



## Ancient Greek Philosophy: Plato



### The influence of Socrates:

Socrates was greatly admired by Plato. Socrates never wrote any of his work down. Plato, however, wrote a series of dialogues, the most famous of which is called *The Republic*. The dialogues put across philosophical ideas through conversation. Socrates appeared in many of Plato's dialogues. It is thought that in his early dialogues the character of Socrates actually shows us what Socrates thought. **Socrates was sentenced to death for "corrupting the youth".**



### Plato and the Soul:

Plato was a **DUALIST**. This meant he believed body and soul were different entities. He also believed that the soul was **IMMORTAL**, meaning it was endless. It cannot stop existing or be destroyed. The soul, according to Plato, is **ETERNAL**. Meaning it always has and always will exist.



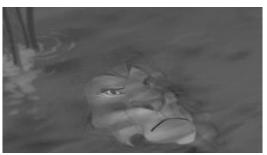
### Plato believed in to separate realms/ worlds:

Realm of Appearances	Realm of Forms
This realm contains <b>MATERIAL BEINGS</b> . Humans, cats, dogs, worms etc.	This realm contains <b>SOULS</b> or spiritual essences. No material beings.
Things in this world <b>CHANGE</b> . People grow and die. Trees grow. Dead things rot. These things are <b>CONTINGENT</b> - they didn't always exist, they rely on something else to exist and will stop existing.	This realm is <b>UNCHANGING</b> and <b>PERMANENT</b> .
Supported by Heraclitus: "You can never step in the same river twice".	This realm is <b>TRANSCENDENT</b> . It is beyond human understanding.

### Doctrine of the Forms:

In the Realm of Forms exists a true or perfect form of everything. EG. A form of beauty. A **FORM** is unchanging. It is not a physical thing, but a **CONCEPT** or idea. It is the eternal idea of what a thing is. Our soul originally existed in the Realm of Forms (how it got to our body is never really explained). We have some recollection of the forms and that is why we are able to recognise beauty...and cats. We have **A PRIORI** knowledge of these forms. We can recollect these forms without experience. Although only vaguely.

In the realm of appearances there are imitations, shadows and imperfect images of the forms which we experience using our senses. You may also refer to these as the '**PHENOMENA**'. Experiencing something with your senses is called **EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE**. (Knowledge gained through our 5 senses). Knowledge gained from experience is called **A POSTERIORI**. So what we experience in the Realm of Appearances is like when you look into some water and see a very blurry image being reflected. You know what is is, but the image is far from perfect.



### The Form of the Good:

All the forms are related and are in a hierarchy (order of value). At the top is the Form of the Good. The most important form is the Form of the Good and this forms gives value to all other forms. Justice, wisdom, honesty and courage etc. are all aspects of good. True knowledge = knowledge of the good, and this is what philosophers seek. Ignorance causes immorality. If someone knows what good is and what bad is, they will choose good.



Strength	Weakness
Shows that there is <b>MORE TO REALITY</b> than that which we observe.	Is the Realm of Forms really "more real"? Stubbed toe example or Scientific discovery. No practical use to forms.
	Are we really happy to accept there is a perfect form of cat, dog, and computer mouse? Reductio ad absurdum.
	Many people would argue that people who do wrong know that their action is wrong but do it anyway.
	Use of empirical evidence cannot prove the existence of the Realm of Forms.
	People's idea of perfection changes.

### The Cave Analogy: aim- to help us understand our position in the realm/ world of appearances and the importance of gaining an understanding of the truth

Analogy	Understanding
In an underground cave prisoners have been kept chained there, their whole life. They are chained with their backs to a wall and their heads facing forward.	These prisoners are living in the Realm of Appearances. They are trapped by the chains and are unaware of reality. They symbolise humans who are imprisoned in the physical world of appearances, who cannot see the forms.
Behind the prisoners is a road. People walk along the road carrying various models and statues. The fire casts a shadow of the models on the wall the prisoners face. The prisoners know no reality other than these shadows.	The models could be seen as the Forms of which the prisoners can only see a very weak imitation of. Just as we see imitations of the true forms.
A prisoner is then released. When he turns around he sees the fire and the models. The fire will hurt his eyes and he won't recognise any of the objects being carried. He will think the shadows are more real. However, his eyes will become accustomed to the fire and his understanding of the models will improve.	The fire represents the sun which illuminates the world we live in. It gives light to the world. The pain and confusion he is experiencing represents the pain we feel when we begin to question the world around, realising we may have been wrong.
The prisoner is then forced from the cave- he doesn't want to leave. The sun dazzles him, once again he is in pain and can't see clearly. The longer the prisoner is outside the cave the more he is able to understand, learn about his surroundings. His wisdom grows. He realises that the sun is illuminating the world, helping him gain new knowledge. The sun also supports all life and the seasons.	The forced exit from the cave and the pain represent his struggles with new views and understandings forced on him, challenging his view of reality. The prisoner is now in the Realm of the Forms. The sun- which lights up his new world and allows him to understand the true Forms is the Form of the Good. Without the sun we cannot survive and without the form of the good we cannot understand the other forms.
Whilst the prisoner does not want to leave this world of new understanding, he feels he must go and educate the prisoners still in the cave. However, the prisoners are very hostile to the suggestion they should leave the cave. They are so reluctant they are willing to kill the freed prisoner if he tries to lead them out of the cave.	This represents the hostility faced by philosophers when trying to enlighten others about the truth. More specifically it represents Socrates who was killed for 'corrupting the youth'; with his ideas and philosophy
Positive	Negative
It parallels real life. <u>Robin Waterfield</u> comments how the prisoner could be drawn back to the shadows, like we are drawn back to our traditions and cultures because it is where we feel comfortable.	"It fails to illustrate the attractiveness of the physical world; the scene inside the gloomy cave hardly represents the delights of the senses." <u>Mel Thompson</u>
It encourages us not to accept things at face value.	It can be interpreted many ways, making it unclear.
Provides clear imagery to help illustrate the Doctrine of the Forms.	It implies that our senses are useless- yet we have survived for a very long time using them.
	Plato tries to make his analogy out to actually be a fact of how we live our lives, rather than a hypothetical situation. The jump to a real life situation isn't really there.

# Ancient Greek Philosophy: Aristotle

Aristotle was an empiricist. He thought the way to deepen his understanding was through experience. He thought the only knowledge we could have is of the empirical world (that which we can experience through our senses).

Aristotle disagreed with Plato about his idea of Forms. He did not believe there was a separate 'ideal' realm. He believed that a 'form' was distinctive to each object. Key question for Aristotle: Why are things the way they are? He realised there were different ways to answer this question...this lead to his Theory of the Four Causes.

What caused this desk to be the way it is?



1. Material cause. What is the thing made from/ what does it consist of?

*Example: the desk is made of wood. So the material cause of the desk is wood.*

2. Formal cause. The shape, form or structure something takes to be a certain thing.

*Example: the desk has flat surface and sturdy legs so it can hold a computer or someone can lean on it to write.*

3. Efficient cause. What caused it to come about? Who made it or took action that caused it to come into existence?

*Example: the carpenter used the materials to make a desk.*

4. The final cause. What is the goal or the purpose of this thing? The final cause is **TELEOLOGICAL**. (Telos= goal/ purpose)

*Example: the purpose of the desk is to provide people with somewhere to do their work so they don't have to sit on the floors.*

How does this link to goodness?

Aristotle linked the final cause to goodness. He did not think there was a concept of good- goodness is subjective- dependent on a situation. Something is 'good' if it achieves its telos/ purpose. *An axe is good if it cuts wood well. A desk is a good desk if it doesn't collapse. A cup is good if it holds your drink without leaking.*

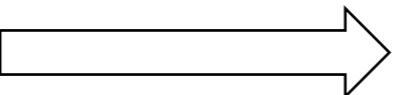


Aristotle saw that the world around him was in a state of constant motion. To Aristotle motion means change. He was able to experience this change with his senses, making the evidence of change **EMPIRICAL**. Therefore, his statement that the world was in constant change was **A POSTERIORI**.

Things change because they exist in an 'actual' state and have the 'potential' to become another. These states are known as 'actuality' and 'potentially'. The state something is in and the state it can change into.



Actuality- Cow



Potentiality- Beef Burger

Something has caused these things to **CHANGE**. They have caused the change to fulfil a purpose. Eg. *The cow was killed and filleted for beef to provide food.*

What caused the universe to go into motion?

Aristotle said you cannot have an infinite chain of cause and effect. There must be a starting point. The universe too is in constant motion and according to Aristotle the planets have been in motion eternally. Note that the thing causing the change (efficient cause) in all the examples we have seen are outside/ external to the thing itself. Therefore the universe must have a cause outside of itself, that put it into a state of constant motion or change, and this cause must be eternal.

The Prime Mover

Aristotle called the thing that caused the universe to go into constant state of motion the Prime Mover. For Aristotle the Prime Mover was God. The Prime Mover is in a state of pure actuality- it has no potential for change itself. As the Prime Mover has no potentiality, it cannot have put the universe in motion with a physical action, as this physical action would have caused change to the Prime Mover. Therefore, the Prime Mover is not the **EFFICIENT** cause of the universe, but the **FINAL** cause. The Prime Mover is perfect and all things want to imitate this perfection. This attraction to perfection provides a **PURPOSE** for change. The desire for God and perfection is the goal or purpose for changing. Therefore the Prime Mover is the **FINAL** cause.

The Beyoncé Effect

Beyoncé does not cause her fans to change their appearance through a physical action....she does not have time to do everyone's hair, but she inspires them and gives them a purpose to change...Just like the Prime Mover can the universe a purpose for change.



Characteristics of the Prime Mover:

Necessary: God is something which has always existed and always had to exist. God does not depend on anything or anyone to exist.

Eternal: God has no potential. God cannot change. If God cannot change then God cannot stop existing. If God cannot stop existing God must always have existed.

Perfectly good: Badness corresponds to a lack of something. God is pure actuality, so contains everything. Therefore, God must be perfect.

Immaterial: All physical matter has the potential to change. God cannot change, therefore is immaterial. God is immaterial so cannot perform any physical activity (remember God can be the final cause without physical activity. Consequently, God is spiritual and pure thought. God cannot think of anything that could cause a change therefore God must only think of his own pure state or perfection.

Evaluation

Strengths	Weaknesses
The four causes can readily be applied to things that exist in this world. Especially compared to Plato's Forms which cannot be observed.	Generally Aristotle's work was unclear due to the nature of the text he left behind. Lecture notes rather than books.
The view that everything has a purpose is supported by other philosophers- Aquinas supports this in his Fifth Way/ teleological argument.	Many theists would criticise the idea of a God that does not interact with the universe. A lot of religions believe in an <b>IMMANENT</b> God. Meaning God is present and active in the world.
Many characteristics of Aristotle's God are shared with the God of 'modern' religions such as Christianity. Eg. Eternal and perfect.	There is a lack of EVIDENCE for the Prime Mover....and isn't Aristotle an empiricist?
	To argue the universe must have a purpose is wrong. It just exists by chance. If it does have a purpose- what is it? Supported by philosophers. <u>Satre</u> - the universe is "Gratuitous". <u>Dawkins</u> - "The universe we observe has no design, no purpose..." <u>Russell</u> – "I should say the universe is just there, and that's all." Hume also made this point as part of his criticisms of the cosmological argument.
	Aristotle is guilty of the <u>Error/ Fallacy of Composition</u> . This is the mistake of assuming that because something is true of the parts it is true of the whole. Parts of the universe have a purpose so he assumes the universe as a whole must too.



Body, mind and soul.



### Key words:

**Metaphysics:** the branch of philosophy concerned with questions such as the **nature of existence**, dealing with concepts such as “being” and “identity”.

**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 exists as two distinct and separate realities.

**Property dualism:** There is one kind of physical matter, but there can be distinct physical and mental properties

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

**The soul/ self:** Non physical essence of a person. Mental states/ Spiritual experiences. The soul (religiously) the particular aspect of us that allows a relationship with God and creates the possibility of an afterlife.

**Substance:** a subject which has various properties

**Property:** characteristics/ traits which cannot exist on their own.

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



### Plato: Dualist

The immortal soul will reach its highest state after death, as it will no longer be disturbed by bodily demands and desires.

Plato believed our souls had once lived in the world of perfect forms, separate from our body and our souls attain knowledge before we are born. This is shown in the dialogue ‘Meno’ an uneducated slave boy is able to solve a geometry puzzle through questioning. According to Plato he was using knowledge he attained prior to birth.



Plato uses the analogy of a chariot being pulled by two horses to explain the soul. Plato has a tripartite view of the soul- it has three parts: appetite, emotion and reason. The charioteer is reason, ensuring the two horses appetite and reason work together in a rational direction. Allowing reason to guide us will make us wise.



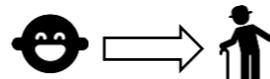
### Plato: Dualist (continued)

**Myth of Er** – encourages us to seek wisdom through philosophy in order to benefit our souls. In this myth, a soldier who had died in battle, comes back to tell of his journey in the afterlife in which he saw souls being judged, rewarded and punished. Some souls were able to choose a new life on earth for themselves, but only the philosophical choose wisely seeking lives on peace and justice. Others were drawn to lives of power. Emphasising the need for philosophical exploration.



### Aristotle: Materialist

The soul is a “substance” / essence/ real thing. He called it the psyche. The physical body is in constant state of change, whereas the essence remains the same, allowing for a continuous identity as we physically change.



Aristotle is to be understood as a materialist as he did not believe body and soul could be separated. He said that the soul is to be understood through the matter and structure of the body. The soul gives an individual living things its capabilities and capacities...essentially it makes the body able to do stuff. It is an animating force. Capabilities and capacities such as feeding, breathing, growing.

Aristotle uses the example of an axe. If it were a natural body then its soul would give it the capacity to chop wood.



Humans have a higher degree of soul (compared to plants and animals), as we have the ability to reason. Thinking about Aristotle's Four Causes (his ideas on causality) we can apply it to the soul's impact on the body. If the body is a lump of flesh, the soul gives it its form (shape so it will have certain capabilities). Therefore the soul is also the efficient cause, making the body a certain way. Lastly the soul is the final cause, giving the body a purpose (telos) or reason for acting. So without the soul we would be a lump of lifeless flesh, however, without the body (matter) the soul would not be capable of anything itself.

Aristotle did not allow for the idea that the soul could survive the death of the body.



### Substance dualism



Mind	Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Non physical</li> <li>✓ Thinking/ feeling</li> <li>✓ Eg. Decides I want tea, chooses the mug, enjoys the tea.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Physical</li> <li>✓ Activity of Body</li> <li>✓ Eg. Walks into the kitchen, makes the tea, drinks it, digests it.</li> </ul> 

**Substance:** a subject which has various properties.

**Properties:** characteristics/ traits which cannot exist on their own.. .

Eg. A mug is the substance, the properties are patterned, nonporous, breakable.

For substance dualists...

- Mind= substance.
- Intentions/ feelings/ emotions = properties.
  
- Body= substance.
- Tall, old, slim = properties

The property of “extension” means something takes up space.

A substance dualist would say that the body has the property of extension, but not thought. The mind has the property of thought but not extension.

If the mind can exist without the body this allows for the possibility of life after death.



### What would this look like in an exam style paragraph?

The term, substance dualism means that the mind and body are substances which exist distinctly from one another. A substance is a subject which has a variety of properties, a property is simply a trait or characteristic. For example, a mug is a substance with the properties of being non porous and patterned. Applying this to the dualist perspective the mind is a substance with properties such as emotion and intent, in comparison the body is a different substance with properties such as tall, old and wrinkly. A more significant distinction between the two can be seen when applying the property of extension and thought. Whilst the body has the property of extension (taking up space) it cannot think, whereas the mind can think but not take up space, thus emphasising the difference between the two.



Body, mind and soul.



"Cogito, ergo, sum."

"I think, therefore, I am."

Descartes used logical reasoning and a priori knowledge to understand the truth. In his book, "Meditations on First Philosophy" his aim was to demonstrate that there is a distinction between the soul (mind) and body.

Descartes thought about all things which could be "known" and rejected those he could not be 100% certain of. **Scepticism**: a questioning approach which does not take assumptions for granted.

One fact, Descartes's "first certainty", which cannot be doubted is that he exists as a "thinker" (his mind exists). How could he think about doubting his existence as a thinker, unless his mind existed to do this doubting? This would be a contradiction. Hence, "I think, therefore, I am". **Cogito, ergo, sum**.

So, Descartes could not doubt the existence of his own mind, but he could doubt the existence of his body. We could be a disembodied thinking thing, being deceived into believing we have a body. Hence, Descartes took a dualist approach. The body and soul cannot be the same thing, because they have such different properties (extension and thought).



### Property Dualism

There is one kind of physical matter, but there can be distinct physical and mental properties.

One type of property dualism is known as emergent dualism. Supported by J S Mill.

Physical things become more complex and new properties emerge. These new properties cannot be reduced the physical nature of the thing.

As a result it is seen that the mind has its own sort of existence, but is not completely separate from the body.



### Reductive Materialism

The mind is not distinct from the brain, but is identical with it. Mental states can be classified into different types. Eg. Memory, pain, happiness, desire.

Psychologist: Boring

$$X=Y$$

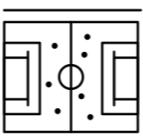
Mental and physical events in the brain are the same. It is not a case of when x happens the consequence is Y. Rather x is Y. The chemical reaction in the brain doesn't just cause a mental event, it is the event.

There is nothing more to the human person than the physical material. Reductive materialism doesn't allow for life after death. The consciousness is something physical and therefore when the physical body dies, so does the conscious.

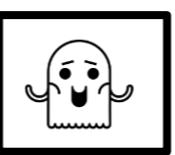
Gilbert Ryle "the ghost in the machine".

To say there is a separate "self", which exists beyond the body is wrong and a mistaken use of language.

Imagine watching a football match. You see all the players taking part and all the tactics being employed etc. Someone then asks where the "team spirit" is, as if it is a separate observable element of the game, when it actually denotes the way people interact with one another. In the same way, the soul should not be thought of as a separate or extra to the body.



Ryle mocked the dualist perspective of mind and body, by saying the mind was like a "ghost in the machine". As if we are physical machines being controlled by some invisible mind. For Ryle to separate the two is a mistake. He states the traditional dualist perspective is guilty of a "category mistake". The mind and body do not belong in the same logical category. And dualists try and treat them as if they do belong in the same category. Dualists seem to think the mind and body are both separate things a person possess and they are somehow linked or harnessed together and that then become separated at death. Ryle stated this doesn't match with what we can learn from psychology or neuroscience. We do have minds, personalities, consciousness, but not in addition to our physical bodies.



### Richard Dawkins : Biological Materialist

There is nothing non physical about a person. Dawkins: we are nothing more than "survival machines". Humans, like all other creatures, are vehicles for genes, which are only interested in replicating themselves in order to survive into the next generation.

Concept of the soul accepted by Dawkins: individuality and personality, no connection to the divine or life after death.

Life after death has no sound basis, it is simply based on wish fulfilment for those who lack courage and fear death. For the materialist consciousness is simply an electro-chemical event and therefore it cannot survive brain death.

<u>Dualism Evaluation</u>	
<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
The key strength and appeal of dualism is it allows for life after death. (But just because it is an attractive idea, it doesn't mean it's true.)	How do the separate mind and body interact? Lots of evidence that they do. Eg. Blushing when embarrassed. But no explanation of how this works.
	The problem of other minds: If the mind is separate from the body, then we can only perceive that other people have bodies, but not that they have minds.
	Flew to talk of a life after death, where the soul outlives the body and carries on by itself is nonsensical. Cheshire cat grin.

### Dualist responses/ criticism of materialism.

- Our use of language shows that we consider body and mind differently (body in the garden example). Or does it just prove we are sloppy with language?
- Surely if the two substances (mind and body) were identical they would have the same properties, rather than mutually exclusive ones?
- Materialism cannot answer how an opinion, use of logic or a strong emotion is simply a chemical reaction. Neuroscience has a long way to go. (But maybe one day it will have the answers.)
- Swinburne (Christian): The body and soul are distinct. There are fundamental truths about us as individuals which cannot be explained purely through physical terms. The most important aspects of who (those which give us our identity) we are cannot be explained physically. The soul is unique and capable of logical, ordered and complex thought. The soul is aware of its freedom to make choices and its moral obligation. The soul allows us to recognise goodness and gives us our conscience.
- Ward (Christian): If we don't believe in the soul, a soul which comes from God, morality will just be a matter of personal choice. Our God-given soul allows us to achieve the special dignity of being human, rather than just being an animal. Additionally without a soul, humanity lacks any sense of final purpose.



### Key words:

**A posteriori:** argument based on experience.

**Empirical:** we use our 5 senses to gain this experience.

**Telos:** Goal/ purpose.

**Key Philosopher: Saint Thomas Aquinas.** His teleological argument is his fifth argument for the existence of God. Hence it is known as his "fifth way".

When you look at the natural world you can see that everything in it follows natural laws, even if the things are not necessarily conscious, thinking being. Things are acting for a purpose/ to reach a goal.

If things follow natural laws / do the same things over and over they normally achieve their goal or purpose

However, if a thing cannot think for itself then it does not have any self- given goal or purpose. It must be directed by an intelligent being.

Therefore an intelligent being must exist to direct all natural things to their end/ goal/ purpose.

This intelligent being is God. So God exists.

Things are **designed** with a **purpose**. Remember "**telos**" means goal/ purpose. Aquinas examines the evidence of things in nature, even things without intelligent working towards a final goal, in order to achieve their purpose. Hence it is more appropriate to refer to his argument as the teleological argument, rather than design argument.

Aquinas argues that all things exhibit purpose, even if they are not intelligent beings. (eg. The planets spinning shows a purpose. ) By striving for this purpose they normally achieve good outcomes. This purpose must be designed/ given by an intelligent being. It has not just come about by chance. This intelligent being must exist (as their purpose exists). This being is God. God exists.



### **Key Philosopher: William Paley: The Divine Watch Maker**

**Design:** when things show evidence of things being planned for a purpose.

*If you came upon a stone in an uninhabited place, you could reasonably say that it had been there since the beginning of time.*

*If you came upon a watch in an uninhabited place, you could not say that it had come to be there by chance. The complexity of its mechanism would make you say it had a designer.*

*The universe is far more complex than a watch, so if a watch needs a watchmaker, the universe needs a universe maker.*

*As the only being that could design the universe*

*Would be God, it follows that God must exist.*

**PALEY**

William Paley provided an analogy in which he asked you to imagine finding a watch in an uninhabited place eg. A beach. Having examined the watch, and recognising it had a purpose, we would say the watch was too complex to have happened by chance. You would not say this watch had just appeared. It is far too **complex** and has a **purpose**. Something/ someone has **designed** this watch in order for it to fulfil this purpose- the watch maker is the designer. He said the same could be said of the world. It is too **complex** to have happened by **chance**. It needed a designer. The human eye is very complex and design to see. All this complexity requires a designer. This designer is God. God is the "Divine Watch Maker".

His argument states:

1. To design something takes intelligence and thought.
2. The universe shows evidence of design.
3. Therefore, a being with intelligence and thought must have designed it.
4. Only God could have intelligence and thought enough to design the universe.
5. Conclusion. Therefore, as the universe exists, God must exist.



### **Key Philosopher Richard Swinburne.**

*"Every object, however distant in time or space from ourselves, has the same powers and the same liabilities to exercise those powers as do the electrons and protons from which our own bodies are made. If there is no cause of this, it would be the extraordinary coincidence – too extraordinary for any rational person to believe". SWINBURNE.*

It's too irrational to suppose the laws of nature/ physics are just a coincidence, according to Swinburne. It is more rational to conclude the laws exist due to divine intelligence. The divine intelligence responsible for these laws has also made them easy for humans to observe. We can learn a lot of important things from these laws, including things important for our survival. Eg. Things fall when dropped, this can help us try to avoid accidents.

Swinburne's argument follows the **principle of Ockham's razor**. This principle states "do not multiply entities beyond necessity". Essentially we should look for the simplest answer, and in this case Swinburne is saying it makes much more sense for all these complex laws of nature to have been designed than for them to have happened by coincidence.



### **Key Philosopher: F R Tennant: Anthropic principle**

1. The world we live in provides precisely what we need to survive.
2. We can observe the world we live in and we can rationally analyse how things work.
3. Evolution has led to intelligent life, only as intelligent beings can we observe the very precise and delicate balance of nature which allows us to live.
4. These conditions for survival are too complex and precise to have happened by chance- they must have been designed and created to fulfil the purpose of sustaining life.



### **Key Philosopher: F R Tennant: Aesthetic principle**

Humans enjoy beauty, we find it pleasing. We always try to replicate the beauty of nature, but we never quite succeed. The existence of such natural proves there is a God because it was designed for enjoyment. To be designed for such a purpose requires an intelligent designer. There is no other reason for beauty to exist. It does not serve a 'useful' purpose other than pleasing us.

However, many may disagree and say that whilst beauty is a value judgment in humanity many animals perhaps have an idea of 'beauty' that they look for in a partner, which does indeed aid survival, so is actually an evolutionary development.,



### Strengths of the Teleological/ Design argument.



- ✓ The use of an analogy by Paley makes the argument easier to understand.



- ✓ Not incompatible with scientific theories such as evolution and The Big Bang Theory- these could have been part of design.



- ✓ Has had support throughout time. Eg. Swinburne still supports this argument.



- ✓ It is the simplest and easiest solution- Ockham's razor.



- ✓ God as a designer reinforces the idea that God was involved in the history of the universe. This supports the view that God is Omni benevolent (caring so as to produce things the way we need to survive) Omnipotent (powerful enough to design the world) Omniscient ( knows exactly what to design/ how to design it).



- ✓ A posteriori: based on things we can SEE and TEST. Science has shown us how complex the body is etc



### Weaknesses of the Teleological/ Design argument.



**Hume:** The analogy made by Paley is **WEAK**. There is very little similarity between machines, such as watches, and the natural world. You could say the jump in the analogy is too big. To base the argument on this analogy therefore makes it weak. Also we have experience of the concept of a watch designer, but not of a divine designer, hard to make the jump between too.

**Hume:** Just because there is order in this world does not mean there has to be a "divine orderer". In fact the world we live in may just appear to be ordered as this is all we know. It could really be disastrously chaotic compared other potential worlds.

**Hume:** if the world was not ordered it would not have survived. The order itself is a necessary part of the universe. It had to be there, it was 'put' there. The idea of survival was later supported by Darwin.

**Hume:** Even if there is a designer who says it has to be a God and a singular God? What proof is there of this?

*"why may not several deities combine in contriving and framing a world?"*

**Hume:** If the world was designed it wasn't done very well! It's a hugely flawed design which is evident through the evil and suffering experienced. (2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami nearly 250,000 dead). *"This world, for aught he knows, is very faulty and imperfect, compared to a superior standard; and was only the first rude essay of some infant deity, who afterwards abandoned it, ashamed of his lame performance: it is the work only of some dependent, inferior deity."*

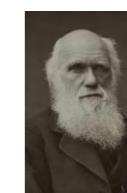


**Mill:** If the world is designed then it hardly points to the God of classical theism which is supposed to be Omni benevolent (all loving). The world is full of cruelty. There are lots of human examples of human cruelty which goes beyond the needs for survival. (Terrorism: 2001 9/11 attacks. 7/7 London bombings, IRA attacks). Even plants can seem to use cruel methods of staying alive: Venus fly trap. Much of the death and cruelty actually seems to be art of a design (after all everyone dies). *"In sober truth, nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another are nature's every-day performances."*



**Darwin:** the complex and essential parts of nature that exhibit design and form the basis of Paley's argument haven't always been there. Darwin provided evidence of evolution and natural selection. Animals and plants have adapted over time in order to survive. If they didn't adapt they would die. So these 'complex and designed features' are actually adaptations and were not put there by God. Darwin's original scientific work has since been supported by many others. For example Sir Charles Lyell- showed the world was millions of years old, not just 6 thousand as is maintained in the Bible. Then Mendel and other geneticists have been able to provide more information about how species have developed and adapted.

**Darwin:** you can also link Darwin's scientific theories to Aquinas. If things had just followed the natural laws due to their God given purpose, would they have ever changed? We know things have adapted to survive, so does this mean they don't have a God given purpose to follow a certain law/ path to achieve a goal or purpose?



**Dawkins:** One of the most prominent atheists of modern day philosophy. Criticised Paley in his book *The Blind Watchmaker*. He maintains the analogy mad by Paley is false (thus supporting HUME). The watchmaker of nature= natural selection and this is automatic process. The universe = brute fact. *"Paley's argument is wrong...gloriously and utterly wrong."*

**Dawkins:** He states religion is an excuse not explore the world properly through science. Religion assumes that there are things that only God can explain, Dawkins does not agree with this.



**Key words:**

**A posteriori:** argument based on experience.

**Empirical:** we use our 5 senses to gain this experience.

**Cosmos:** means universe.

The argument is based on the fact we can SEE that the universe exists.

**Key Philosopher: Saint Thomas Aquinas.**

Aquinas has 5 arguments for the existence of God- The Five Ways.

**First way: argument from motion**

The first and most obvious way is the argument from motion. It is obvious that in the world some things are in motion. Whatever is moved, is moved by another...it is impossible that in the same respect and in the same way a thing could be both mover and moved, i.e, that it should move itself. Whatever is moved is moved by another . If that by which it is moved is itself self moving, then this must also be moved by something else and something else again. But this cannot go on to infinity, because there would then be no first mover, and, consequently not subsequent mover, as subsequent movers move only insofar as they are moved by the first mover, just as staff moves only because it is moved by the hand. So there must be a first mover, itself unmoved; and this everyone understands to be God.

1. Everything that moves is moved by mover/ Everything in motion is put into motion by something else.  
 2. That mover must also be moved by something else.  
 3. But you cannot have an infinite chain of movers. A chain of moving going backwards forever.  
 4. Because then there would be no reason for the movement to get started at all. This is because everything moving is a secondary mover- it has been moved by something else and if this is the case the movement would have never began.  
 5. Therefore there must be an unmoved mover, producing movement in everything else, without itself being moved.  
 6. This unmoved mover is 'God'.

Example. In a chain of falling dominoes each domino falls due to the one before falling. Each domino is a secondary mover and did not start the movement- it was reliant on something else for motion. In order for the chain to fall it relies the primary mover – the finger that pushes the first domino...just like the universe relied on the primary movement of God.

Can be linked to Aristotle Prime Mover.



**Second Way: First cause: Argument from causation**

The second way is from the nature of efficient causes. In the world of sensible things we find an order of efficient causes. There is no case known (it would be impossible) in which a thing is found to be its own efficient cause; to be so it would have to exist prior to itself, which is impossible. In efficient causes we cannot go on to infinity, because in any order of efficient causes, the first is the cause of the intermediate and the intermediate of the last, whether there are several intermediate causes or only one. Without a cause, there is no effect. Thus, if there were not first cause ...there would be no intermediate causes, and no last. If we could go to infinity in efficient causes, there would be no first cause; if that were true, there would be no intermediate cause, and no present effects for us to see. Plainly this is not the case. So we must admit a first efficient cause, [itself uncaused], which everyone calls God.

1. The universe exists.  
 2. Something cannot come from nothing- everything is caused.  
 3. Without a first cause there would be nothing, but things do exist so there must be a first cause.  
 4. Aquinas said this first cause was God.  
 5. Therefore God exists.

We can see, using empirical evidence, links of cause and effect- one thing coming about due to another.

Baby---Parents---Grandparents---Great Grandparents--- Continuous chain until we reach the first humans. Humans had to start somewhere. So we can see that everything requires a cause. But things had to start somewhere, with a cause that itself did not require a cause. This is God, the first cause.



**Third Way: Necessity and contingency**

The third way is taken from possibility and necessity. In nature we find things that are possible to be and not to be- they are found to be generated and corrupted- and so it is possible for them to be and possible not to be. It is impossible for them always to exist, for that which is possible not to be at some time does not exist. If everything is like that, at one time nothing existed. If that were true, there would be nothing in existence now, because things only come to exist because of things already existing. If at some time nothing existed, there would be nothing today, which is obviously false. So, not all things are merely possible- there must exist something whose existence is necessary. Every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by something else or it does not. As we saw when we considered efficient causes, it would be impossible to go on to infinity in a chain of things which have their necessity caused by another necessary being. We have to admit the existence of some being whose necessity lies in itself (and not received from something else), which is the source of necessity in others. This all men call God.

**CONTINGENT:** Something which did not have to exist and relies on something else for its existence.

**NECESSARY:** must exist and does not require anything else for its existence.

1. There are contingent things.
2. Contingent things can cause other contingent things, but there cannot only be contingent things.
3. If there were only contingent things there would have been a time when nothing existed. If this was the case there would be nothing now.
4. Things do exist now we have evidence.
5. Therefore a necessary being must exist to create contingent things.
6. This necessary being is God.

**Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716): Principle of Sufficient Reason**

"Why is there something rather than nothing?"

Any contingent fact about the world has an explanation. Simply put: 'no fact could ever be true...unless there were a sufficient reason why it was...' Leibniz means that you should be able to give an explanation of why something is in order to have a sufficient explanation.

The fact there are contingent things must have an explanation. This cannot be explained by contingent things. Therefore the explanation must be necessary. There must be an explanation, so there must be a necessary being. This being is God.

## Hume's Criticisms



### 1. Fallacy of Composition: Just because something is true of the parts does not mean it needs to be true of the whole.

1<sup>st</sup> way: Motion- things in the world must be put into motion by something else as a result the universe itself must have been into motion by something else.

2<sup>nd</sup> way: Cause- everything in the universe has a cause so the universe must too.

3<sup>rd</sup> way: Contingency- if all contingent things need a cause this means the universe also needs a cause.

Just because parts of the universe need cause or to be put into motion does not mean that is true of the whole. Aquinas makes this fundamental error in his argument, therefore his argument is not valid.

### 2. Hume maintained it could be possible to reject the idea of a beginning of a universe.

In 1940s Sir Fred Hoyle developed 'Steady State theory'. The theory maintains the universe did not have a beginning- instead the universe is eternal. This idea would also lead to rejection of the impossibility of an infinite regress. After all if the universe has no beginning and is eternal that means it has existed infinitely. So an infinite regress would be possible and the need for a first cause would be obsolete.

However...However, there are other scientific views that do support the idea that the world came into existence. Big Bang.

### 3. Reality and speculation.

Speculation: the activity of the mind thinking about the various logical possibilities regarding any given point or issue. even if the universe does have a starting point and a cause it is merely speculation to say that cause was God. The argument is inductive- moving towards a conclusion which is at best probable. It can be referred to as speculation.

### 4. The Problem of Induction

Induction is essentially predicting future events based on what has happened in the past. We are often certain, when actually we cannot be. At best we can make probable assumptions. For example: we predict that the sun will rise tomorrow, because it has every other day so far.

The Cosmological Argument is based on assumptions about cause and effect- essentially the assumption is that things have effects on one another. Hume maintains that we can never truly be sure of the connection between cause and effect. Hume stated cause and effect may not even be a real thing but what we say is a cause and effect is just a statistical correlation. Instead of saying "x causes y" we could say "when x, y". You don't need to mention cause. If cause and effect isn't a real thing then the notion on which Aquinas's bases his argument is flawed.

## F C Copleston 1907-1994 vs. Bertrand Russell 1872-1970

Copleston: Well, for clarity's sake, I'll divide the argument into distinct stages. First of all, I should say, we know that there are at least some beings in the world which do not contain in themselves the reason for their existence. For example, I depend on my parents, and now on the air, and on food, and so on. Now, secondly, the world is simply the real or imagined totality or aggregate of individual objects, none of which contain in themselves alone the reason for their existence. There isn't any world distinct from the objects which form it, any more than the human race is something apart from the members. Therefore, I should say, since objects or events exist, and since no object of experience contains within itself reason of its existence, this reason, the totality of objects, must have a reason external to itself. That reason must be an existent being. Well, this being is either itself the reason for its own existence, or it is not. If it is, well and good. If it is not, then we must proceed farther. But if we proceed to infinity in that sense, then there's no explanation of existence at all. So, I should say, in order to explain existence, we must come to a being which contains within itself the reason for its own existence, that is to say, which cannot not exist.

1. We know that there are at least some beings in the world are not the reason for their own existence.
2. The world is made up of these individuals.
3. The world is made up of these individuals.
4. The reason must be an existent being.
5. This being must either be the reason for its own existence or not. If not we will end up going back infinitely searching for a cause. Therefore we must come to a being which is the reason for its own existence (necessary being).
6. For Copleston this being would be God.



### Russell's responses:

#### 1. The universe is a brute fact.

'I should say that the universe is just there and that is all'.

Is this just a cop out, that Russell just simply stops questioning the universe at this stage? McCabe to say the universe is "Just there" is to make a comment such as "dogs are just there". It is arbitrary. Whilst asking why the universe exists is a mysterious question, it is not an "unaskable" question.

To support Russell we could say that to stop at God as the answer is not that satisfying. However, it could be argued that to say God is the cause of the universe actually raises MORE questions. Eg. Problem of suffering.

#### 2. The concept of a necessary being = meaningless.

For Russell you can only have necessary statements of logic, it cannot be applied to things. To say that God was a necessary being would put God in a unique category that we cannot possibly understand.

So for Russell the only necessary statements that can possibly have meaning would be statements such as 'a square must have 4 sides' as logically you cannot call a shape a square unless it has 4 sides.

### 3. Fallacy of Composition: Just because something is true of the parts does not mean it needs to be true of the whole.

"Every man that exists has a mother, therefore the human race must have a mother...but obviously the human race hasn't a mother- that is a different logical sphere."

The Fallacy of Composition is based on the idea that the Cosmological Argument uses deductive reasoning incorrectly, in order to get to the conclusion that God is the cause of the universe so must exist.

Deductive reasoning: if the premises of an argument are true, then the conclusion is true.

Russell is maintaining that you cannot deduce that if something is true of the parts it must be true of the whole. So whilst you can see that contingent things in the universe have a cause, you cannot say that the universe as well has a cause. The argument is INDUCTIVE because at best the conclusion is probable.

### 4. Scientists were discovering "first causes which haven't in themselves got causes".

This would undermine Aquinas's third way and the principle of sufficient reason.

## Kant's Criticism

The idea of everything having a cause can only be applied in a world of sense experience. We can use our senses to experience the causes.

We cannot apply the notion of cause to something we have not experienced.

We have not experienced God. For Kant God is outside of space and time (therefore cannot be experienced).

Therefore, there can be no justification for saying God. is the cause of the universe.

After all it could be said that the argument itself is a posteriori- based on what we can experience, so why should an entity which we cannot experience be a sensible conclusion?

Response: individuals who have had a religious experience.

Weak response as this only gives evidence for the individual.





### Key words:

A priori – argument based on logic not experience.

Deductive argument- If the premises of an argument are true, then the conclusion is true.

Contingent- Something which did not have to exist and relies on something else for its existence.

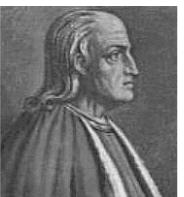
Necessary-Something which did not have to exist and relies on something else for its existence.

Ontology- ‘Ontos’ (being) + ‘logos’ (word/knowledge) = arguing the existence of God from the knowledge/study of his ‘being’.

Predicate- An intrinsic property or quality of something.

### Key Philosopher: St Anselm.

“and the fool hath said in his heart ‘there is no God’”. (Psalm)



**God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived”.**

Whether a person believes in God or not, God exists in the mind. Something which exists in reality is better than something which only exists in the mind.



Anselm said that if God only exists in the mind then God won’t be the greatest possible thing that can be conceived. We have just agreed that things which exists in reality are SUPERIOR to those which exists only in the mind. So God must exist in reality as well as the mind in order to be logically consistent with the definition of God. Therefore, God exists.



1. God is the greatest possible being (“*a being than which nothing greater can be conceived*”).
2. God exists at least in the mind or understanding (even atheists can define God even if they don’t believe in him)
3. A being who exists only in the mind is not as great as a being who exists in reality as well as the mind.
4. If God existed only in the mind, he would not be the greatest possible being.
5. Therefore God must exist in reality as well as in the mind.

**Second argument:** “God cannot be thought not to exist.”

There are things you can imagine not existing...eg. Unicorns and Yetis.



There are things you can’t imagine not existing...You..and GOD.



Why is it okay for you think a yeti or unicorn does not to exist but you cannot think of God not existing? Because God is the greatest thing which can be conceived...so must be thought as existing if he is to be the greatest.

For Anselm existence is a predicate of God. Existence is a property of God’s nature.



Examples- elephant: trunk, tusks, a mammal.

1. God is “**that than which nothing greater can be conceived**”– even atheists agree on this definition of God
2. A being that you can imagine not existing is less great than one you can’t imagine not existing
3. Therefore, in order to be the ‘*greatest being*’ it must be impossible to deny the existence of God as a being you can’t imagine not existing.

### Gaunilo and the perfect island.



### A02 WEAKNESS

Gaunilo maintained that Anselm’s argument essentially allowed anything to come into existence. If a perfect island did not exist it would be a contradiction to call it the perfect island. So essentially anything that we think of as perfect must exist. But of course there is no such island. This argument which parallels Anselm’s shows that Anselm’s argument is absurd.

**You cannot define something into existence.**



### Anselm’s response:

The island is contingent as is its existence. God is necessary. You cannot define a perfect island. You can define God.

### Aquinas: A02 WEAKNESS

God’s existence cannot be regarded as self evident. Compare to the following statement:

**“Truth does not exist”.**

It is nonsensical to say this because you cannot accept the truth of “*Truth does not exist*” unless truth does exist after all. It is contradictory. To have a mental concept of the non existence of truth is contradictory. Yet to have a mental concept of God not existing is possible and not contradictory.

Aquinas also challenged Anselm’s definition of God. *That than which nothing greater can be conceived*. He said whilst we can approach a certain level of understanding of Gods, the finite human mind could never truly understand God. God will always remain unknowable. So we cannot know that Anselm’s definition is correct. He also questions whether an concept of God could be universally shared. Furthermore, even if there is a shared concept this does not mean this concept exists in reality. For example we have a shared concept of what a mermaid is (half fish, half lady) or a unicorn (horse with a horn on its head)...but these things don’t have to exist just because we have a shared concept of them.



“Perhaps not everyone who hears the name ‘God’ understands it to signify something than which nothing greater can be thought, seeing that some have believed God to be a body. Yet, granted that everyone understands that by this name ‘God’ is signified something than which nothing greater can be thought, nevertheless, it does not therefore follow that he understands that what the name signifies exists actually , but only that it exists mentally.”



## Descartes

### Argument 1: God is the sum of all perfections



1. God is by definition perfect.
2. An imperfect God would not be God.
3. If God is perfect he must contain all perfections, including the perfection of existence.
4. If God did not exist he would be not perfect
5. Therefore, God exists

### Argument 2: Existence is a predicate.

1. Existence is a predicate of the concept of God in exactly the same way three sides and three angles is intrinsic to the concept of a triangle. Without three sides there can be no concept of a triangle.
2. "Existence can no more be separated from the essence of God than can its having three angles to two right angles can be separated from the essence of a triangle."
3. Existence is part of the essence of God.

### Kant: Existence is NOT a predicate. A02 WEAKNESS

This is because existence is not an attribute or characteristic of something. "Exists" does not tell us something about an object that helps identify it. When you say something exists you are not giving it a new quality or characteristic you are just saying those characteristics have been "actualised". There is one real example of this thing in real life. Regardless of which definition of God you take it's a concept. You cannot solve the question of whether this concept has been actualised by adding "existence" to this concept's predicates. You state that the triangle has the predicates of three sides and internal angles that add up to 180 degrees. But to know if that triangle exists you have to investigate/ find evidence.

Equally you could say that a unicorn has the predicate of having a horn. Adding existence to its lists of predicates does not mean this concept has been actualised.



### Possible response to Kant...

God's existence is necessary rather than contingent, so maybe existence is predicate of necessary being. This is really going to fail to convince a sceptic of the argument because it requires us to agree that God necessarily exists.

## Modern ontological arguments

### Norman Malcolm

Agreed with Kant that we can't view existence as a predicate. So the idea that he tries to revive the argument anyway, focusing on necessary existence, could be seen as a strength, because he is responding to a criticism.

1. If God does exist today, then he never can and never will- his existence must be impossible.
2. If God does exist he must exist necessarily.
3. God's existence is therefore either impossible or necessary.
4. God's existence is not impossible. It is not logically contradictory to have the concept of a God who exists- it is an idea that we can entertain without any logical absurdity.
5. Therefore, given that God's existence is not impossible, it must be necessary- so God exists necessarily.

### Alvin Plantinga

Focuses on the idea of God as a maximally great being. This means God is omnipotent, omniscient and morally perfect. Such a being is not self contradictory- unlike a square circle.

1. The concept of a maximally great being is self consistent.
2. If 1 is true then there is at least one logically possible world where a maximally great being exists.
3. If a maximally great being exists in one logically possible world then it exists in every logically possible world.
4. Therefore a maximally great being (God) exists in every logically possible world.

The argument is based on modal logic. Premise three works on this system of modal logic, a system that is different to others. It may be criticised that this step of the argument is breaking logical rules.



If you are an atheist or even agnostic you will not agree with the first premise of the arguments that define God. If you don't agree with the first statement about God the rest of the argument becomes obsolete. The arguments are reliant upon agreement with the definitions.

**Massive flaw:** you are trying to convince people God exists based on a statement/assumption about God. **You will only ever convince people who already believe in God.**

The argument fails at the first hurdle for anyone who does not believe in God. And even some of the most notable theists and philosophers who do have faith don't find the argument convincing!





### Key words:

Omnipotent – All powerful

Omniscient – All knowing

Omnibenevolent - All loving

Eternal- Timeless, atemporal outside the constraints of time

Everlasting- Lasting forever on the same time line as humanity.  
Sempiternal.

### Is it possible to be omnipotent?

#### The Omnipotence Paradox

Being omnipotent involves being able to do anything, but there seem to be some impossibilities eg. “failing a test”.



Perhaps being omnipotent itself is impossible and the whole notion could be self contradictory.



#### Biblical evidence for God's omnipotence.

“And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.” Genesis 1:3

The creation story shows God’s power over the entire universe.

“Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son.” Genesis 8:14

Sarah was well past childbearing age when God blessed her with a child.

“...with God all things are possible.” Matthew 19:26

Jesus declares God is omnipotent.



### Descartes’s view of God’s omnipotence



To say God is omnipotent means God can do **absolutely anything**, even if it is a logical contradiction.

Eg. Draw a square circle

Descartes believed God has NO limitations. As God is the source of logic God can suspend the laws of logic and do what he wants. For example, God made the laws of maths, so he can change them.



### What about evil?

Evil exists and there is too much empirical to deny this.

This creates a philosophical argument against the existence of an omnipotent, omnibenevolent and omniscient God called the

**Problem of Evil.** Eg. If God really is all powerful why can’t he stop evil?

**For Descartes the Problem of Evil isn’t a problem.** God can be capable of evil (as he is all powerful) and capable of love (as he is all loving) at the same time, as he is able to defy the laws of logic.

This is not a widely accepted view!

Many theodicies (arguments which aim to justify the existence of God and evil in the world) state moral evil exists as a result of free will. We have to have free will in order to be autonomous beings who can freely chose to love God. Without free will our actions would be robotic and be meaningless.

Therefore, we have to accept that evil and suffering might occur as people can use free will to make poor decisions. If God is not bound by logic (as Descartes claims!) then surely it should have been possible to create humans with free will, without the consequence of evil. Evil and suffering DO exist so it would seem that that God is choosing not to prevent suffering, and this makes it hard to reconcile with the claim God is all loving.



### Other criticisms of Descartes

- Descartes’ view is just nonsensical. The logical contradictions Descartes claims God can do are simply NOT THINGS. To say God can’t get more than 100% on a test does not diminish God’s power.
- If God can do ANYTHING he becomes an arbitrary tyrant who cannot be relied upon. God’s rules can change at any point and this would make it impossible for humans to have relationship with him.
- The Bible does not support Descartes either. It clearly states some things are impossible for God.

“it is impossible for God to lie” Hebrews 6:18

### How else can omnipotence be understood?

**Aquinas & Swinburne:** God can do everything that is within his own nature and which is logically possible.

(This view spans 1000s of years- this gives the argument longevity/ it has stood the test of time ☺)

“Everything that does not imply a contradiction is among those possibilities in respect of which God is called omnipotence.” Aquinas

#### Aquinas:

- God is completely omnipotent meaning he is charge of the whole world- creating and sustaining.
- Logical contradictions are not “things”.
- So God can’t do anything logically possible, but it does not limit God’s power to say he “can’t” do something which is logically impossible.
- Therefore, God cannot do anything which is inconsistent with his nature. For example, God is incorporeal (has no body) so cannot get tired, go swimming etc.

#### Swinburne:

- God can do everything, but “everything” needs to be understood properly.
- Self contradictory definitions do NOT refer to “things”. Eg. A stone too heavy for God to lift is not a thing.
- But this is not a challenge to God’s power as God is capable of doing all real things.
- 

**Peter Vardy & John Macquarrie:** God limits his own power for the benefit of humanity.

Why would a view of God’s power being limited gain popularity in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century?

- ✓ After the horrors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (eg. The Holocaust) some Christians needed to re evaluate the idea of God’s omnipotence.
- ✓ Existentialist ways of thinking (putting focus on free will and finding our own meaning) have become more popular and these views often emphasise the freedom humans have of their own path, things don’t just happen because God wills them to.



#### Vardy:

- God is not in control of the world and the whole of history, like a chess player moving around pieces. Not everything in the universe happens because of the will of God.
- The universe is perfectly suited the existence of free rational beings and for it to stay that way God's power must be limited.
- God created the universe in this way and limitations to his power are self imposed. We can still call God omnipotent as only he can limit his own power.

"God is limited by the universe he has chosen to create...his limitation does not however, lessen God in any significant way"

#### Macquarrie:

- God is not constrained by logic, the physical world or the actions of humans, but has self imposed limitations due to his love for humanity.
- This idea of God having self imposed limitations is useful when explaining how Jesus was the Son of God, as Jesus did not display all of God's power. Eg Jesus wasn't timeless or incorporeal.
- Theologians have developed a doctrine known as kenosis. This means "self emptying". God deliberately emptied himself of some divine attributes in order to make the incarnation (Jesus coming to earth in human form) possible.

"And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death"

#### John Macquarrie: Is the debate of God's omnipotence an issue of religious language?

- When we apply the word "power" to God it cannot be applied literally with a human understanding of power in this world.
- To speak of the power of God is to use an analogy. In agreement with Aquinas, Macquarrie stated there will always be elements of God which are unknowable to us, but through analogy we can partially understand and express some key ideas.

#### Charles Hartshorne: God should be understood as unsurpassably great rather totally powerful.

- God should be thought of as a being whose power cannot be surpassed, rather than as a being with total power.
- Total power is not impressive. To have total power means nothing can put up any resistance to God. So, total power is as impressive as someone winning a race against no competitors. It would be far more impressive if you win the race whilst facing a challenge from other competitors.



#### What do we mean when we say God is omniscient and is it problematic?



- If God knows the future He will know all the decisions we will make through our lives. So, do we really have free will? God's knowledge is infallible- it cannot be mistaken. If God knows something will happen this Friday IT WILL HAPPEN. The event is fixed and is unchangeable. Chocolate cake example.
- But.. Freedom of choice is an essential part of the three Abrahamic faiths. With freedom of choice comes moral responsibility and the appropriate judgement from God.

#### Friedrich Schleiermacher

- Schleiermacher compared the knowledge God has of us to the knowledge of a good friend. If am going to lunch with Mr Cooper I can be fairly certain he will take me to a burger restaurant. Does my knowledge of this future choice restrict his actions?
- NO
- Schleiermacher claims it is the same for God. Just because He knows what we will do, our choices remain unforced and we are therefore still morally responsible for our actions.
- However, when I say Mr Cooper will take me to a burger restaurant I am making a reliable guess. I could be mistaken. God's knowledge is different- it is infallible- cannot be mistaken.
- It is the certainty of God's omniscient knowledge that makes it harder to reconcile with genuine human choice.

#### What does the Bible say?

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,  
before you were born I set you apart,"

Jeremiah 1:5

- God made us all individually and uniquely.
- God chose to make us a specific way and what we would chose to do at every specific point of our lived.
- So perhaps God can be held responsible for our actions, including moral evil?

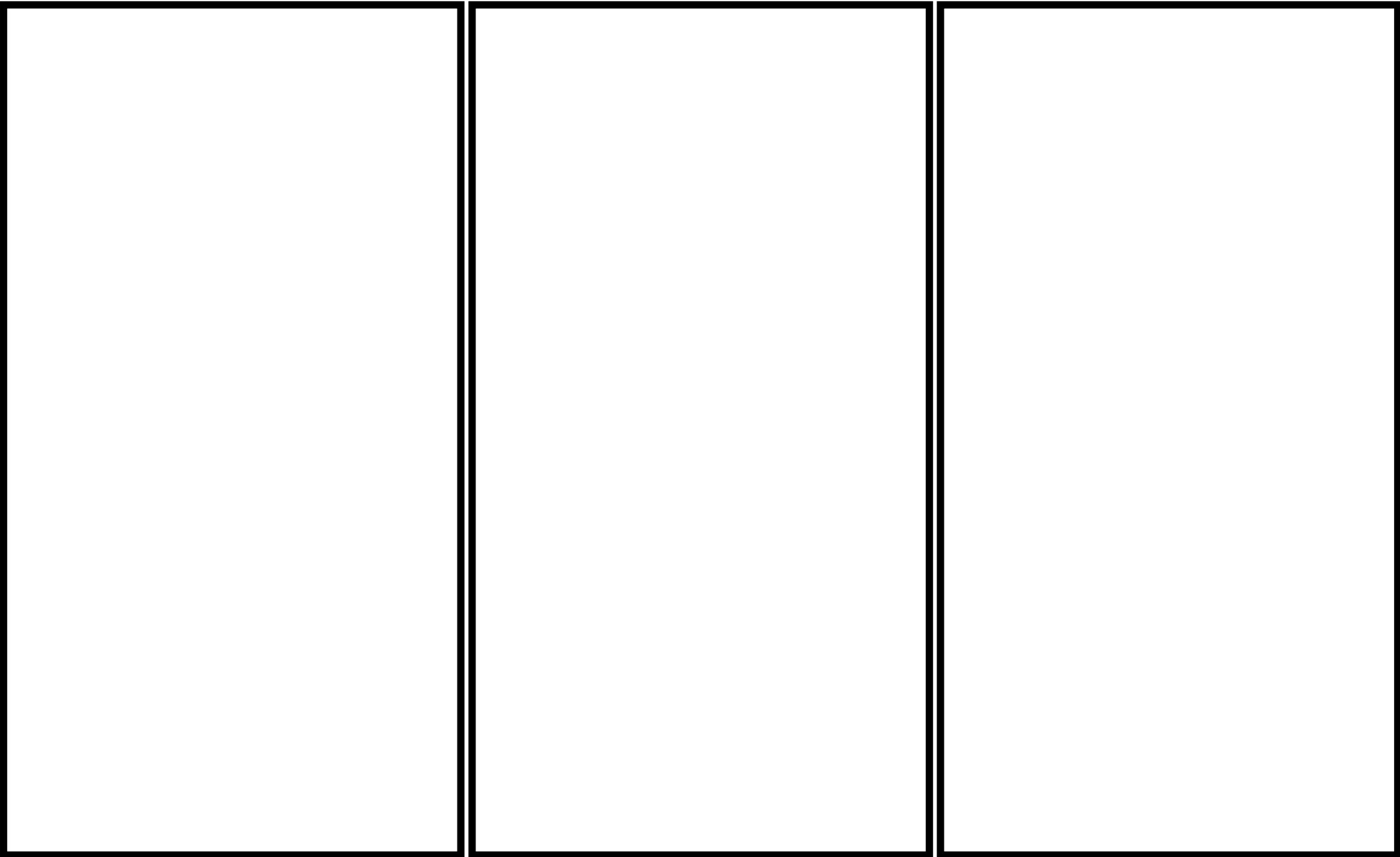


#### What is God's relationship with time?

When it comes to God's relationship with time there are two main schools of thought. God is eternal OR God is everlasting.

#### God is eternal and a temporal:

- God exists in every part of history: every part of the past, every part of the present and every part of the future.
- "Time" is a created element of the world – God is not bound/ limited by it.
  - ☺ This view is appealing because it allows God to be limitless.
  - ☺ If God is not bound by time his omnipotence is not "threatened"- would God be less powerful if he didn't know the future.
  - ☺ It also allows God to be immutable (unchangeable) and this is important if God is perfect.



   
Key words:

- Analytic statement:** In an analytic statement the words in the statement will verify if the statement is true or false.
- Synthetic statement:** A synthetic statement requires further external information to verify if it is true or false. The evidence will normally be empirical- using our five senses.
- Cognitive statements** are realist and univocal. **Cognitive statements:** factual statements proven true or false via empirical evidence.
- Univocal:** word means the same when applied to God when using RL.
- Realism:** the world exists objectively and independently of the way we think or describe it. To interpret religious statements in a realist way includes asserting these statements are either made true or false by something that exists objectively and independent of the way we think about it
- Non-Cognitive statements** are anti-realist and equivocal. **Non-Cognitive statements:** context dependent statements that cannot be verified or falsified.
- Equivocal:** saying something and meaning different- never know what is meant when applied to God.
- Non realist/ anti-realist:** religious statements are not made either true or false by anything objective.

The purpose of religious language

- Specific terminology Eg. Christianity: "The Eucharist", "The Messiah".
- Truth claims "There is no God but Allah" "God created the world"**
- Expressing feeling and emotion. "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour"
- Unique descriptions of God. "Omnipotent"
- Everyday terminology given religious meaning "God is love"


The Verification Principle

1920s/ 1930s there was a small group/association of philosophers called The Vienna Circle. Known as logical positivists

They suggested that any statement that cannot be proven empirically or verified to be true (or is a tautology) was literally meaningless.

*"A statement which cannot be conclusively verified cannot be verified at all. It is simply devoid of any meaning."*  
Waismann.

For Verificationists language about God is meaningless as there is no way to show the truth or falsity of 'God-talk' by observation and experiments.


Issues?

1. It would make many statements that people say meaningless. Swinburne ("God talk is not evidently nonsense") gives the example "All ravens are (at all times) black". He highlights that whilst we generally accept ravens are black there is no way to confirm this statement, because no matter how many ravens you look at, there may be another one which is not black. Therefore the statement cannot be verified, so is meaningless.

2. No meaningful statements can be made about History. For example- The Battle of Hastings happened in 1066. Yet there is no way to empirically verify this...so a statement about this event is meaningless.

Key philosopher for Verification Principle= A J Ayer

*"The criterion we use to test the genuineness of apparent statements of fact is the criterion of verifiability".*

If a statement is not verifiable it is either meaningless or tautology (which are meaningful).

People do make other types of statements that are important to themselves, but such statements are not factually significant. E.g. "God answers my prayers". "The sentence expressing it may be emotionally significant; but it is not literally significant."

Ayer called a statement that needed to be verified a putative statement. There are two types of verifiability according to Ayer.

1. **Practical Verifiability:** such statements can be tested in reality. E.g. If you said "*Mr Smith's car is red*" I could observe the car and verify if this statement was true or false.

2. **Verifiability in principle:** a statement that could be verified if we had the correct technology. E.g. "*There is life on Mars*".

**Strong verification**= is applied to anything that can be verified conclusively by observation/ experience. No doubt. "Mr Smith's car is red".

**Weak verification**= statements that can be shown to be probable by experience or observation. "All humans are mortal"

According to Ayer, religious statements are meaningless because they cannot be supported by empirical evidence that goes with what is probable. So cannot be verified even in the weak sense. Ayer also says the religious statements are meaningless because metaphysical ideas are beyond our senses so could never be verified with empirical evidence. Ayer rejects all arguments from religious experience as someone who claims to of had such an experience is actually just recounting emotions that are religious rather than a verifiable experience.

After criticism Ayer did make changes. Most notably he changed the definition of verification to:

*"A statement is held to be literally meaningful if and only if (iff) it is analytic or empirically verifiable."*

Ayer lost the distinction between strong and weak verification and he decided strong verification could not apply to any statement. Ayer wanted to lose the distinction between strong and weak verification and he decided strong verification could not apply to any statement. Ayer suggested two new criteria for verification: directly and indirectly verifiable.

**Directly verifiable:** a statement that is verifiable through an observation.

**Indirectly verifiable:** a statement whose truth cannot be directly observed but could be supported by directly verifiable evidence. Also refers to analytic statements.

Evaluation:

1. **Verification is unverifiable.** You can't verify the statement "statements are only meaningful if verifiable by sense observation" with a sense observation and it is not analytic.

2. **God talk is eschatologically verifiable:** Supported by **John Hick**. The truth of religion will be verifiable in principle at the end of time.

Hick gives an example of two travellers on the journey through life to the Celestial City. One believes the city is real, they other does not. Whoever is right will be verified at the end of the journey.

3. **Strong verification** was widely criticised as is excluded many areas of knowledge such as history, because no sense observation can confirm historical events. It also excludes any universal statements (think Swinburne and the ravens). However, Ayer did make amendments to his theory to deal with these issues.

4. **Evidence problem:** what evidence should count? Whilst Ayer reject religious experience others have stated that these should be accounted for.

5. **Meaningful but not verifiable.** A statement can still have meaning without being verified. E.g. Schrodinger's cat. You can never verify if the cat is dead or alive but there is still meaning to the idea of the cat in the box.

### The Falsification Principle

Simply put: the Falsification Principle is not concerned with what may make something true, but what may, in principle, make it false. If something could not, in principle, be falsified then it is meaningless.

#### Antony Flew 1923-2010

Flew stated that often to the non religious person there is no event or series of events that would ever convince the "sophisticated" religious person there wasn't a God at all.

*"Now it often seems to people who are not religious as if there was no conceivable event or series of events the occurrence of which would be admitted by sophisticated religious people to be a sufficient reason for conceding 'There wasn't a God after all'."*

#### Parable of the explorers in the jungle:

- Two explorers in the jungle come across a clearing with flowers and weeds.
- One explorer concludes that a gardener must be responsible for looking after the plot. But the other explorer disagrees.
- They wait for the gardener to appear, set up an electric fence and even use a bloodhound to track its scent. NO sign of the gardener.
- The explorer who is convinced that the gardener exists states:
  - He has no scent
  - Makes no sound
  - Secretly comes to look after the garden he loves.



Religious believers act in the same way as the explorer who believes in the garden. They won't let anything falsify their belief.

A religious believer may claim God loves people like a father and is omnibenevolent. Then there is a Natural disaster. Eg. Tsunami 2004. No help from God? Why didn't God prevent this? Love from God is "inscrutable" (impossible to understand/ interpret). No experience will falsify a religious believer's faith.

So for Flew, religious language is meaningless as it is not falsifiable. For Flew, God dies a "death by a thousand qualifications". When a religious believer is challenged, they modify the way they talk about God. They end up changing their statement so much it no longer resembles the original claim.

### R.M Hare 1919-2002

Hare agreed that falsification could be used to determine the usefulness of a statement, but this did not apply to Religious statements. According to Hare, Flew took Religious statements to be factual or scientific statements, that could either be true or false. Such statements can be called assertions. Hare believed it was a mistake to view Religious statements this way.

Hare did not agree that Religious statements had to be factual. So whilst a Religious statement may not be falsifiable they could still have meaning. They have meaning because, despite not being factual, they have an impact on the lives of religious believers.

Key word: "Blik"- a word coined by Hare to mean the way we look at or interpret the world.

Parable of the lunatic: The lunatic has an insane blik, the way in which he views the world makes him believe all dons will kill him. You can see he won't let it be falsified (no matter the number of nice dons he meets he still believes they will kill him), but it still impacts his life, so has meaning. We too have blik's about dons/ teachers...but ours are sane. Your blik about teachers has meaning and impacts behaviour.

A blik is not falsifiable and does not make claims about the world that can be tested (remember it is just the way each person interprets the world). Religious statements are blik's and therefore are meaningful because they have significance to the people using them.

#### Flew's response to Hare:

Christianity is not a blik as its followers make assertions about the universe.

*"If Hare's religion really is a blik, involving no cosmological assertions about the nature and activities of a supposed personal creator, then surely he is not a Christian at all?"*

It is a fundamental element of Christianity that they believe certain statements about God are true. "God created the world". This is truth, not just an interpretation of the world. This can take us back to Flew's original argument that a Christian then does not allow this statement to be falsified.



### Basil Mitchell 1917-2011

Mitchell states Flew makes the error in his analysis of religious believers of claiming a religious believer is a detached observer, rather than a believer.

Mitchell states there is evidence against religious claims and religious believers are aware of this. Key example= Problem of Evil. As a result Religious Language is not meaningless.

Whilst believers may recognise evidence that counts against their belief they may not reject religious beliefs. This is because they have a bias not to reject the belief, because of their faith.

Experience/ evidence that could count against God are put into the wider context of their faith and belief. Therefore statements such as 'God loves men' are not falsifiable but are "significant articles of faith".

Mitchell disagrees with Hare about "blik's". He maintains (like Flew) Religious Language makes assertions. Rather than just a statement that represent how the individual interprets the world.

#### Evaluation of Falsification.

#### Richard Swinburne 1934-

A response to falsification. Just because a statement can't be falsified does not mean it is meaningless.

Example= Toys in the Cupboard. The toys only come out and move when no one is watching. This can never be falsified. Yet we still understand the idea of the toys coming out and moving. So falsification cannot work.



#### Braithwaite

Whilst religious language is not cognitive, it can have meaning in a variety of ways, for example in giving moral imperatives. However, people who make these claims mean what they say, they are making cognitive claims.

#### Tillich

Religious is symbolic, therefore non cognitive. They are neither verifiable nor falsifiable, but symbols can still have meaning.

#### Donovan

Truth claims are a small part of how Religious Language is actually used. It also used to make commands and expressions of preferences. It can be used as part of a ceremony "I baptise you in the name of the Lord". He claims that most of the time RL is not used to make truth claims.

### Language Games: Ludwig Wittgenstein

Wittgenstein began to liken language to a game (after initially holding views more similar to the verification principle). Games have different rules. Eg, Chess and Netball have different rules, and the rules of Chess would make no sense applied to Netball (and vice versa). Wittgenstein said there are many different language games- people using language in different contexts and circumstances. In these different contexts and circumstances language has different meanings and purposes.

To use language is to participate in a game where you know and accept the rules.

Understanding the rules: Wittgenstein's example= chess. You may be told a piece is called the 'King', but without understand the rules of chess you couldn't use the piece in a game.

Accepting the rules: You have got to understand that words have different meanings in different contexts and use language appropriately. You can't play chess if your partner is trying to play checkers.

Words only have meaning because of their context, so meanings can vary depending on the context. This can cause problems if someone is using a word in a different context, and the other person doesn't realise.

Applying to an example: The word result would mean different things to the three different groups of people below.

- An athlete involved in sport.
- A scientist working in a medical lab.
- A student after an exam.

Inside the game = You know the rules. Outside the game = Don't know the rules.

Wittgenstein's example: Imagine you found yourself standing in the drivers cabin of a steam train. In front of you would be a large array of controls that you have no understanding of, whilst the driver would have a perfectly good understanding of their function. The only way to engage with these controls is to attempt to learn how to drive the train.

The only way RL can be understood is by playing the RL game. You need an "insider's view" so that RL can be put into its proper context.

"Was Jesus God?"

Not a yes/no answer. It depends which RL game you are playing. Christians and Jews are likely to give different answers, but both are equally valid in their language game.

So this implies RL cannot be criticised by an outsider as you don't know the rules of this game.

So when RL is discussed we are not testing whether religious claims are true, we are looking at how the RL is used...what is its function?



### Language games supported by D.Z Phillips (1934-2006)- adding strength

Statements such as "God is Love" and discussion of religious experience are to be understood within their language game. Therefore RL can only be judged by those who understand the rules. RL is meaningful to those who genuinely use it. So cannot be criticised by those outside the game.

Strengths	Weaknesses
It recognises the distinctive nature of Religious Language.	Who makes the rules? Can the rules be changed? If so, who by?
As a non-cognitive form of language (meaning it is context dependent, so in this case the meaning of language is dependent on the game being played) Religious Language makes no assertions (truth claims), so it cannot be criticised like it was by verificationism and/or falsification. It provides boundaries for the correct use of language. You have got to follow the rules.	Believers' claims can't be empirically tested.
Believers can be initiated into the game.	How can we be sure that the rules are going to be interpreted correctly?
Highlights how language games are used to express different forms of life. Example: Science and religion- if we recognise that they are employing different language games and not undermining each other you will be able to recognise the distinctive contributions of each.	Does not allow for believers' claims to be objectively true. This leads to language being understood as antirealist (can't be made true or false by anything objective). But do some religious believers want to make cognitive statements (factual claims)? Both Flew and Mitchell say they want to make assertions.
Looks at the use of language, rather than if it is objectively true or false. Allows the language to have meaning through its use.	D Z Phillips supported Language Game Theory and emphasised the idea that Religious Language is separate from other language. But religious believers partake in many other Language Games...so is Religious Language games really totally isolated from other language?
Compare to verificationism and falsification: They seem much more suited to scientific discussion- examining assertions. Language Games gives depth and value to Religious Language by emphasising its use in the lives of Religious Believers.	

### The Via Negativa Also known as the Apophatic Way

The example "God is good" is using language in a positive way. We have only a human understanding of what goodness is. We are told the goodness of God is beyond our comprehension. So how can we talk about God using this positive statement when we can't understand how it applies to God. We cannot truly ever understand how good the goodness of God is.

As a result some people suggest in order for language about God to have meaning, you should only talk about God in negative terms. This doesn't mean to criticise God. By talking negatively about God it emphasises the difference between God and humanity. It means we avoid anthropomorphism – bringing God down to the same level as humans/belittling God. You won't accidentally suggest that a good human is the same as good God.

Positive descriptions of God can be misleading. "God is Love"- God's love and humans love are completely different. Human love is flawed and inconsistent. To talk positively about God can therefore make statements about God inaccurate and damage our understanding of God. It is better to accept the mysteries of God than use flawed concepts to discuss God.

Many of the philosophers who use the V.N say we can experience God, but we cannot describe God. God is ineffable= incapable of being expressed or described in words.

Plato: His God is indescribable in nature. The mind of man can ascend mysticism through wordless prayer and draw him close, almost to the point of union with God.

Moses Maimonides: By understanding what God is not we can understand what God is.

"There is no necessity at all for you to use positive attributes of God with the view of magnifying him in your thought".

Ship analogy.

Brian Davies – criticism of Maimonides

Quote: "Only saying what something is not gives no indication of what it actually is, and if one can only say what God is not, one cannot understand him at all. Suppose I say that there is something in my room, and suppose I reject every suggestion you make as to what is actually there. In that case, you will get no idea at all about what is in my room. Going back to my quote from Maimonides ...it is simply unreasonable to say that someone who has all the negations mentioned in it 'has almost arrived at the correct notion of a ship'. He could equally well be thinking of a wardrobe."

By saying what something is not doesn't give you any indication of what a thing is. People may in fact get completely the wrong idea of what a thing is. Also if you are going to work on the basis of a process of elimination should you start with a list of options/ outcomes?



### The cataphatic way / via positiva and Analogy

The cataphatic way / via positiva aims to use positive terms to convey meaning of God. Aquinas maintained we can't talk in literal terms about God (same pitfalls via negativa is trying to avoid). What we know of God will always be limited, we will have a partial understanding.

Aquinas: we could make positive claims/ convey positive ideas about God if we speak analogically.

We can use language in a univocal way: using words in a way to mean the exact things. "Green hat" "Green grass" "Green car". This is a univocal use of "green", in all situations it is being used to describe the colour.

We can use language in an equivocal way: same words being used in a different sense. "Dining table" "Periodic table". The word "table" is being used differently.

Analogical language- using language in a similar/ related sense, but not in exactly the same way. Example: metaphorical language in poetry. "Blanket of snow". "Blanket" has its obvious and literal meaning but it also has connotations allowing us to gain greater insight to the idea to be understood.

### Types of analogy

- Analogy of attribution: a causal link between the two things being described/ compared. Example: a "healthy seaside", causes good health if you live there. Aquinas: To say God is living is to say God causes life.
- Analogy of proportionality: words relating to something in different proportions. Example: "Clever dog" "Clever scientist". We recognise there is a different scale of clever. To say God is loving – God's love is on an infinitely vaster scale.

Criticism: William Blackstone: We are going to have to translate into univocal language for it to mean anything. So we are still left with a very limited understanding of God.

### Response:

Stephen Evans: Nothing wrong with God being mysterious, you just need to be able to understand 'enough'.

Rudolph Otto: God is "*mysterium tremendum et fascinans*" a fearful and fascinating mystery. This should be conveyed, not disguised by language.

Ramsey: We need to use models and qualifiers to talk about God. Model: eg. Loving. Something we have a reference point to. Qualifier: eg. Perfectly. Shows that God is proportionality different. We may not understand God completely but not guilty of anthropomorphism, but neither does God become completely incomprehensible.

Analogy is a useful way to create an understanding of a complex idea. (Think back to the watch analogy given my Play in the Teleological. You don't need to explain this analogy in the exam, but you could highlight it as an example of using an analogy to simplify a complex idea.)

### The use of symbols in Religious Language

- You could argue a lot language is symbolic, in the sense it is used non literally. For example we can use language figuratively: "I'm going to kill my sister for taking my shoes"
- You could say this leads to a problem: how do we know when language is being symbolically or literally?
- Analogy and myth can both be seen as symbolic use of Religious Language. As they are both non literal uses of language to talk about God/ Religion.
- Signs: Signs are used to represent a specific object, person or event. Convenient shorthand way of communicating meaning. The meaning of a sign has to be learnt.



Paul Tillich: Signs are chosen arbitrarily.

Symbols also stand for something other than themselves. Symbols take an everyday image to direct our thoughts to something else, in the case of religion they point to the transcendent. Tillich maintains that a symbol 'participates' with the object being represented. Eg. National flags evoke feelings of pride and loyalty.

Tillich maintained that all religious language is symbolic as it is pointing beyond itself. God is what concerns us ultimately. God is not a physical reality, bound in a physical world. Any language/ statement beyond "God is a being itself" is symbolic.

*"God does not exist. He is a being itself beyond essence and existence. Therefore to argue that God exists is to deny him"*

When you are talking about God you are using physical and contingent language. The majority of claims about God are non physical and non contingent. So you want to point to something transcendent – hence the use of language is symbolic.

Examples of symbolic religious language: The symbol of light- used in most religions. It can represent truth, purity, knowledge.

### J H Randell- Four Functions of Symbol:

1. Motivation: inspire people to take action.
2. Socially binding- people who have the same understanding of a symbol are brought together.
3. Communication- of something non literal.
4. Disclosure- reveal the hidden depths of spiritual matters.

Macquarrie: Signs can have an intrinsic connection with what it represents. (Some symbols eg. Mathematical are also arbitrary). He states there are two types of symbol: conventional and intrinsic. "The conventional symbol has no connection with what it symbolises other than the fact that some people have arbitrarily agreed to let it stand for this particular symbolizandum. The intrinsic symbol, on the other hand, has a kinship with what it symbolises."

### Evaluation

Adequate and appropriate: Using language symbolically is to say something can represent something else. Can a symbol really represent something beyond our experience? Will it adequately represent that thing, in this case God?

Realism: The implication of saying RL is symbolic is that it is claiming RL does not refer to something that has an objective reality (so it is a non realist use of language). There are other philosophers who state that religious believers ARE trying to make realist claims when they talk about God. Eg. Flew.

Open for interpretation: Not only can symbols convey meaning but leaves it open for the believers to make their own interpretation. Highlights the private nature of religion. Could it also be problematic?

Do we need to be inside the community to understand? Think back to Wittgenstein's language games. In order to truly understand a word you have to be inside the game, does the same apply to symbols? In order for people to have a shared understanding of a symbol do they need the same beliefs? Symbols can mean different things in different cultures, religions societies.

Outdated: Tillich "It is necessary to rediscover the questions to which the Christian symbols are the answers in a way which is understandable in our time".

