

Philosophy of Religion Revision Guide

Name: _____



How to plan and write an essay

A-B-C

SAMPLE QUESTION: 'Episteme can be gained through reason not doxa'

Introduction

1. General statement referring to the key concept or issue referred to in the question.
2. Specific statement outlining the scholars for and against the issue.
3. Thesis statement stating the direction and aim of the essay.

Thesis: 'Though Aristotle believed knowledge derives through experience of the physical world, physical experience is liable to give changing opinion, and so I will argue through Plato's Theory of Forms that it is through reasoning that we gain true knowledge.'

A. Plato's Theory of Forms points to knowledge coming from reason (claim)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Concluding Statement (linking back to thesis)

B. Aristotle's challenge to Plato and claim knowledge comes from experience (counter claim)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Concluding Statement (linking back to thesis)

C. Weaknesses of counter claim and defence of original position

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Concluding Statement (linking back to thesis)

Conclusion

1. Thesis statement should be restated and a judgement reached on the question.
2. A specific statement giving a summary of what has been argued and justifying the position.
3. A general statement presenting the implications of your argument or posing questions that it provokes.

1.1 Ancient philosophical influences

Forms: a name Plato gave to ideal concepts

Reason: using logical steps and thought processes in order to reach conclusions

Rationalist: someone who thinks that the primary source of knowledge is reason

Empiricist: someone who thinks that the primary source of knowledge is experience gained through the five senses

Prime Mover: Aristotle's concept of the ultimate cause of movement and change in the universe

Socratic method: the method of philosophical reasoning which involves critical questioning

Analogy: a comparison between one thing and another in an attempt to clarify meaning

Transcendent: being beyond this world and outside the realms of ordinary experience

Dualism: the belief that reality can be divided into two distinct parts, such as good and evil, or physical and non-physical

Action: an explanatory factor, a reason or cause for something

Telos: the end, or purpose, of something

Theist: someone who believes in a God or gods

Aristotle – Mark Scheme

Introduction

Aristotle's Starting Point : Empirical Approach

- AO1: Motion – movement from potentiality to actuality
- AO1 = planets are moving eternally
- AO2 = strength = empirical approach more successful – verifiable cf. Plato's distrust of senses
- AO2 = based on observation of empirical world which has real world advances e.g. medicine, science
- AO2 = weakness = senses can deceive us cf. Heraclitus – Plato's forms better?

Aristotle: 4 Causes

- AO1 = 4 Causes = material (what its made of); efficient (who made it and the art of making it); formal (characteristic shape); final (telos/purpose)
- AO1 = Pheidias' bronze statue of Athena
- AO1 = teleological view of nature
- AO2 = strength = easily applied and observed
- AO2 = weakness = not everything has a final cause
 - Evolution = suggests we're the result of chance genetic mutation and have no predefined purpose
 - Cf. Sartre – humans have no predefined purpose but are 'condemned to be free' and define themselves through their choices
 - Bertrand Russell = universe has no purpose 'it is there and that is that'

Prime Mover

- AO1 = Prime Mover final cause of universe cf. saucer of milk
- AO1 = Prime Mover not efficient cause – universe moving eternally
- AO1 = Prime Mover is immaterial (only capable of intellectual/spiritual activities); immutable; perfect; necessary
- AO2 = strength = consistent with monotheistic/Christian God with qualities above (immutable, immaterial, perfect, necessary, omni-words)
- AO2 = weakness = important difference with monotheistic God = Christians believe in a God who cares for his creation and interacts with universe e.g. miracles, religious experience, Bible points to loving God
- AO2 = weakness = scientific criticism = universe not eternal - Big Bang Theory suggests universe has a beginning
- AO2 = weakness = no empirical evidence for Prime Mover

Conclusion

Plato – Evaluation Table

Plato	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Theory of Forms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Forms are perfect ideas</i>: uncreated, ultimately real, immaterial, unchanging, transcendent (beyond space and time), pure (only 1 quality), archetypes (models). • <i>Only known through reason</i>. • <i>Everything has a form</i>: there are forms for beauty, justice and wisdom, forms for living things and objects, forms for mathematical concepts. The form is what they all have in common. They are systematically interconnected • <i>Ultimate Form is the Form of the Good</i>: by understanding FoG we can understand the value of all things; like sun helps illuminate other forms; ultimate end in itself. <p>Allegory of the Cave</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cave/World of Appearances, Prisoners/Us, Objects/Imitations of the Forms, Fire/Sun of our World, Sun/Form of the Good, Escaped prisoner/The Philosopher, Journey out of the Cave/soul's journey into realm of forms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains why we all recognise the same essential elements in something. • Explains why world is imperfect & problem of evil (world is imperfect copies of the form). • Encourages us not to accept things at face value • Empirical knowledge flawed as liable to change e.g. previously atoms thought to be smallest thing it can reduced to but now protons, neutrons and electrons cf. Heraclitus 'cant step into same river twice' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third-Man Argument (Aristotle): Infinite regress of forms to explain another form 'Plato needs a form of the forms to explain what the forms have in common and a ...'. • Forms could be just ideas preserved in people's minds which can die if not passed on ill. Dawkins 'memes'. • Unclear the link between the World of Appearance and Forms e.g. is there a form of an animal to which all animals relate to or do forms relate to specific animals? is there anything in the middle? • No empirical evidence for forms. In allegory no proof world in cave or outside is real. How can you prove the prisoners and philosopher is right or wrong? • Form of the Good = Aristotle claims no single good, relative to each things telos • Forms for evil things?

Aristotle – Evaluation Table

Aristotle	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>The Four Causes (Explains why things exist):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Material, Formal, Efficient, Final (ill. sculpture). <p>Aristotle’s argument for a PM based on observation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical world in constant <i>motion</i>; ; objects in state of <i>actuality or potentiality</i>; planets moving <i>eternally</i>; change is always caused by <i>something</i>. Concludes there must be a PM responsible for this motion. <p>Prime Mover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Unchanging</i> cause of all that exists; as unchanging must be <i>good</i> as something that changes is bad; as cannot change must be <i>immaterial</i> and so can only do <i>intellectual and spiritual activities</i>; <i>leader of the universe</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Derived from Aristotle’s observations of the natural world. Contrast this with Plato. Causes can be readily applied to objects in the world. Cf. Anthony Flew argues in favour of the Prime Mover at the end of his life, having previously been a staunch atheist (falsificationism). He argue that evidence of fine-tuning from observation of the universe does point to the existence of a Prime Mover. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship between Prime Mover and universe unclear. Prime Mover is transcendent and cannot interact in the universe which is not way most believers talk about God’s activity in the world e.g. miracles, incarnation. Is there really a final cause or purpose to the universe? Cant it just be there? (Bertrand Russell). Lack of evidence for a Prime Mover. Empirical knowledge flawed as liable to change e.g. previously atoms thought to be smallest thing it can reduced to but now protons, neutrons and electrons cf. Heraclitus ‘cant step into same river twice’

1.2 Soul, Mind and Body

Soul: often, but not always, understood to be the non-physical essence of a person

Consciousness: awareness or perception

Substance: a subject which has different properties attributed to it

Dualism: the belief that reality can be divided into two distinct parts, such as good and evil, or physical and non-physical

Substance dualism: the belief that the mind and the body both exist as two distinct and separate realities

Scepticism: a questioning approach which does not take assumptions for granted

Materialism: the belief that only physical matter exists, and that the mind can be explained in physical terms as chemical activity in the brain

Reductive materialism: otherwise known as identity theory – the view that mental events are identical with physical occurrences in the brain

Category error: a problem of language that arises when things are talked about as if they belong to one category when in fact they belong to another

Discuss critically the view that the mind and body are separate substances.

Introduction

AO2 IN FAVOUR OF DUALISM: Descartes' Conceivability Argument

A substance is something that does not depend on another thing in order to exist. It is conceivable that the mind can exist without the body. Therefore, it is possible that mind can exist without body. Therefore, mind and body are distinct substances. The mind is nothing but thought; the body is nothing but extension because both mind and body are clear and distinct.

AO2: IN FAVOUR OF DUALISM: Descartes' Divisibility Argument

Mind and body have different properties – thought and extension. If they were the same thing they would have the same properties.

Leibnitz – principle of the indiscernibility of identicals = two substances if identical share the same properties.

The mind does not have any parts and cannot be divided whereas the body does have parts (e.g. hands and arms). So mind and body are distinct type of things.

AO2: AGAINST SUBSTANCE DUALISM: PROBLEM OF INTERACTION

How can you explain relationship between mental and physical substances. How can mental states (immaterial) cause physical reaction (material)

John Searle e.g. thought of raising arm = raising arm

Descartes' response = close connection between mind and body "intermingling"

Mind has a privileged link with the brain, a point of causal connection in the pineal gland

However, this has been disproven by science.

AO1: RESPONSE TO DUALISM MIGHT BE TO ACCEPT MATERIALISM

Gilbert Ryle Ghost in the Machine

Dawkins

AO2: AGAINST MATERIALISM - What are Chalmers' easy and hard problem of consciousness

EASY PROBLEM OF CONSCIOUSNESS = analysing and explaining the function of consciousness e.g. the fact that we can consciously control our behaviour (Chalmers think this can be resolved through studying the brain and so doesn't threaten materialism)

HARD PROBLEM OF CONSCIOUSNESS = however, no explanation of physical processes can explain what it is like to undergo conscious experience

Materialists argue that conscious experiences are just physical experiences but Chalmers argues such explanation misses how it feels to undergo the experience (e.g. experience of seeing yellow)

AO2: How can we resolve the hard problem of consciousness

AO1: What is property dualism?

view that there is just one kind of substance (physical) but that it is capable of both physical (chemical and neural activity in the brain) and mental properties (emotions, consciousness) Mental properties can cause physical events.

AO2: Zombie Argument – in favour of property dualism

Zombie -= exact physical duplicate of a person without experiential consciousness

Identical physical properties but different mental properties

Zombies are not possible in the real world but could exist in a different possible world (metaphysical properties)

To argue that zombies are possible is to argue that property dualism is true. It argues that the properties of consciousness cannot be physical properties.

The idea of a zombie is conceivable to the extent that there's no obvious contradiction in the idea.

This means zombies are metaphysically possible. If consciousness was identical with physical properties it would be impossible to imagine a zombie. This is Leibnitz' principle of the indiscernibility of identicals (i.e. if they were the same they would have the same properties).

Therefore property dualism is true.

Conclusion

- Consciousness is real
- Conscious states are caused by brain processes
- Consciousness is realised in the brain
- It functions causally – mental causes cause physical effects

Both substance dualism and materialism are saying something true. Dualism is correct to say that consciousness is real, however, it fails to explain the causal link between mind and brain if they were separate substances (the problem of interaction). Materialism is true to say that there is a causal relationship between mind and brain. However, in its strong form, it is wrong to deny the existence of consciousness. Therefore, it has been argued that property dualism is the most elegant solution to the Mind-Body problem.

Mind, Body, Soul – Evaluation Table

Materialism		Dualism	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Mind Brain Identity Theory Mental states = brain states</p> <p>Gilbert Ryle: Ghost in the Machine</p> <p>Richard Dawkins' Selfish Gene</p>	<p>Hard Problem of Consciousness Chalmers: How can subjective first-person experience (e.g. experience of seeing 'red') be explained by objective third-person explanation (chemical and electrical activity in the brain)</p> <p>Dualist arguments: Descartes: mind and body have different properties see dualism ></p> <p>Christian arguments: Richard Swinburne – soul gives us our individuality Keith Ward need soul to have purpose</p>	<p>Descartes: Conceivability Argument It is conceivable that the mind can exist without the body. Therefore, it is possible that mind can exist without body. Therefore, mind and body are distinct substances. The mind is nothing but thought; the body is nothing but extension because both mind and body are clear and distinct.</p> <p>The Divisibility Argument Mind and body have different properties – thought and extension. If they were the same thing they would have the same properties.</p> <p>Cf. Leibnitz – principle of the indiscernibility of identicals = two substances if identical share the same properties.</p>	<p>Problem of Interaction: Substance dualists cannot explain how mental thoughts can cause physical responses e.g. how when I feel embarrassed (mental state) I blush (physical state) Descartes' response to this problem, that the point of interaction is in the pineal gland, is wrong.</p> <p>Problem of other minds: if mind is separate from other bodies, then we can only know that other people have bodies but we have no way of knowing whether they have mind.</p> <p>Ryle: Category Error (Ghost in the Machine)</p>

1.3 Arguments based on observation

Teleological: looking to the end results (telos) in order to draw a conclusion about what is right or wrong

Cosmological: to do with the universe

Natural theology: drawing conclusions about the nature and activity of God by using reason and observing the world

Contingent: depending on other things

Principle of Sufficient Reason: the principle that everything must have a reason to explain it

Sceptic: someone who will not accept what others say without questioning and challenging

A posteriori arguments: arguments which draw conclusions based on observation through experience

Necessary existence: existence which does not depend on anything else

A priori arguments: arguments which draw conclusions through the use of reason

Logical fallacy: reasoning that has a flaw in its structure

Assess the Cosmological Argument.

Introduction

First Way: Unmoved Mover, Second Way: uncaused causer

Motion, Potentiality, Efficiency

Objection: Hume's Fallacy of Cause and Effect

Cf. Russell's treasure hunter – scientists might look for causes but does not mean there are any

Response: Anscombe's rabbit from a hat

- Anscombe has responded to Hume's argument by pointing out that you could conclude that "existence must have a cause" without believing or knowing that "such particular effects must have such particular causes".
- Anscombe gives the example of a magician pulling a rabbit out of a hat, pointing out that you can imagine a rabbit "coming into being without a cause" but this tells us nothing about "what is possible to suppose 'without contradiction or absurdity' as holding in reality".

Infinite Regression

Objection: The Fallacy of Infinite Regression

Response: Big Bang suggests universe does have a beginning... therefore must have a cause

Counter-Response: even if Big Bang true, doesn't necessarily mean God created the universe. For example, some cosmologists argue universe was caused by events in another unknown universe which in turn was caused by events in another unknown universe, and so on to infinity.

Third Way: Argument from contingency

Objection: Hume's Fallacy of Composition

Cf. Russell's Mother Argument

Objection: Existence is not a predicate

- Immanuel Kant rejected Aquinas' Third Way for the same reason that he rejected the concept of necessary existence with respect to the ontological argument: existence is not a 'predicate'.
- For example, one can have an idea of what a unicorn is. However, that does not mean it exists in reality, even though we can think about unicorns as living creatures.
- **Response:** However, this is not entirely fair as the cosmological argument is fundamentally different from the ontological argument in that it is *a posteriori*.
- **Counter Response:** Mackie questions the assumption that there is a necessary being. He argued that Aquinas assumes that anything which does not have the predicate of existence requires the existence of a necessary being, whom Aquinas calls God. He suggests that you could equally argue that there is '**a permanent stock of matter whose essence did not involve existence from anything else**' (Mackie, The Miracle of Theism).

Conclusion

Cosmological Argument – Evaluation Table

Aquinas' Three Ways	Objection	Counter
First Way: Argument for unmoved mover Motion Infinite Regression	Objection: Fallacy of Infinite Regression: infinite regressions are possible e.g. number sequence (Hume) cf. multiverse theory	Counter: Big Bang suggests universe had a starting point and is not infinite
Second Way: Argument for uncaused causer Efficiency Infinite Regression	Objection: Problem of Cause and Effect (Hume/Russell): we have a tendency to see cause and effect even where there is no such e.g. bus stop cf. inertia, quantum jumps without cause Russell says scientist may look for cause but doesn't mean there is a cause like a treasure hunter may hunt for treasure doesn't mean there is treasure.	Counter: Magician's rabbit from the hat (Anscombe) Quantum jumps only occur on subatomic level, but cause and effect applies in Newtonian universe
Third Way: Argument from contingency Contingent & necessary existence	Objection: Fallacy of Composition (Hume): it is not necessary for the whole universe to have a cause just because everything within it can be explained by the preceding cause. Cf. Russell's Mother Argument everyone has a mother doesn't mean human race has a mother	Counter: Copleston – it is legitimate to ask what is the cause of the universe

Teleological Argument – Evaluation Table

TAs	Objection	Response
<p><u>Paley</u> Argument based on purpose</p> <p>Watch analogy: Paley focuses on the manner in which things fit together in a particular way for a purpose. He gives examples like the human eye, an intricate mechanism of the human body. The eye is designed in such a way to create the ability to see.</p>	<p>Hume: i) The analogy is false. A watch is a mechanical and static device, whereas the world or universe is organic. It would be better to compare the universe with an orange. If there is no obvious creator of the orange, then there is no obvious creator of the universe. ii) Epicurean thesis. As all things require some kind of stability to exist then the universe can sustain some degree of randomness. This being so, then it is likely that an infinite universe over infinite time will develop patterns and order to give the appearance of design. iii) Like effects do not imply like causes. Even if the universe has an apparent design (effect) the cause does not have to be attributable to a single design cause. iv) Nothing in universe which a universe can be compared to satisfactorily so any argument by analogy is weak. Our universe only seems ordered because it is the only one we know, compared to others it may be not orderly v) Other explanations other than God for apparent design</p>	<p>Fine-Tuning Argument:</p> <p>Polkinghorne: the difference between expansive and contractive forces in the expanding cosmos according to then-currently accepted theory, depends upon an extremely fine balance of the total energy, the odds of which are 10^{60}.</p> <p>George Wald wrote in the same context that the conditions for something as fundamental as the atom depend on a balance of forces to within one in 10¹⁸.</p> <p>Counter: Weak Anthropic Principle - It is impossible to observe a universe that does not permit the existence of observers; only a universe that permits the existence of observers could be observed.</p>
<p><u>Aquinas</u> Argument based on regularity: Aquinas focuses on how one thing follows another, according to the laws of nature, leading to particular results or purpose.</p>	<p>Aquinas assumes that things in natural world have some purpose and are aimed at some goal but may not be so -Sartre</p> <p>Some would say Natural World is just the way it is and it is incorrect to assume there's a designer Cf. Russell, Coplestone</p> <p>Dawkins: Blindwatchmaker = complexity does not imply design</p> <p>Swinburne: Circular Argument: truth of the conclusion assumed in one of the premises</p> <p>Who designed the designer?</p>	

1.4 Arguments based on reason

A posteriori arguments: arguments which draw conclusions based on observation through experience

Ontological: to do with the nature of existence

A priori arguments: arguments which draw conclusions through the use of reason

Contingent: depending on other things

Necessary existence: existence which does not depend on anything else

Predicate: a term which describes a distinctive characteristic of something

Epistemic distance: a distance in knowledge and understanding

Logical fallacy: reasoning that has a flaw in its structure

Assess the view that God can be known through reasoning alone.

Introduction

Anselm's 1st Argument – God can be known through reasoning (existence in reality v existence in mind alone)

Gaunilo's Objection – The Island – logical fallacy

Anselm's Response – islands are contingent, God is necessary

Anselm's second argument – God can be known through reasoning (necessary v contingent existence)

Aquinas' criticism – God can be known through a posteriori arguments alone

Descartes' version of the Ontological Argument (existence is a predicate of a perfect being)

Kant's criticism of Descartes' ontological argument – existence is not a predicate – logical fallacy (category error)

Norman Malcolm's response
Contingent existence is not a predicate but necessary existence is

Conclusion

Ontological Argument – Evaluation Table

OAs	Objection	Counter
<p><u>Anselm</u> <u>1st Ontological Argument</u> Key concepts: God greatest possible being Existence <i>In intellectu v in re</i> (a chair in reality and an imaginary chair) Painter analogy (painting superior to image of painting in mind)</p> <p><u>2nd Ontological Argument</u> Key concepts: Contingent v necessary existence</p>	<p><u>Gaunilo's objections:</u> Objection 1: Gossip The person and event in question can be made up to trick you.</p> <p>Objection 2: Cannot define into existence. You cannot prove from what is said (de dicto) what exists in reality (de re)</p> <p>Objection 3: The Perfect Island</p>	<p>Response: cf. Second Ontological Argument: Anselm did not just say God is the greatest possible being but that God's existence is necessary. In contrast, <u>Gaunilo's</u> island's existence is contingent.</p> <p>Response: <u>Platinga</u> argues that however great an island is, there could always be one better (more trees etc.), whereas Anselm's God nothing greater is possible.</p>
<p><u>Descartes</u> God is perfect being Predicate Triangles : immutable nature Existence as Perfection (ill. Mountain and Valley)</p>	<p><u>Kant's Objection:</u> Existence is not a predicate Cf. unicorns</p> <p><u>Gasendi's Objection:</u> 'perfection' can only be discussed for something that exists.</p>	<p>Response to <u>Kant:</u> existence is a predicate, it adds a quality</p> <p><u>Normon Malcolm:</u> Contingent existence is not a predicate but necessary existence is</p> <p>Response to <u>Gasendi:</u> Descartes says God not like triangles or unicorns.</p>

1.5 Religious Experience

Mystical experience: experiences of God or of the supernatural which go beyond everyday sense experience

Conversion experience: an experience which produces a radical change in someone's belief system

Corporate religious experience: religious experiences which happen to a group of people 'as a body'

Numinous experience: an indescribable experience which invokes feelings of awe, worship and fascination

Principle of credulity: Swinburne's principle that we should usually believe what our senses tell us we are perceiving

Principle of testimony: Swinburne's principle that we should usually trust that other people are telling us the truth

Naturalistic explanation: an explanation referring to natural rather than supernatural causes

Neurophysiology: an area of science which studies the brain and the nervous system

Read p. 250-255. Identify the key features for each type of religious experience.

Vision	Numinous
Conversion	Voices

Discuss critically the view that people who claim to have had experience of God should be believed.

Examiners Notes

This question invites you to consider whether claims to religious experience are credible. You could explore the different possible explanations for religious experience, both natural and supernatural in your considerations of whether claims to have experienced God are best understood at face value (Richard Swinburne, William James) or whether another explanation is more plausible (physiological and psychological).

Union with Greater Power	
Richard Swinburne William James	RESPONSE
Psychological	
Ludwig Feuerbach Sigmund Freud Donald Winnicott	RESPONSE
Physiological	
Michael Persinger (magnetic waves) Mobbs and Watt (near-death experience)	RESPONSE

Religious Experience – Evaluation Table

Arguments that RE comes from God	Arguments that RE can be explained physiologically	Arguments that RE can be explained psychologically
<p>Principle of Credulity; what one sees is probably right. Criticism: can be mistaken in what is seen, senses may cause you to misinterpret things. Counter: not mistaken all the time. If we constantly rejected things we'd end up doubting everyday ordinary experiences which is absurd.</p> <p>Principle of Testimony; if there isn't evidence stating the opposite then one should believe the testimony of religious experience. Criticism: If one accepts the possibility of an experience not being from God then how can one be sure that a religious experience proves God? A proof for God should be flawless. Counter: however, most religious experiences are reliable, as the evidence to the contrary isn't there. Plus they happen randomly.</p>	<p>Voices = Schizophrenia Teresa's Response: Two tests 1) does it fit with Christian teaching 2) does the person feel at peace after the experience?</p> <p>Paul's Vision = Epilepsy Response: No evidence every person who has experienced religious experience suffered from illness</p> <p>Michael Persinger – religious experience could be explained by unknowingly being in the presence of some magnetic field</p> <p>Response: Poor methodology – participants knew in advance what the investigators were hoping to find and other attempts to repeat experiment have not led to same result</p>	<p>Feurebach: Religious experience originates in the mind. We take the best of human nature (heroism, compassion) and project it onto 'God'. Our idea of 'God' designed to meet our needs i.e. if we're of insignificant status we imagine a God who values us.</p> <p>Winnicott: Children make attachment to transitional object (e.g. teddy bear) Child holds it for comfort in unfamiliar situations Transitional object lies between imagination and reality Religious experience is an illusion that helps to comfort us</p> <p>Freud: Religious experience born from desire for father figure.</p> <p>Response: Problem with challenges based on the subconscious is that scientists still understand relatively little of the relationship between mind and body, and the conscious and unconscious mind.</p>

Comparing Individual and Corporate Religious Experience – Evaluation Table

Individual Strength	Individual Weakness	Corporate Strength	Corporate Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate experiences can be described as being down to 'mass hypnosis' They can be authenticated personally They are less likely to be conditioned Cf. Swinburne's Principle of Credulity; what one sees is probably right. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't appear as valid as corporate experiences There are often no witnesses to these experiences Lack of empirical evidence Cf. A.J.Ayer: Anything which is unverifiable, including talk of God and religious experience which are ineffable by James' definition, are meaningless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate experiences are more numerically valid. They often show shared feelings and responses, which are more valid than individual experiences Suggests that experiences come from God, not individual imaginations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking the Toronto Blessing as an example - why would God show himself by making people laugh hysterically and bark like dogs?! Hank Hanegraaff argues that such phenomena are the result of mass hypnosis William Sergeant argued that mass religious conversions are down to conditioning Christian psychiatrist John White refers to corporate experiences as "learned patterns of behaviour"

1.6 The Problem of Evil

Omnipotent: all-powerful

Omniscient: all-knowing

Omnibenevolent: all-good and all-loving

Inconsistent triad: the omnibenevolence and omnipotence of God, and the existence of evil in the world, are said to be mutually incompatible

Theodicy: an attempt to justify God in the face of evil in the world

Natural evil: evil and suffering caused by non-human agencies

Moral evil: the evil done and the suffering caused by deliberate misuse of human free will

Privatio boni: a phrase used by Augustine to mean an absence of goodness

Free will: the ability to make independent choices between real options

Epistemic distance: a distance in knowledge and understanding

To what extent does the experience of evil and suffering count against the existence of God.

Introduction

G: Inconsistent Triad (Epicurus and later Augustine come up with the inconsistent triad which states that if God is omnipotent then he would have the power to stop suffering but chooses not to so he is not benevolent and so does exist. If God is willing but not able to then he is not omnipotent and so does not exist.)

S: Both **Augustine** and **Irenaeus** theodicies, which attempt to account for the experience of evil and suffering are unconvincing.

T: The experience of evil and suffering proves that God does not exist.

Moral Evil

Augustine's Theodicy as an explanation: free will defence

God is not responsible for evil but it is a privation and the result of humans abusing their God-given free will. He interprets Genesis 2-3 literally to explain how original sin enters the world and corrupts human nature.

Irenaeus/Hick's Theodicy: soul-making

Hick, on the other hand, argues that God allows evil because it allows us to develop virtues, moral character traits, and that we develop into the image of likeness of God, which we will complete after death.

Objection 1: evidential problem – distribution of evil impossible to explain

Both theodicies fail to explain why innocent people disproportionately suffer, for example in the genocides in Rwanda and Cambodia.

Objection 2: God could have created creatures that always choose good (Mackie)

Response: this is not true free will

Objection 3: God's omniscience

If God knows all the evil that will happen then he cannot escape blame

e.g. **Dostoyevsky's Brothers Karamazov** – loses faith because God allows children to suffer

Natural Evil

Objection Problem of Natural Evil cannot be explained by free will

Response: Reasoning allows humans to predict or ward off misfortunes (**Moltman**)

Response: suffering can help us develop moral virtues (**Swinburn and Hick**)

Objection: Miracles

if God sometimes performs miracles, why is he so selective (Maurice Wiles)

Objection: Falsification

if religious believers not prepared to allow any evidence, including suffering, as evidence to count against belief in God, then God talk is meaningless (Falsification, Antony Flew)

Response: Problem of falsifying love – by **Flew's** logic, a parent's love could be falsified if parent harms the child... but many parents believe and their children agree, that growing up requires facing some hardship, danger and risk. Question not existence of suffering but balance of suffering and good in world

Response: D.Z. Philips

Read p. 54-56 and fill in the table.

Augustine's claims	Objections	Counter Responses
1. Augustine basis his theory on Genesis 2-3.		
2. Evil is a privation		
3. Moral evil is the result of the Fall of Man		
4. Natural evil is the result of the Fall of Angels		
5. We all share in Adam's sin		
6. Free Will defence		

Theodicy – Evaluation Table

Augustine		Irenaeus and Hick	
For	Against	For	Against
<p>Theodicy= theory to justify Gods righteousness when faced with evil (PoE- Logical/inconsistent triad (Hume) – soul-deciding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Starting point= Genesis→ If God made everything he must have made evil - solution=Evil=privation of good → cf. McCabe's grapes- lacks qualities of grape- sweet taste etc Cf. Aristotle's 'bad' human= not fulfilling its purpose Based on Genesis 2-3 - Moral evil = fall of man → result of free will e.g. murder → God made everything, we spoil everything ∴ evil= our responsibility, not Gods -all humans deserve to be punished for Original Sin of Adam/Eve → 'seminally present in loins of Adam'- descendants of Adam ∴ share effects of OS RESP:1 Natural evil = result of fall of angels – Hierarchy of creation –loss of harmony in the world (natural evil) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can a perfect world go wrong? - Evolution suggests that we were not seminally present in OS – humans = individual beings, DNA from parents→ why should we all be punished for one person's sin? → Life evolved over millions of years -Fails to adequately respond to existence of natural evil + suffering -nature = vast → evil in nature cannot point to a omnibenevolent designer →Dawkins- e.g. digger wasps paralyses victim to lay eggs in it - Evidence of Lack of design, e.g. Cancer → Hitchens : suffering we endure cannot be reconciled to any powerful/loving God →belief in benevolent God = Immoral – as an explanation of evil such as cancer - Counter response: Not scientific , not taken seriously by any rational scholar, religious or otherwise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - created in Gods image, not likeness - Soul-making theodicy Suffering = necessary for our development of virtues - If there was no evil, there is no value in life/our goodness -Hick: - evil/suffering exists in order for us to develop in His likeness -God cannot make us good → Support from Plantinga: if he did we would have no free will ∴ we would be robots -Vardy: 5 types of evil: → without this suffering we cannot better ourselves, serve each other, be like Christ (Perfect man) →Epistemic distance: gap in knowledge between God/ humanity →believes in universal salvation (closer to understanding of God) -gives purpose to natural evil -more in line with modern understanding of evolution -non literal approach to Genesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hick does not consider suffering of animals/planet - Why could God not make a world where humans always make the right choice - Hick does not explain the imbalance of suffering in the world between different people/ innocent suffering – universal salvation seems to remove the freedom Hick keeps central - universal salvation undermines Jesus' death + resurrection – reduces him to a role model - why would a perfect, loving God us evil as a means to an end? – must be another way that God can use to develop humanity. - unfair for babies, disabled people to suffer- unable for them to use suffering in a developmental way

1.1 Attributes of God

Omnipotent: all-powerful

Omniscient: all-knowing

Omnibenevolent: all-good and all-loving

Eternal: timeless, atemporal, being outside the constraints of time

Everlasting: sempiternal, lasting forever on the same timeline as humanity

Free will: the ability to make independent choices between real options

Existentialism: a way of thinking that emphasises personal freedom of choice

Immutable: incapable of changing or being affected

Attributes of God Evaluation Table

Omnipotence		Eternal		Omnibenevolence	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Descartes: God has no limitations at all</p> <p>Aquinas: God can do everything that is within his nature therefore cannot be cruel or unwise</p> <p>Swinburne: God can do everything possible but logical impossibilities are not things</p> <p>Vardy: God deliberately limits his own power- he created the world in such a way that his own power has to be limited. Does not undermine God as he chose to do this in order to create a world suitable for free and rational human beings Cf. Kenosis- God deliberately empties himself of his own power Cf. Philippians- In incarnation God deliberately limited his</p>	<p>Response to Descartes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If God can do anything then he can do things that go against his loving nature e.g. cruelty 2. Things that are logically impossible e.g. stones too heavy for God to lift are not really 'things' because they are impossible 3. Problem of Evil <p>Response to Aquinas: If God cannot do things and is limited by his own nature then he is not truly omnipotent</p> <p>Is omnipotence a problem of religious language where we do not have the words to frame an adequate concept of God's power?</p> <p>Whitehead and Hartshorne: a totally omnipotent God is not as</p>	<p>Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas = God is eternal in a timeless way. God created time and is not bound by it but exists in the past, present and future</p> <p>Swinburne: God is everlasting in a way that moves along the same timelines as we do. This gives us genuine free will and allows us to have a relationship with God who responds to our behaviour and prayers.</p> <p>Boethius: questioned whether an omniscient God could justifiably punish and reward if timeless</p> <p>Anselm: four-dimensionalist approach- God is in all times at once and all times are 'in God'. We are restricted in one place at one time with</p>	<p>Against God being eternal</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If God is timeless then he does not change and he cannot respond to people's behaviour with anger or love 2. If God knows everything for all time our freedom is restricted Cf. elect 3. If God is outside time he cannot be omniscient as he cant know what day it is <p>Against God being everlasting</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Makes God seem less impressive because God is restricted by time 2. It puts a limit on God's omniscience as he cannot know the future with certainty 3. It raises questions on what God was doing before he created the universe 	<p>Bible describes God as good and perfect</p> <p>Gen 1: When God created the universe everything is very good</p> <p>Unlike Plato's Form of the Good, the God of the Bible is interested in moral behaviour e.g. gives Israel the Ten Commandments</p> <p>When God is angry, it is not because of their failure to perform religious rituals but how they treat the poor and weak</p> <p>Jesus = sacrifice, exemplifies goodness of God</p>	<p>God if the Bible, especially the Old Testament, is not particularly good e.g. he asks Abraham to sacrifice his son as a test, flooded the world in story of Noah and expressed regret</p> <p>Omnibenevolence may be incomputable with omnipotence as he wont be able to do evil acts</p> <p>Problem of Evil</p>

own power to be accessible to humanity Wiles: God cant perform miracles as it defies his own laws	impressive as a God who could meet resistance Problem of Miracles: If God is all powerful, why doesn't he perform miracles on everyone?	free will, but God is without restrictions			
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1.2 Religious Language: religious perspectives

Agnosticism: the view that there is insufficient evidence for God, or the view that God cannot be known

Truth-claim: a statement that asserts that something is factually true

Apophatic way (via negativa): a way of speaking about God and theological ideas using only terms that say what God is not

Cataphatic way (via positiva): a range of ways of speaking about God and theological ideas using only terms that say what God is

Univocal language: words that mean the same thing when used in different contexts

Equivocal language: words that mean different things when used in different contexts

Analogy: a comparison made between one thing and another in an effort to aid understanding

Symbol: a word or other kind of representation used to stand for something else and to shed light on its meaning

Religious Language I Evaluation Table

Symbols		Analogy		Via Negativa	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Tillich: -God= 'ground of being' - symbols "partially negated by that which they point" - God = Father – negating the meaning of the word Father in biological/human sense + opening a deeper, meaningful way in God Talk - symbols= beyond direct experience - meaningful in symbolic context - Symbols originate within us – universalised – accepted by everyone - no room for misinterpretation</p> <p>Leibniz- God = beyond our comprehension - comparable to Via negative</p>	<p>Macquarie: symbolic language = language of the mind – bounces off subject of speaker on what the speaker wishes to refer to - symbols= ambiguous Open to subjective interpretation - Religious language is not all symbolic e.g. resurrection = literal</p> <p>Wittgenstein: - depends on context - symbols=meaningless way to talk about God into literal meaning, but into symbolic context might be meaningful - Symbols grow from situations, but die when this changes- e.g. Swastika</p> <p>Hick: Not clear what it means to say symbols 'participate' in power of the divine.</p>	<p>Aquinas: -understand God through creation; known through his objects + relationship of natural order -Analogy of attribution is when the qualities we denote to each other are reflections of the qualities of God. (causal) - we can understand the agent by looking at product -e.g. Davies: bread + Aquinas- medicine/urine - does not attempt to know god, just understands there is a higher being -Analogy of proportion, the type of properties that something has depends on the nature of the being that possesses the properties - comprehend that everything within physical world fulfils expectations whilst god's expectation=infinately greater than us</p>	<p>-Analogy can be challenged as it tells us very little about God's nature.</p> <p>Swinburne: To be meaningful some language is used univocally to refer to God and human beings; an example could be 'good'. If human beings and God are good, is there a reason to say that the word 'good' means something different when applied to God and human beings?</p>	<p>words are unable to adequately describe God - God is beyond human ability to describe -Pseudo-Dionysius- God= beyond comprehension - positive statements about God risks an anthropomorphic idea of him- via negative prevents this Moses Maimonides: - You will come nearer to knowledge + comprehension of God by negative attributes - Only positive statement= God exists - Analogy of the ship: it is not... - by tenth statement we will have an idea of what a ship is -Recognises God's transcendence + complete difference to human realm - approach fits with religious experience – mysticism- William James- RE=ineffable</p>	<p>-incredibly limited in what can be known – not clear from analogy of ship – even less likely to bring knowledge of God -not a true reflection of how religious believers speak/think about God - most scriptures describe God in positive terms- E.g " God is faithful" "god is alive and active" - apothatic way means that believer has no means of communicating with non-believer about God</p> <p>W.R Inge- argued that denying any description of God leads to annihilation of God- leading to us losing the connection between us and God</p> <p>Not helpful to someone who knows nothing of God</p>

1.3 Religious language: philosophical perspectives

Logical positivism: a movement that claimed that assertions have to be capable of being tested empirically if they are to be meaningful

Cognitive: having a factual quality that is available to knowledge, where words are labels for things in the world

Non-cognitive: not having a factual quality that is available to knowledge; words are tools used to achieve something rather than labels for things

Empirical: available to be experienced by the five senses

Verification: providing evidence to determine that something is true

Symposium: a group of people who meet to discuss a particular question or theme

Falsification: providing evidence to determine that something is false

Demythologising: removing the mythical elements from a narrative to expose the central message

Challenge to Religious Language Evaluation Table

Verificationism		Falsificationism	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Logical positivism began in early twentieth century with discussions amongst Vienna Circle</p> <p>A.J.Ayer: proposition only meaningful if it is analytic, or if it is capable of being tested using the five senses.</p> <p>Religious language is meaningless because claims such as God created the world cannot be tested empirically and are not analytic</p>	<p>Hick's eschatological verification = Parable of the Celestial City</p> <p>- Strong verification excludes many areas of knowledge e.g. history Weak verification, problem of evidence e.g. religious experience</p> <p>Swinburne: statements can be unverifiable but meaningful (ill. toy cupboard)</p> <p>The Verification Principle fails its own test</p>	<p>Anthony Flew: God talk= unfalsifiable ∴ meaningless, truth can only be found in empirically sense observed statements</p> <p>Christianity is not a blik but an assertion ∴ something that can be falsifiable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E.g. God as a creator - Unfalsifiable = meaningless <p>Analogy of Gardener (using originally the parable of John Wisdom)</p>	<p>Basil Mitchell: we have to make commitments to trust and believe in things even when the evidence is ambiguous or lacking e.g. Story of partisan in wartime Religious language is cognitive even if people do not have readily available facts to support beliefs</p> <p>Hare's Bliks: A blik is an attitude that shapes the way people see and interpret the world. Bliks are not falsifiable and it does not make factual claims about the world that can be verified. No evidence or argument can demonstrate the falseness of a blik.</p> <p>Karl Popper: key falsificationist but indicated religious language not part of scientific study Cf. Gould- non-overlapping magisteria ∴ Alston- epistemic imperialism</p> <p>-Falsificationism= could be argued to be a language game (cf. Wittgenstein) and holds no authority over other things- e.g. religion</p> <p>John Wisdom: God outside human understanding</p>