



Fundamentals –Year 13 - Philosophy

Key knowledge by the end of Year 13 (Students should also know the Year 12 content)

THEOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

THE NATURE OR ATTRIBUTES OF GOD:

Developments in the understanding of:

- o omnipotence - divine power and self-imposed limitation
- o omniscience - divine knowledge and its interaction with temporal existence and free-will
- o (omni)benevolence - divine benevolence and just judgement of human actions, including Boethius's argument relating this to divine foreknowledge, eternity and free will
- o eternity - divine eternity and divine action in time, including Anselm's four-dimensionalist approach as an extension of Boethius's view
- o free will - the extent to which human free will reasonably coexists with these attributes
 - the above should be studied with reference to alternative possibilities presented by Boethius, Anselm and Swinburne
 - whether or not it is possible, or necessary, to resolve the apparent conflicts between divine attributes
 - whether Boethius, Anselm or Swinburne provides the most useful understanding of the relationship between divinity and time
 - whether or not any of these thinkers are successful in resolving the problems of divine knowledge, benevolence, justice, eternity and human free will
 - whether the attributes should be understood as subject to the limits of logical possibility or of divine self-limitation

RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE: NEGATIVE, ANALOGICAL OR SYMBOLIC:

-the apophatic way – the via negativa - the argument that theological language is best approached by negation

-cataphatic way – the via positiva - the understanding of religious language in terms of analogy, with reference to:

o Aquinas's analogy of attribution and analogy of proper proportion

-symbol - understanding of the language of religious expression in terms of symbol, with reference to:

o Tillich's view of theological language as almost entirely symbolic

- comparison of the usefulness of the above approaches to religious language
- whether or not the apophatic way enables effective understanding of theological discussion
- whether or not Aquinas' analogical approaches support effective expression of language about God
- whether or not religious discourse is comprehensible if religious language is understood as symbolic

RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE: 20TH CENTURY PERSPECTIVES & PHILOSOPHICAL COMPARISONS:

-logical positivism - the impact of the verification principle on the use of religious language, with reference to:

o Ayer's approach to verification



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-Wittgenstein's views on language games and forms of life - how language games may permit religious language to be deemed meaningful yet not cognitive

-discussion about the factual quality of religious language in the falsification symposium - the varying arguments, with their associated parables, put forward in relation to theological language by:

- o Flew, Hare and Mitchell in their contributions to the symposium
- whether or not any version of the verification principle successfully renders religious language as meaningless
- whether or not any participant in the falsification symposium presented a convincing approach to the understanding of religious language
- a comparison of the ideas of Aquinas and Wittgenstein, including:
 - o whether a cognitive approach (such as Aquinas's thinking on analogy) or a non-cognitive approach (such as the language games concept of Wittgenstein) present better ways of making sense of religious language
 - o the influence of non-cognitive approaches on the interpretation of religious texts
 - o how far Aquinas' analogical view of theological language remains valuable in philosophy of religion

SKILLS

KEY SKILLS DEVELOPED IN YEARS 12 AND 13

- critical analysis of key texts and philosophical and religious views
- evaluation of different viewpoints
- analysis of ethical and theological outlooks
- essay writing skills
- advanced literacy skills including the use of technical language
- the use of quotes to support statements