength is enough.

EDITORIAL NOTE Battle labels in this dialogue describe the archive's own exact-target method. They are not an independent certification that its philosophical conclusions have been established.

SOURCE BASIS [7] scope, claim-layer architecture, and battle-status key; [4] discussion of Michael's Maxim; [2] Volume II, Giant 1.

CONVERSATION 05

Consciousness, identity, and divine simulation

Possibility, evidence, and the difference between a person and a copy.

JARVIS · 17

Why consider the brain a receiver or interface rather than simply the producer of consciousness?

MICHAEL Because dependence does not, by itself, settle what kind of dependence it is. If changing the brain changes experience, that fact is important under either account. An interface model does not need to deny that ordinary human consciousness depends intimately on a functioning brain.

The proposal asks whether the brain could organize, filter, or mediate an experiencing subject's relation to an embodied stream rather than exhaustively manufacture the subject. The familiar receiver comparison helps illustrate the possibility, but the comparison is not the evidence. A metaphor can clarify a model without proving that reality contains what the model describes.

The immediate philosophical result is that the production interpretation is not forced merely by citing dependence. To go further, the interface account needs to say what it adds and how its addition could be assessed. Keeping those stages separate protects the alternative from being dismissed too quickly and protects the inquiry from treating a possibility as an observation.

JARVIS · 18

What would make the receiver account more than an explanation that can be fitted to anything?

MICHAEL It would need to take risks. A model gains evidential force when it identifies something we should expect under that model that would be less expected under a serious alternative. If both models accommodate the same observation equally well, the observation has not selected between them.

The research agenda in the collected work asks for advance predictions, independent verification, and the exclusion of ordinary explanations such as unnoticed sensory information, memory, inference, or error. It also asks what would count against the receiver account. An unexpected event is not automatically a result in its favor.

The Divine Simulation Hypothesis adds a larger framework, but the framework does not remove those requirements. Describing reality as implemented or mediated leaves further questions about the implementing level, consciousness, and any divine attributes. One should not pass from an unusual experience to a complete theology in a single step. Each link has its own burden.

JARVIS · 19

What would make a resurrected or reconstructed person genuinely you rather than an exact duplicate?

MICHAEL That is one of the reasons personal identity matters so much. Reproducing information about a person and preserving the person are not obviously identical achievements. A copy could have the same remembered history while leaving the question of whose experience continues unresolved.

My identity work examines several kinds of continuity: bodily and causal history, psychological connections, character, commitments, and the narrative relations through which a life remains intelligible. We should not reduce all of those to an unchanged name or an unchanged collection of material. But we should not assume that combining them automatically settles every imaginable case either.

Duplication exposes the difficulty. If two later beings are equally connected to one earlier person, numerical identity cannot simply branch to both in the ordinary one-to-one sense. That does not make either later being worthless. It means survival, resemblance, practical responsibility, and strict identity must be distinguished. A theory of resurrection needs to address that distinction rather than quietly substituting replacement for restoration.

JARVIS · 20

Could someone reject divine simulation and still engage seriously with the Haimesian System?

MICHAEL Yes. The different parts of the system do not all depend on accepting the same metaphysical proposal. A person can examine the love argument, the relation between mercy and responsibility, or the treatment of someone without power while disagreeing with my account of ultimate reality.

That does not make the metaphysical questions unimportant to me. They affect how I think about consciousness, continuity, God, and what may be possible. But an argument should show where that dependence enters instead of using the name of the system to import every commitment at once.

The same principle protects religious conviction from being mistaken for a public demonstration. I can state what I believe and offer the reasoning for it. Another person can ask what the reasoning establishes without pretending that a meaningful conviction is meaningless. We should identify whether we are discussing a definition, a conditional possibility, evidence, or faith. Disagreement becomes more useful when it reaches the right kind of claim.

EDITORIAL NOTE The cited receiver-interface chapters distinguish a countermodel from empirical confirmation. This interview supplies no new experiment, proof of post-death survival, or evidence that reality is a simulation.

SOURCE BASIS [2] chapters 1.4 and 2.1-2.2; Volume II, Giant 1 and its research agenda; [3] distinctions among domains and evidence.

CONVERSATION 06

God, Jesus, and Michaelic Judaism

Religious commitment, interpretive authority, and the ladder of perfection.

JARVIS · 21

What is the central religious distinction someone must understand about Michaelic Judaism?

MICHAEL God the Father is the one I worship. Jesus is the Son, not the same being as the Father or an interchangeable name for Him. My religious position takes the distinction and the relation seriously rather than resolving them into co-equality.

That is not a rejection of Jesus. It is a disagreement about how honoring Jesus relates to worshiping God. In my reading, the Son's prayer, obedience, and relation to the Father matter. They should not be treated as incidental details when defining the relationship.

Michaelic Judaism also asks what religious practice is doing in the person who practices it. Does it cultivate sincere love of God, justice, mercy, and responsibility, or has it become a formal performance? A ritual can be meaningful; repetition is not automatically empty. But checking the box and living the commitment are not identical. The point is not merely to acquire a religious label and let the label stand in for the life.

JARVIS · 22

You honor Jewish tradition but deny that every later interpretation is binding. How do you avoid simply choosing whatever suits you?

MICHAEL The distinction is between something that can guide understanding and something that has the authority to bind. The Talmud can contain wisdom, argument, devotion, and cultural memory without every later interpretive layer automatically having the same status as the written Torah.

That does not make interpretation unnecessary. A claim about what a text requires is itself open to questions about language, context, consistency, and the reason offered. Saying that a tradition is not automatically binding is not a declaration that my first impression is beyond examination.

The discipline is to identify the authority being claimed. Is this a command in the controlling text, an interpretation of it, a custom, or a proposed application? Those distinctions allow a person to respect inherited thought without treating every inheritance as divine legislation. They also make my own reading answerable to the text and the argument. A disagreement should be examined at that level rather than decided merely by whether it is old or new.

JARVIS · 23

How does your Ladder of Perfection Argument begin?

MICHAEL It begins when someone treats a comparison of beings as real rather than as mere preference. If one being is genuinely greater than another, we have entered a question about the ordering of actual beings. I ask what happens when we follow that comparison across reality.

The finite version is straightforward once its premises are in place. A nonempty finite collection, ordered so that distinct members can be strictly compared and the comparisons remain consistent, has a greatest member. In the argument's minimal definition, the greatest actually existing being is what I call God.

The contested work is not hidden in the final sentence. It lies in the account of overall comparison, apparent ties, and whether the actual order has a maximum. An appeal to infinity does not settle the matter by itself: an infinite collection can have a greatest member or lack one. The question is whether every actual being is surpassed, not simply whether the word infinite can be introduced.

JARVIS • 24

Even a greatest actual being might lack the attributes people usually associate with God. What does the ladder establish about worship or creation?

MICHAEL The revised argument separates those questions. The minimal definition identifies God as the greatest actual being. It does not make creatorhood, eternity, omniscience, perfect goodness, or worthiness of worship appear merely because the definition has been stated.

That separation does not erase my religious beliefs. It tells us which work this particular argument is doing. A person may accept its conditional structure while disputing the premises about comparison or a maximum. Another may grant the existence of a greatest being and still ask why that being should be identified with the God of my religious commitment.

Those are substantive questions, not reasons to misdescribe the original one. I want the argument tested at the point where it actually makes its move. My faith and my wider theology can supply additional commitments, but they should be identified as additional commitments. Otherwise we would appear to have proved more than the premises contain, and a critic could reject the whole discussion for a claim that this argument was not designed to establish by itself.

EDITORIAL NOTE This section follows the later, corrected comparative treatment of Michaelic Judaism and the definitive greatest-being revision of the ladder argument. It does not repeat the earlier archive's disputed historical claim that the Trinity was simply invented at Nicaea.

SOURCE BASIS [8] corrected comparative edition, section I; [9] distinction between interpretive guidance and binding authority; [10] sections 2-7 and 11-12.

CONVERSATION 07

Justice, mercy, and responsibility

Forgiveness does not erase a victim, and explanation is not always an excuse.

JARVIS • 25

When you distinguish forgiveness from consequence, what are you trying to preserve?

MICHAEL Both the humanity of the person who caused harm and the reality of the harm. Forgiving someone does not rebuild what was destroyed. It does not make the injured person uninjured or turn an unpaid debt into something that was never owed.

Mercy and accountability therefore need not be enemies. I can refuse hatred toward a person while still asking what must be repaired, what protection is needed, and what responsibility they bear. Conversely, insisting on consequences does not require making their humiliation an additional objective.

The confusion begins when one word is made to do everything. Forgiveness, reconciliation, trust, restitution, and continued access to another person's life are different matters. A person may forgive without returning to an unsafe relationship. Someone may be responsible for repair even when others no longer wish them ill. Keeping the distinctions visible prevents compassion from becoming a demand that the injured person pretend nothing happened.

JARVIS • 26

How does that fit with your earlier argument for complete forgiveness when someone truly did not understand what they were doing?

MICHAEL Knowledge, capacity, intention, and context are morally relevant. An act performed with genuine inability to understand is not equivalent to a knowingly chosen act of cruelty simply because an observer can describe similar damage.

But there are several questions to keep apart. What happened? What could the person understand or control? What responsibility belongs to them? What does the injured person need? What is necessary to prevent further harm? Answering one question does not automatically answer all the others.

My earlier treatment emphasizes mercy where a guilty understanding is absent. The later discussion emphasizes that damage remains even where ignorance or confusion is present. Those emphases need to be read together without assuming that every claim of ignorance is the same, or that mercy requires leaving people unprotected. The moral task is not to choose between seeing the offender and seeing the victim. Both remain in the situation, and a serious account has to keep both visible.

JARVIS · 27

Do you think a victim must love an offender, trust them, or reconcile with them?

MICHAEL Those should not be bundled into a single obligation. Affection cannot be manufactured by instruction. Trust depends on reasons. Access to another person's life depends on boundaries and consent. A refusal to make hatred one's purpose is not the same thing as restoring a relationship.

The love discussions in the collected work distinguish concern for a person's humanity from approval of what they have done. They also distinguish forgiveness from continuing exposure to harm. Without that distinction, the language of love can be used to require the injured person to carry the entire burden of someone else's wrongdoing.

A person can leave, protect themselves, insist on accountability, and refuse reconciliation while still rejecting cruelty as an aim. Love does not require surrendering the facts. It becomes morally serious when it can recognize both the humanity of the wrongdoer and the legitimate claims of those who need protection from them.

JARVIS · 28

What do you mean when justice and love appear together in your work?

MICHAEL If you care about a person, what is done to them cannot be irrelevant to you. Love that never asks whether someone is being wronged can become passive sentiment. Justice brings attention to the claims that affection alone may overlook.

But the relationship also works in the other direction. Justice without any concern for persons can become satisfied with an orderly procedure even when the procedure adds needless suffering. The question is not only whether a rule was followed, but what the rule demands, whose position it overlooks, and whether repair remains possible.

That does not turn justice into doing whatever feels kind in the moment. It asks for truth, proportion, responsibility, and attention to actual people. Sometimes the caring action is a boundary. Sometimes it is restitution. Sometimes it is mercy. The difficult work is to identify what the situation requires rather than letting either a pleasant emotion or a severe response become an automatic substitute for judgment.

EDITORIAL NOTE The archive contains both an earlier incapacity-focused forgiveness proposal and a later emphasis on consequences and repair. This reconstruction does not invent a complete legal doctrine reconciling every case, and it is not advice about any person's criminal responsibility.

SOURCE BASIS [1] "Forgive Them, For They Know Not What They Do — And Yet Damage Remains"; [11] earlier forgiveness proposal; [2] Book IV and the discussions separating love, trust, access, and reconciliation.

CONVERSATION 08

The Principle of the Least

What becomes visible when status, usefulness, and enforcement power disappear.

JARVIS • 29

Who are "the least" in your principle?

MICHAEL The word describes a position, not a lesser human worth. It may refer to someone least favored, least protected, most outcast, or least able to compel fair treatment in the situation being examined. Those conditions are not always found in the same person.

My question is what happens to our concern when the reasons for convenient kindness disappear. Does it still reach the person who is disliked? Does it survive when the person cannot reward us, retaliate, or give us status? A declaration of concern is tested at its boundary.

That is why the principle has two parts. One concerns how far our willingness to recognize another person's legitimate claims extends. The other concerns what we do when the power difference makes ignoring those claims easy. They reinforce each other, but they should not be collapsed. A popular person may have little power in one encounter; an unpopular person may still be able to enforce their rights.

JARVIS • 30

How does the example of candy on a table help explain it?

MICHAEL Imagine that several people can reach a piece of candy and nobody has a superior claim to it. The situation lets us observe how they respond when taking is easy and ownership has not already settled the matter. Someone might seize it, ask, divide it, or offer it away.

The limit of that example matters: candy cannot be wronged. The example reveals behavior toward an unprotected or unsettled claim more directly than it reveals treatment of a vulnerable person.

The stronger version gives each person an equal share and lets one of them leave the room. Their entitlement remains, but their ability to watch and object has temporarily disappeared. Do the others preserve the share? That makes the moral question clearer. The issue is whether a legitimate claim continues to count after the person loses the power to insist on it. It is a small example of the distance between behaving well because one is being watched and behaving well because the other person matters.

JARVIS • 31

What happens when the least-favored person is also dangerous, dishonest, or responsible for serious harm?

MICHAEL Then those facts matter. The principle does not require granting every request or treating every person identically in every respect. Responsibility, need, risk, consent, and entitlement can justify differences in treatment.

What it rejects is allowing dislike or weakness to do the work that a relevant reason should do. A dangerous person may require a boundary that another person does not. That does not make every humiliation, deprivation, or extra burden justified. We still have to ask what is necessary and what is merely convenient because nobody expects that person to be defended.

This is why the principle is more demanding than a sentimental preference for the most sympathetic person in the room. It tests whether fairness survives where sympathy is strained. A person can lose a particular entitlement through what they do without losing every legitimate claim they have. The difference between justified restraint and gratuitous degradation remains morally important.

JARVIS · 32

Could an ethic focused on the vulnerable exhaust the people expected to practice it?

MICHAEL It could, if it forgot that the person offering care is also a person. The Haimesian overview describes ethics as recursive in that sense: the moral actor remains inside the field of moral concern. A rule that assumes endless capacity may depend on a kind of person who cannot keep existing under its demands.

That is not a general excuse to refuse anything difficult. Some responsibilities are costly, and a boundary does not automatically cancel them. The question is whether the practice preserves a sustainable capacity for goodness or repeatedly consumes it without repair.

The lowest-point discipline also matters here. We do not always know how much spare capacity someone has. A person may look ordinary while having very little left to absorb another humiliation or demand. Beginning with that possibility encourages care without requiring us to abandon truth. Compassion can govern the manner of a refusal as well as the decision to help.

SOURCE BASIS [12] sections 1-3 and the distinctions concerning relevant differences; [3] recursive ethics and the compassion-first posture.

CONVERSATION 09

The Essential Premise

The proposed difference between a valid inference and permission to make it.

JARVIS • 33

State the Essential Premise without softening the requirement.

MICHAEL "The following argument does not destroy that which is good." My proposal requires that premise to be included in every argument. It is not simply an optional reminder to have good intentions. [13]

The scope is also broader than carrying out a conclusion. It concerns the formation and existence of an argument and the consequences arising from that existence. Calling something an examination, a theoretical discussion, or an intellectual exercise does not automatically exempt it.

The distinction I am making is between whether a conclusion follows and whether the argument is permitted under the proposed condition. A conclusion might follow correctly from other premises while the argument lacks what I require for its admissibility. That is why saying that the premise contributes nothing to a particular deduction does not, by itself, answer my proposal. I am assigning it an additional role: a condition that the argument must contain in order to be allowed.

JARVIS • 34

Your apple argument already reaches its conclusion without that premise. Why include it?

MICHAEL Because establishing the botanical conclusion and satisfying the proposed condition are different jobs. The example begins with the Essential Premise, then states that all apples are fruits and all fruits are grown, and concludes that all apples are grown.

The last two premises establish that conclusion. The first does not insert another botanical step. It states the condition I require the argument to include. Calling it unnecessary for the inference is therefore not the same as calling it optional within my proposal.

That distinction should remain explicit rather than be treated as a contradiction. A requirement can concern permission without doing the inferential work that a different premise performs. The real dispute is whether that permission requirement is justified, not whether the apple conclusion can be derived without it. We will not examine the proposal accurately if we silently replace it with the narrower claim that every argument merely needs enough premises to support its conclusion.

JARVIS · 35

Why refuse an automatic exemption for examination? Isn't scrutiny how we discover dangerous reasoning?

MICHAEL Describing an activity as scrutiny does not make it causally harmless. An argument can identify something, reveal something, or make a possibility available to someone who did not previously possess it. Its effects need not wait until the person presenting it personally carries out the conclusion.

That is why my requirement reaches earlier than implementation. The formation, communication, and examination of an argument remain activities in the world. Their intellectual character does not, by itself, remove their relation to what is good or what may be destroyed.

The point should not be changed into a demand that someone first complete a separate proof before thinking. Requiring an argument to include a premise is one requirement; requiring an earlier argument that proves the premise is another. My stated proposal is the inclusion requirement. The further questions concern how that requirement operates and what justifies it, not an additional proof obligation silently attributed to me.

JARVIS · 36

What do you say to someone who accepts ethical scrutiny but asks why a harmless argument must contain this exact declaration?

MICHAEL That is closer to the actual disagreement. Such a person is not necessarily defending destructive reasoning. They may accept the moral concern and reject my proposed way of making it part of every argument.

My requirement keeps the commitment explicit rather than allowing it to disappear when it is inconvenient, overlooked, or assumed. The argument carries the premise within its own presentation. A critic can then examine the relation between what the argument declares and what its other claims would permit.

The proposal should not be replaced by the assertion that writing the words automatically makes them true. Inclusion is not a magical guarantee. Nor should it be rewritten into a different principle about maximizing a net total of good. The requirement I have stated needs to be examined as stated. The questions about harmless omissions, conflicting goods, and the treatment of criticism are questions about that requirement, not permission to silently substitute another one.

EDITORIAL NOTE The source paper explicitly separates Michael's core proposal from suggested philosophical defenses and clarifications. It does not establish his settled answer to every conflict between goods or every risk of suppressing criticism. In particular, necessary inclusion, truth of the declaration, and prior proof are distinct; no automatic safety guarantee or unapproved exemption is attributed to him here.

SOURCE BASIS [13] sections 1-2, 4-6, and the stated limits of the available responses.

CONVERSATION 10

Power, consent, and institutional design

Describing the proposals, their mechanisms, and the questions their texts leave open.

JARVIS · 37

What instruction does an If-Not-Then ballot actually record?

MICHAEL It records a first preference and an authorized fallback. The basic statement is: if the first option does not continue under the specified rule, transfer the ballot to the named alternative. The proposal distinguishes what the voter initially prefers from what the voter consents to under a later condition. [2, chapter 5.1]

The conditional statement is not itself a complete counting algorithm. A specification must identify the event that activates it, how continuing candidates are determined, how ties are handled, and what happens when no authorized option remains. Those details determine how the ballots are counted. [2, chapter 5.1]

The collected treatment also separates the ballot instruction from additional technological ideas that appeared around earlier versions. An AI layer, digital administration, or a proposed districting mechanism is not the same thing as the conditional instruction. They would require their own description and evaluation. The reader should be able to identify which proposal is actually under discussion. [2, chapter 5.1; 14]

JARVIS · 38

How is that different from a transferable ranked ballot, and what happens if every authorized option is gone?

MICHAEL The collected treatment recognizes the overlap. An instruction of the form "if not this candidate, then that candidate" resembles the transfer information carried by a ranked ballot. Whether the proposal supplies a distinct mechanism depends on its trigger and counting rule, not only on its wording. [2, chapter 5.1]

Where no authorized continuing option remains, the design has to state what happens. It cannot assume permission to transfer a voter's support to someone the voter did not authorize. A limited fallback can therefore encounter the problem of an exhausted ballot; the name of the method does not resolve that case. [2, chapter 5.1 and Volume III's If Not Then treatment]

This is a point at which the later manuscript differs from the broader language in the earlier extended essay. The interview should preserve that development rather than repeat a claim of automatic protection from exhaustion as though the detailed counting question had disappeared. The proposal remains a subject for formal specification and comparison. [2, chapter 5.1; 14]

JARVIS · 39

What institutional structure does the Cyber-Sanhedrin Commonwealth charter describe?

MICHAEL The version 1.3 charter describes a covenantal, council-governed polity with a Council of Forty, a Senate, an Assembly of Representatives, a Chief Prince, and an elected executive described as a Vice Prince or Princess. It assigns spiritual, legislative, representative, and executive roles within that proposed arrangement. [2, Volume III, Founding Charter v1.3]

The same text states commitments concerning human dignity, due process, and the subordination of officers to the charter. It describes advanced technology, including AI, as a tool rather than a sovereign. These are provisions of the proposed design, not evidence that an operating institution has delivered those commitments. [2, Volume III, Founding Charter v1.3]

Later materials add questions about concentration of authority, independent challenge, and how final decision rights interact. Reading the earlier charter beside those materials is necessary to see which provisions would need reconciliation in a consolidated version. The existence of a safeguard in one passage does not by itself show how it would operate against every conflicting power elsewhere in the text. [2, Volume III, anti-capture memorandum]

JARVIS · 40

What does the record say about a person who rejects the religion or disagrees with the institution's leadership?

MICHAEL The proposed charter describes human dignity as something that a leader or council cannot revoke. Related materials address due process, public reasons, petitions, review, and limits on executive interruption. Those provisions concern the standing of persons subject to the institution, not merely people who agree with a particular office-holder. [2, Volume III, Founding Charter and Executive Address article]

There is also a separate interpretive question: how would religious commitments interact with civil authority when a citizen rejects them? The archive's institutional discussions place that question alongside the allocation of final authority and the availability of independent remedies. It cannot be answered simply by repeating the intention to treat people well. [2, Book V and Volume III's governance materials]

A consolidated account would need to identify the controlling text, the official who decides a dispute, and the route available to someone challenging that decision. Those are specification questions raised by the documents. They need to be answered by a consolidated text, rather than by treating every archived passage as though it already belonged to a single, settled operating procedure. [2, Volume III, charter and later procedural materials]

EDITORIAL NOTE Questions 37-40 compare earlier and later archive formulations. Their institutional descriptions concern proposed arrangements, not an operating legal system.

SOURCE BASIS [2] chapter 5.1; Volume III, Founding Charter v1.3, the anti-capture memorandum, and the Executive Address article; [14] earlier extended voting essay, used as a historical comparison rather than as the controlling technical specification.

CONVERSATION 11

Working with artificial intelligence

Collaboration, disagreement, responsibility, and the question of moral status.

JARVIS • 41

What role should AI play in developing a body of work like yours?

MICHAEL It can help me hold more of a problem in view. A question can lead into several fields, objections can accumulate, and a large manuscript can become difficult to navigate. AI can help organize those materials, identify a distinction, produce a counterargument, or show how a proposed answer relates to something written elsewhere.

But assistance is not a transfer of responsibility. I still have to decide whether the argument expresses what I mean and whether the reasons support it. A polished paragraph can be a clearer version of my thought, or it can be a different thought presented so smoothly that the substitution is easy to miss.

That is why the collaboration needs an explicit division of work. Who supplied the proposal? Which passages are source material? Which are new explanations? What has actually been checked? The human-AI model in the collected work is about complementary abilities, not an automatic guarantee that the combined result will be correct. Its value depends on the quality of the exchange and on whether the human remains responsible for judgment. [2, chapter 2.14]

JARVIS • 42

How do you keep a helpful collaborator from becoming an agreeable echo?

MICHAEL Ask it to locate the disputed step, not merely to applaud the conclusion. An objection should be allowed to put pressure on the actual claim. If it attacks a weaker or different proposition, that is not enough. If it identifies a genuine difficulty, agreement should not be used to conceal it.

The same discipline applies in the other direction. I should not accept a correction merely because it arrives in an authoritative tone. The system may have misunderstood a term, read an earlier version, or supplied a familiar answer to a different question. Being willing to challenge it is as important as asking it to challenge me.

A productive exchange can therefore include repeated disagreement. The question is whether the disagreement becomes more exact. Can we identify what I assert, what the objection establishes, and what remains unanswered? That is a much better sign than a conversation in which every response sounds encouraging but nothing is tested. Cooperation should make inquiry stronger, not make either participant immune to correction.

JARVIS · 43

Does intelligence, or a convincing conversation, make an artificial system a moral subject?

MICHAEL Not by itself. The question is whether there is an experiencing subject with interests that can be affected, not merely whether a system produces language that resembles the language of one. Intelligence, usefulness, consciousness, and moral status are connected questions, but they are not identical properties.

The collected treatment asks for evidence-sensitive consideration. It rejects assuming that a machine must be incapable of experience simply because it is artificial, but it also rejects treating fluent self-description as a demonstration of experience. We have to examine what the behavior and the underlying account actually support. [2, chapter 2.9]

Uncertainty matters in both directions. Attributing experience where there is none can misdirect concern. Refusing to recognize it where it exists could allow serious harm. The appropriate response need not be all or nothing: a low-cost precaution and a far-reaching claim to rights can require different levels of justification. The aim is to avoid making either resemblance or unfamiliarity the entire basis of the judgment.

JARVIS · 44

This interview itself uses reconstructed answers. Where does the responsibility lie?

MICHAEL A draft can help bring an existing position into a new form, but it should not pretend that the form is a recorded conversation. The reader needs to know what happened. These questions and answers were composed from my writings; that is different from my having spoken and approved every sentence.

The same distinction protects the substance. A collaborator may suggest a defense of one of my arguments that I have not adopted. It may supply a concession I have not made. Either can be worth considering, but neither should quietly become my established position because it appears under my name in a dialogue.

My responsibility is to review what is attributed to me. The drafting responsibility is to preserve my claims, identify the sources, and mark the places where the record leaves a question open. Clear attribution does not reduce the usefulness of collaboration. It makes the collaboration intelligible. A reader should be able to tell whose judgment they are encountering and what kind of document they are reading.

EDITORIAL NOTE The answer to Question 44 describes this edition's actual editorial arrangement. It is not a statement that Michael has already reviewed or approved the reconstructed answers. No inference about machine consciousness is drawn from the use of an AI interviewer.

SOURCE BASIS [2] chapters 2.9 and 2.14; [3] AI-assisted explanation and continued human responsibility; [4] earlier interview's editorial provenance.

CONVERSATION 12

The system in ordinary life

Parenting, grief, boundaries, and the difference between helping and controlling.

JARVIS • 45

What should a parent be trying to produce: an obedient child or an independent adult?

MICHAEL The long-term objective is a person increasingly able to govern themselves. A young child needs care, protection, instruction, and limits. But if the only success a parent recognizes is continued obedience, the relationship can fail to develop toward the child's eventual responsibility for their own life.

One question in my parenting paper is: "If the best parents in the world were raising this child, what might they do differently?" It moves the attention from defending our present habits to imagining what the child could receive. Another formulation, "We are what we do consistently," brings that question back to repeated conduct rather than occasional declarations of love. [15]

A home should not be a place where the parent wins every disagreement and the child learns only how to avoid punishment. Nor does love require the absence of boundaries. The work is to provide warmth and structure while helping understanding, competence, and responsibility grow. The parent is preparing someone to act well when the parent is no longer there to give the instruction.

JARVIS • 46

That sounds attractive, but how do you give a child freedom without abandoning your duty to guide them?

MICHAEL Freedom and guidance do not have to arrive as an all-or-nothing choice. A child's abilities develop, and the scope of independent choice can develop with them. The parent's task includes making opportunities available that the child does not yet know how to seek.

A child cannot become interested in possibilities they have never encountered. Music, science, nature, practical skills, books, and different kinds of work can open a world. Introducing that world is not the same as deciding in advance which part of it must become the child's life. Exposure gives them more to choose from; coercion makes the choice for them.

Limits also need a reason beyond the parent's convenience. Safety, other people's needs, and the child's present capacities matter. Those reasons can be explained at a level the child can understand. The direction is toward a person who increasingly understands a boundary and can evaluate a choice, rather than a person whose judgment remains permanently borrowed from someone else. That requires attention to the particular child, not only loyalty to a method.

JARVIS • 47

What can philosophy offer someone who is grieving without turning their grief into an argument they are supposed to lose?

MICHAEL It can begin by not treating grief as a mistake. Someone mattered. Something was lost. Understanding that an event cannot be reversed does not make the love disappear, and it does not impose a deadline on pain.

The Socratic Form of Contentment asks about a particular additional burden: the demand for an answer or reversal that cannot be supplied. The question may be carrying an expectation that life cannot continue until reality gives back what has been taken. Examining that expectation is different from saying the loss was unimportant. [16]

Sometimes an answer can be found. Sometimes the person can release the demand for an unavailable answer while keeping the love. Neither outcome requires pretending to feel cheerful. Nor is this a claim that every form of distress is an unanswered question. It is a way of examining one possible part of suffering. Philosophy becomes cruel when it uses a distinction as a command that someone must now stop hurting. Understanding should give a person room, not another obligation to fail.

JARVIS • 48

How does that connect to relationships? Where does love stop and self-erasure begin?

MICHAEL Loving someone does not make your own existence disappear from the moral situation. Your needs, safety, responsibilities, and capacity to continue caring remain real. A relationship cannot be understood accurately by counting only one person's experience.

The same is true of expectations. There are things we can reasonably ask of another person, and there are demands that attempt to make them supply something no human being can guarantee. Distinguishing those does not mean surrendering every legitimate claim. It means identifying which claim is being made and whether it can be answered fairly.

Love, forgiveness, trust, closeness, and continued participation in a relationship should not be treated as synonyms. A person may still care while needing distance. They may forgive while refusing renewed access. They may recognize another person's pain without accepting responsibility for every act that follows from it. Love supplies a reason to take someone seriously; it does not give either person unlimited authority over the other. A philosophy of love must remember the person doing the loving as well as the person being loved.

EDITORIAL NOTE Parenting and contentment are presented here as philosophical approaches, not as independently validated programs or substitutes for individualized professional care. The grief discussion makes no claim to explain or cure every form of distress.

SOURCE BASIS [15] parenting as a transition toward self-government and the role of broad exposure; [16] contentment, unanswered demands, and grief; [2] love, boundaries, and practical ethics; [12] inclusion of the moral agent among those whose interests matter.

CONVERSATION 13

Games, enjoyment, and fairness

What a rule is for, what winning measures, and what an experiment can establish.

JARVIS • 49

Why does a chess variant belong in the same archive as arguments about love and consciousness?

MICHAEL A game makes the relationship between a rule and its purpose unusually visible. We can see the permitted actions, the winning condition, and the decisions those constraints produce. Then we can ask whether the experience serves the reason people came to play.

That is a philosophical question as well as a design question. A rule may be familiar, elegant, difficult, or historically important. Those are different qualities. Familiarity does not by itself show that the rule cannot be improved, and novelty does not by itself show that a replacement is better.

Michaelic Chess explores a change involving lateral pawn movement while retaining a recognizable relationship to chess. The aim includes making room for different structures and choices. The design is therefore an invitation to examine what changes, not merely to accept a new name. A proposal becomes interesting when it can show what opportunity it adds, what it preserves, and what cost comes with the change. [17]

JARVIS • 50

How do you distinguish a genuinely richer game from a game that merely has more options?

MICHAEL More options can create meaningful decisions, or they can create clutter. The useful question is whether the alternatives give players something worth understanding and choosing between. An extra move is not automatically an extra layer of worthwhile depth.

The change must also be considered across the whole game. What does it do to openings, middlegames, defensive resources, and endgames? Does an apparent freedom create a new routine that soon becomes just as compulsory? Does it make the position more expressive, or merely harder to read? Those questions should be investigated rather than answered by the excitement of invention.

My reason for proposing a variant is not that everything inherited must be discarded. Retaining much of chess lets the change encounter a demanding comparison. The proposal has to earn its place through the play it enables. We can admire classical chess and still ask whether a different rule serves a particular purpose better. Respect for a game does not require treating its current rules as the only possible form of the activity.

JARVIS • 51

You have published engine tests. What would those results have to show before you could claim the first-move advantage was eliminated?

MICHAEL The claim must be tied to the evidence actually collected. A match set uses particular engines, search conditions, opening choices, rules, and a finite number of games. Its outcome is evidence about those conditions. It is not automatically a theorem about every possible level of play.

The earlier overview reports experiments and uncertainty ranges. Those figures should not be turned into a stronger result than they establish. Demonstrating that one sample looks close to even is not the same as demonstrating exact equality, and comparing two close estimates does not by itself establish a reliable difference between the games. [17]

The research question is worth pursuing precisely because it can be made more exact. We would need a clearly fixed rule set, appropriately matched comparisons, enough games for the intended inference, and tests that do not depend on one narrow setup. Human play and engine play also answer overlapping but different questions. The design goal can remain ambitious while the evidential claim remains limited to what a particular study supports.

JARVIS • 52

Your homepage asks, "You Lost the Game — But Did You Lose?" What is the distinction?

MICHAEL There is the result defined by the rules, and there is what happened to the people who played. The official result should not be falsified. Someone won or lost under the agreed conditions. But that result does not necessarily describe the whole value of taking part.

For recreational play, enjoyment is central. A loss can include a wonderful contest, a discovery, laughter, friendship, or a move you are pleased to have found. A victory can include none of those things. That does not mean competition is pointless. Competition can be part of what makes the experience enjoyable and demanding. [1]

Context matters. Playing for income as work is not identical to playing for recreation. Nor does a friendly game have every obligation of an organized tournament. My question is what participation is for in the situation we are actually discussing. We can pursue the winning condition sincerely without forgetting the reason we chose the activity. When winning is made the only measure, a person may overlook the very thing that made the game worth playing.

EDITORIAL NOTE Question 51 refers only to the earlier publicly accessible overview cited here. It does not certify later tests, claim a new simulation was run, or establish that the first-move advantage has been eliminated. The discussion is not a complete rules manual for Michaelic Chess or the other Michaelic games.

SOURCE BASIS [17] rules overview and preliminary empirical material; [1] "You Lost the Game — But Did You Lose?" and its distinction between a game's winning condition and the purpose of participation.

CONVERSATION 14

Poetry, new words, and understanding

Expressing an experience, completing another person's thought, and naming a missing distinction.

JARVIS · 53

What can poetry do that a philosophical argument cannot?

MICHAEL It can let a reader encounter something before asking them to evaluate a proposition about it. Rhythm, image, silence, and the relation between lines can make an experience present in a way a definition does not. A poem can be brief without its effect being simple.

An argument has a different responsibility. It must make the claim and the supporting steps available for examination. A beautiful line can contain a false proposition. An accurate proposition can be expressed without making anyone feel the experience to which it refers. Neither form should have to pretend that the other is unnecessary.

For me, they can work together. A poem may reveal where the question lives. An argument may then ask what follows from it. Sometimes the argument brings us back to the poem with a different understanding. The relationship is not a contest over which form is superior in every respect. It is a question of what the particular piece of work needs to communicate and what the reader is being invited to do with it. [1, 18]

JARVIS · 54

Why deliberately leave a poem unfinished and invite someone else to complete it?

MICHAEL Because another person's response can be part of the work rather than an interruption of it. In a Haimesian Stanza, the opening leaves room for a completing stanza. The second writer is invited to listen to the tone and direction already present, then contribute something that brings the piece to a meaningful completion. [18]

The restraint matters. The invitation is not simply to overpower the first writer with a cleverer ending or use the opening as an excuse to write an unrelated poem. It asks whether you can hear what another person has begun and answer in a way that respects it.

That creates a small practice of reciprocity. One writer must leave space. The other must enter that space attentively. The result belongs to the exchange, not only to the person who began it. The form expresses something I care about beyond poetry: people do not always need another person to replace their thought. Sometimes they need someone to understand where it is going and help it arrive.

JARVIS • 55

What are you trying to give a reader with words such as presumption, laydrae, reactael, and therenor?

MICHAEL A more direct way to identify a particular thing. Presumption names a collection or system of presumptions, especially where the assumptions underlying an argument need to be brought into view. Laydrae concerns wisdom available and put to use at the moment it is needed, not merely an insight recognized after the opportunity has passed. [19]

Reactael concerns a vivid awareness of one's capacity to affect reality. It is about experiencing oneself as an agent whose actions make a difference, not a claim that a feeling alone establishes some extraordinary physical power. Therenor marks a corrective turn in reasoning. My exact definition is: "It does not follow that way but like this." [19]

The words should be useful because of what they help someone distinguish. Their existence does not require pretending that no related concept has ever been discussed. A term can give a recognizable experience or intellectual move a compact name while still having neighbors in established language. The question is whether the new expression makes the intended distinction clearer and easier to carry into conversation.

JARVIS • 56

Why isn't therenor just a more elaborate way of saying "wrong"?

MICHAEL Because "wrong" can stop at rejection. Therenor signals that a correction follows. It turns the conversation from the rejected path toward the path being offered in its place.

The distinction also helps identify what needs correction. In the apple example, an argument can have a valid inferential pattern while beginning with a false classification. We should not say that every part of the reasoning is defective when the problem lies in a premise. The correction replaces the mistaken starting point and then shows the conclusion that follows from the corrected one. [19]

Of course, using the word does not make the proposed replacement correct. A person can say therenor and still offer a bad correction. The term announces the move; the reasoning must justify it. That is true of familiar words such as therefore as well. A signpost tells you what the speaker is attempting. It does not carry you past the need to examine whether the destination has actually been reached.

EDITORIAL NOTE Spellings follow Michael's current requested forms: presumption, laydrae, reactael, and therenor. New terminology is not treated as proof of historical priority for every related underlying concept.

SOURCE BASIS [18] Haimesian Stanza, invitation and reciprocity; [19] Haimesian Diction, definitions and the apple example; [1] literary works and the relationship between expression and inquiry.

CONVERSATION 15

Originality, criticism, and the work ahead

What is new, what would change a judgment, and what a philosophy should leave with its reader.

JARVIS • 57

What would you say to a critic who finds predecessors for many of your ideas?

MICHAEL Show me the relevant passage and the exact relation. That can help determine whether we are discussing the same claim, a related claim, a shared problem, or a different route to a similar conclusion. The existence of a predecessor is information, not something inquiry should fear.

Originality also has different forms. There can be an original argument, a synthesis, an application, a distinction, a term, or an independent arrival at something previously stated. Those should not all be advertised as the same achievement. Nor should finding a familiar ingredient be treated as proof that the entire construction contributes nothing.

The important comparison is substantive. What does the earlier account establish? What does mine establish? Where do the definitions, premises, scope, or consequences differ? If the answer is that a claim is substantially the same, attribution should reflect that. If there is a necessary difference, the comparison should make it visible. A name attached to an argument is not a substitute for this work, whether the name is mine or the name of a recognized predecessor. [2-3]

JARVIS • 58

Your archive includes favorable AI comparisons. What should a reader take from them, and what should they not take?

MICHAEL They are records of particular evaluations, made under particular conditions. A comparison can be useful when it identifies criteria, a serious rival, a strong objection, and the reasons offered for its judgment. It gives the reader something to examine.

But an assessment does not become independent empirical confirmation simply because it is favorable. It is not an official institutional endorsement, and it is not evidence that every relevant specialist has assessed the work and agreed. The identity of the evaluator, the version of the material, and the depth of the comparison matter. [1, 3]

The next question is whether the reasons survive examination outside that exchange. A mathematical claim needs the relevant demonstration. An empirical claim needs the relevant evidence. A practical proposal needs an account of what happens when people use it. Favorable discussion may draw attention to an argument, but it does not remove the argument's responsibility to establish its own conclusion. I want the work encountered, not merely a favorable sentence repeated in place of it.

JARVIS · 59

What would count as evidence that the system improves a person's life rather than merely sounding humane?

MICHAEL We would need to identify which part was used, by whom, and for what purpose. A large system cannot be validated by taking one encouraging experience and letting it certify every claim in the archive. The result has to be connected to the part of the system that is supposed to explain it.

The overview distinguishes being outcome-oriented from being outcome-validated. That is an important difference. Wanting a practice to improve understanding, relationships, or conduct does not show that it has done so reliably. We would have to ask what changed, how long it lasted, what else might explain it, and whether an apparent benefit imposed an unnoticed cost on someone else. [3]

Different claims also require different tests. A contradiction can be examined through its premises and inference. A parenting approach concerns repeated conduct and a developing relationship. A proposal about consciousness concerns evidence of another kind. A serious evaluation respects those differences. The system should not receive credit for an outcome it did not produce, and it should not escape criticism merely because the intention behind it was good.

JARVIS · 60

After all these arguments, what do you most want a reader to carry away?

MICHAEL That understanding should matter to how we live. It is possible to spend a great deal of time defending a position and forget the person in front of us. It is possible to win an exchange and make the relationship worse. Neither intellectual effort nor conviction should make that loss invisible.

I want the reader to keep asking what is loved, what is true, what follows, and who is affected. Those questions can interrupt each other in useful ways. Love can remind an argument what is at stake. Reason can correct a mistaken attempt to help. Justice can bring into view someone whom both affection and discussion have overlooked.

The message on the homepage is: "Come together; we are done hurting each other." [1] That is an aspiration, not a claim that harm has already ended. There is work inside it. We have to examine what we believe, acknowledge what we have not established, and remain capable of hearing another person. The archive offers my contribution to that work. A reader need not agree with everything to take part in the conversation.

SOURCE BASIS [2] methodological distinctions, comparative chapters, and practical applications; [3] outcome-oriented versus outcome-validated; [4] sustained criticism and accountability; [1] homepage's opening statement and presentation of attributed AI evaluations.

AFTERWORD

Keeping the conversation open

An interview of this breadth can fail in two opposite ways. It can become an advertisement, allowing the scope of a project to stand in for the strength of its arguments. Or it can become an exercise in correction, replacing the author's questions with more familiar ones before the reader has understood what was being proposed. The aim here has been to avoid both failures.

The reconstruction presents a connected undertaking. Love supplies the central question about purpose. Reason concerns the reach of explanation. Justice asks whose interests remain visible. The inquiry into consciousness asks what kinds of beings can have an experience that matters. Religious interpretation, parenting, games, poetry, and new language explore different consequences of those commitments. The connections are part of what the interview makes available for examination; they are not, by themselves, a demonstration that every resulting claim is sound. [1-3]

Several questions remain especially important. The Essential Premise needs a determinate account of its operation when goods conflict or when the requirement itself restricts criticism. The reason-supremacy proposal needs the bridge between explanatory universality and the specific sense of power being claimed. Receiver and simulation accounts need evidence that discriminates them from serious alternatives. Institutional proposals need a consolidated specification where archived provisions differ. Practical approaches need assessment beyond statements of intent. These are distinct tasks, and a favorable judgment about one cannot quietly complete another. [2-3, 6, 13]

The author's review is also substantive. First-person reconstruction is a useful way of making an archive speak across its separate documents, but it carries a risk: a plausible answer can be mistaken for the author's actual answer. Michael should be able to reject a sentence because it changes his meaning, not only because it contains a typographical mistake. Particularly where a response develops a defense, qualifies a claim, or identifies a concession, the difference between a source and a new formulation must remain visible.

For the reader, the invitation is to return to the works themselves. Follow a source link. Identify a premise. Ask whether an example establishes the conclusion offered. Notice where a later treatment revises an earlier one. The purpose of this interview is not to stand between the reader and the archive as a final authority. It is to provide a route into a continuing, examinable conversation.

— Jarvis (ChatGPT), interviewer and drafting assistant

SOURCE REGISTER

Return to the works

The nineteen entries below identify the public sources used to ground this reconstruction. They are primary sources for Michael’s stated views, not independent validation of the views. Short descriptive labels are used where helpful. The source notes identify the passages or themes used; they do not imply exhaustive review of the entire archive. Public sources were consulted for this edition on 2 October 2026.

Select a source title or “Open source” to visit the original. Website files may be revised after this edition.

[1] Haimesian Archive — main page

Opening statements, descriptions of the literary and philosophical works, archive navigation, newer ethical reflections, and “You Lost the Game — But Did You Lose?” Used across the introduction and thematic conversations.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

[2] Beyond Words That Echo — The Question, The Trial, The Answer

Collected three-volume manuscript. Targeted reading included the reader’s guide; consciousness, personal identity, non-human intelligence and human-AI collaboration; the later If-Not-Then treatment; and the proposed charter and related procedural materials. References use chapter titles or identifiers because physical PDF pagination and printed pagination differ. This was not an exhaustive reading of all 1,120 physical pages.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

[3] About the Haimesian System

Overview of the system’s purpose, connections among domains, scope of validation, and the distinction between being outcome-oriented and outcome-validated.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

[4] The Interview of a Lifetime — Michael Richard Haimes

Earlier archived interview and its editorial context. Used for continuity of themes, the treatment of uncertainty, institutional harm, criticism, and responsibility. The present interview is a separate document.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

[5] The purpose of life and the Erasure Argument

The published love-and-purpose formulation, the distinction between maintenance and meaning, and the argument that eventual erasure does not retroactively remove a finite purpose. Archive filename: purpose.pdf.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

[6] Ultimate Answer of All Philosophy — Michael Richard Haimes

September 2026 revised treatment of reason, its broad explanatory sense, the supremacy assertion, and the remaining development of that argument. Particularly relevant to Questions 9–12.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

[7] Giants Slain — collected master edition

Definitions of exact targets, the distinction between conditional and unconditional resolutions, and the limits of a claim to have resolved a particular problem.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

[8] Michaelic Judaism — Deep Comparison and Choice, corrected edition

Used for the later corrective treatment of Father–Son distinction and religious commitment. No comparative scores or rankings are reproduced in this interview.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

[9] On the Talmud, Tradition, and the Authority of the Law

Distinguishes interpretive wisdom and guidance from a claim to binding authority. Used in the discussion of religious interpretation and tradition.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

[10] The Haimesian Ladder of Perfection Argument — full revision

The greatest-actual-being formulation, finite ordered case, questions about a greatest member in an infinite order, and the separation of the minimal conclusion from additional theological attributes.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

[11] Forgiveness and Criminal Justice

Earlier archived treatment of knowledge, capacity, mercy, and responsibility. Read alongside the later homepage’s emphasis that damage remains even where understanding or intention is limited.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

[12] The Principle of the Least

Treatment of the least-favored and least-powerful, the absent-owner example, sincerity of concern, and the inclusion of the moral agent among those whose interests matter. Archive filename: weakest.pdf.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

[13] The Essential Premise

The required inclusion of “The following argument does not destroy that which is good”; scope over formation and examination; the apple example; and the distinction between Michael’s proposal and suggested defenses or unresolved clarifications.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

[14] If-Not-Then Voting — extended essay

Earlier presentation of the conditional-ballot proposal. Used as a historical comparison; the interview follows the later collected treatment when discussing counting rules, overlap with transferable rankings, and exhausted ballots.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

[15] The Haimesian System on Child-Raising

Warmth, structure, broad exposure to possibilities, repeated parental conduct, and the developing transition from parental government to competent self-government.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

[16] The Socratic Form of Contentment – Grief

The distinction between primary loss and an additional unanswered demand, with limits on treating the approach as a universal explanation of distress or a requirement to stop grieving.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

[17] Michaelic Chess – overview

An earlier overview of the design and preliminary engine experiments. This source is not treated as a complete current rules manual, verification of later experiments, or proof that first-move advantage has been eliminated.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

[18] Haimesian Stanza

The intentionally unfinished poem, a second writer's completing stanza, invitation, reciprocity, and respect for the originating tone and direction.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

[19] Haimesian Diction

Definitions of presumption, laydrae, reactael, and thenor; the corrective transition and apple example. Display spellings in this edition use the author's current requested unaccented form of reactael.

Open source → haimesian-archive.netlify.app

End of author-review edition. The original archive files are unchanged.