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PHILC 1301-Q – Philosophy of Nature and the Human Person

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### Guide Questions for the Philosophy of Mind

1. What does Descartes think he himself is? What is the essence of himself? Is he his body? How body different from mind?
2. What is the problem of “interaction”? Why is this particularly problematic for Descartes?
3. What are *qualia*? How does the mind seem very different from any material object, like the brain?
4. What does Reductive Materialism say the mind is? What does it say mental events are identical to? Who will be able someday to precisely specify what these are? How will it do this?
5. Why do some philosophers say this kind of identity required of Reductive Materialism is not plausible?
6. What evidence is there to favor functionalism as a theory of mind? What does “multiple realizability” mean?
7. According to functionalists, could Martians whose chemistry is silicon-based, have mental states? How would those states be specified (or identified)? How would they be realized or instantiated?
8. Does functionalism entail materialistic reduction.
9. What is a zombie (in the philosophy of mind)? How are their possibility relevant?
10. How does beauty supervene on the physical marble of a statue? How is this idea relevant to the relationship between mind and brain?
11. Why does John Searle think we cannot be free? What conception of how nature works precludes this? Are you committed to such a conception? Where does he say our feeling being free comes from?
12. What other legal and ethical conceptions does the supposed lack of freedom undercut? Why?

13. While being in the Chinese Room, to an outside observer, how does John Searle behave? What does Searle actually understand? What does this say about what a digital computer is and does?
14. According to the various forms of materialism considered so far, what is the ultimate, true cause of all human behavior? What does this entail about the meaning of arguments, i.e., how humans draw conclusions based on premises?
15. What makes you the same person over time? Can it be either your body or your (supposedly immaterial) mind? What does Feser claim is at the heart of these difficulties? Is there another alternative?