



Cambridge Pre-U Getting Started - INSET

Philosophy and Theology

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The opportunity for text-based study

Philosophy of Religion

John Hick: *Evil and the God of Love*

John Polkinghorne: *Science and Creation*

Ethics

J.S.Mill: *Utilitarianism* / Mill on *Bentham*

Sartre: *Existentialism and Humanism*

Epistemology

George Berkeley: *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous in Opposition to Sceptics and Atheists*

David Hume: *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*

Bertrand Russell: *Problems of Philosophy*

Philosophy of Mind

Derek Parfit: *Reasons and Persons*

John Searle: *Minds, Brains and Science*

Philosophical and theological language

Basil Mitchell: *The Philosophy of Religion*

A J Ayer: *Language, Truth and Logic*

New Testament: The Four Gospels

Old Testament: Prophecy

Getting Started and Possible Methods

- Building from Paper One
- Personalities
- Purpose
- Key themes
- Scholarly tradition
- Structure (and some synopticity)
- Extended argument
- Are they convinced?

Building from Paper One: 1d (The Nature of Belief) to Polkinghorne

Is faith rational, irrational or arational? What are the implications of these positions, i.e. if faith is not rational, is it therefore private and entirely subjective? If there is a role for reason within faith, then what is it? Is it reasonable to believe the unprovable? How is faith and belief connected to action?

Return to some central questions they have already been grappling with.

- ‘having a belief in religion and having a belief in science doesn’t necessarily have to ... I know many Reverends who are physicists and things like that ...’
- *But: ‘I think science and religion are ... very opposite ends of the spectrum ... the religion I was brought up with was “Have faith”, and almost “Believe blindly”, whereas science is, “Find the evidence, and therefore modify your theory”...’*

(Maggie Aderin-Pocock)

http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b03d7v5c/Saturday_Live_Maggie_AderinPocock/

Reason vs. faith

- Faith is seen as private, subjective, non-rational at best ...
- Perhaps even *dangerously irrational*: ‘while religious people are not generally mad, their core beliefs absolutely are.’ (Harris 2006:48-9).
- Only ‘public reason’ defined in this ‘scientific’ way has any claim to be taken seriously in public.

Reason vs. faith - problems

- A very poor description of how reasoning – including scientific reasoning – actually works
- ‘[A]ccording to its own criteria of reasonableness, it cannot be reasonable’ (Ward 2006:85)
- E.g. policy debates about ethical issues (assisted dying, human embryo research...) where we have to give *public reasons about questions of value*.
- And the Personhood debate.

- There is also much to be drawn on from section 1a. Foundational debates in Philosophy, and Aristotle's ideas about what counts as a good explanation for something? i.e. four kinds of causal explanation.
- Also their studies within section 1b. Foundational debates in Epistemology, and the ideas of Francis Bacon, that Science should only concern itself with material and efficient causes and that trying to explain natural phenomena in terms of final causes makes scientists lazy.

Your route to Polkinghorne

Polkinghorne on Science and the Debate about God:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIG1T2IAwu](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIG1T2IAwuW)
[W](#)

Personalities

- John Polkinghorne: Physicist and Priest

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w040asDOlfg>

- John Hick: Dr David Cheetham on John Hick

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w040asDOlfg>

- Ayer interviewed by Brian Magee

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMIXmLbGKJY>

Do they understand this author and the authors theological or philosophical vision?

- What does this author stand for?
- Do they align themselves with other writers?
- When were they writing and how does that influence their study?
- What are they responding to and why? Which academic traditions do they challenge?
- What type of philosopher or theologian are they?

What is the purpose of the text?

In his book 'Science and Creation' (1993) John Polkinghorne writes: *'There is a widespread feeling, especially amongst those who study fundamental physics that there is more to the world than meets the eye. Science seems to throw up questions that point beyond itself and transcend its power to answer. They arise from recognising the potentiality inherent in the structure of the world, its interlocking tightly knit character, and indeed, it's very intelligibility which makes it open to our inquiry.'* He quotes Paul Davies (1983), *as writing, 'It may be bizarre but in my opinion science offers a surer road to God than religion.'*

In a nutshell.....

- Polkinghorne argues that Natural Theology – the search for knowledge of God by the exercise of reason and inspection of the world- has been regenerated by scientific discoveries about the nature of the universe.

Central Theme: Modern Natural Theology

Other Central Themes:

The Limits of Natural Theology

Intelligibility

Fine-tuning

Chance and necessity

The relationship between science and religion

Key Words Activity

<i>*Anthropic Principle*</i>	<i>Fine Tuning</i>
<i>Natural Theology</i>	<i>Creation</i>
<i>Revealed Theology</i>	<i>Physics/Theology</i>
<i>Scholars (Swinburne, Davies, Ward, Torrance, Barth)</i>	<i>Miracles/revelation</i>
<i>Quantum Mechanics</i>	<i>Science as Context</i>
<i>Christian Interpretation of the role of Physics</i>	<i>Chance and Necessity</i>

John Hick

‘Those who have some degree of Christian faith should not abandon it in face of evil, nor should those who lack Christian faith rule it out on this account as a possibility for themselves’ ‘The aim of a Christian theodicy must be the relatively modest and defensive one of showing that the mystery of evil does not render irrational a faith that has arisen, not from the inferences of natural theology, but from participation in a stream of religious experience which is continuous with that recorded in the Bible.’ (Hick 2010: x)

Key Words and Key Scholars

<i>Vale of Soul Making (opposed to soul deciding)</i>	<i>Theodicy</i>
<i>Role of Suffering</i>	<i>Augustinian/ Irenaen</i>
<i>Pluralism</i>	<i>Evil imagination</i>
<i>Sin/Fall</i>	<i>Image/Likeness of God</i>
<i>Scholars (A&I but also St Paul, Schleiermacher, Flew, Mackie, Plantinga, Hume, D.Z.Philips)</i>	<i>Eschatology</i>
<i>Freedom</i>	<i>Epistemic Distance</i>

Scholarly tradition: Sartre

The bias of Cartesianism and Neo-Kantianism

Merleau-Ponty and the Phenomenologists

Simone de Beauvoir

Christian Existentialism

Hegel

Marxism

Heidegger and Ontology

Structure and Synopticity

Set Text: John Polkinghorne's *Science and Creation: The Search for Understanding*

Chapter 1 Natural Theology:

- *This chapter is also useful for discussing strong rationalism opposed to fideism (**Paper 1. Section d.**), as well as general science and religion issues (**Paper 2. Topic 3. Section c.**) and arguments for the existence of God (**Paper 2. Topic 3. Section a.**)*

Chapter 2 Insightful Inquiry:

- *Polkinghorne argues that the scientific method requires an act of faith in a) the intelligibility of the universe and b) the ability of the human mind to understand. (**Paper 2. Topic 3. Section c.**) (**Paper 1. Section b. and d.**)*

Chapter 3 Order and Disorder:

- *Some difficult material for the non-physicist, but Polkinghorne's intention and conclusions are clear (**Paper 2. Topic 3. Section c.**). Highly useful material for the freedom/determinism discussion. (**Paper 1. Section e.**)*

Chapter 4 Creation and Creator:

- *Can one make sense of the Christian understanding of God as Creator in the world described by modern science? (**Paper 2. Topic 3. Section c.**) (**Paper 1. Sections a,b,d and e.**)*

Chapter 5 The Nature of Reality:

- *Aims of Chapter 5 are a) to discuss the mind/body problem: 'Dual aspect monism' as a way of doing justice to both mental and physical levels of experience (**Paper 1. Section b.**). (**Paper 2. Topic 3. Section c.**). and b) to argue for the existence of a noetic world (i.e. a world known through noesis, rational intuition rather than sense perception. (**Paper 1. Sections a. and d.**). (**Paper 2. Topic 3. Sections a. and c.**)*

Chapter 6 Theological Science

- *Aims of Chapter 6 are to give an overview on 'a scientist's approach to theology.' (**Paper 2. Topic 3. Section. c.**)*

A J Ayer: Language, Truth and Logic

1. The Elimination of Metaphysics
2. The Function of Philosophy
3. The Nature of Philosophical Analysis
4. The A Priori
5. Truth and Probability
6. Critique of Ethics and Theology
7. The Self and the Common World
8. Solution of Outstanding Philosophical Disputes

The argument present within the text

- What is Hick's argument? (Have they understood his overall purpose?)
- How does he bolster this position?

The aim of Christian Theodicy, human life has a theocentric purpose, a rejection of the Augustinian Theodicy, two-fold creation, epistemic distance, Natural Evil, Moral Evil, Indiscriminate Suffering and his own concessions.

Does Hick convince the student?

- Can they critically engage with his overall argument?

Critically evaluate Hick's theodicy (15)

Write the conclusion first

This is simply a suggestion, although it tends to work very well. If the conclusion is stated first, candidates are then more likely to justify it, thus employing real evaluative techniques with proper critical engagement. The end of the essay can be a summarising evaluation drawing out the main line of argument, or it can be a ‘sting in the tail’ conclusion, pointing the reader in a new direction arising out of what has been said.

References

- Davies, P. (1983). *God and the New Physics* (New York: Simon & Schuster).
- Hick, J. (2010). *Evil and the God of Love* (Basingstoke: Palgrave).
- Harris, S. (2006). *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason* (London: The Free Press).
- Ward, K. (2006). *Is Religion Dangerous?* (Oxford: Lion).

