

Do III

Jan. 14

1. Theo 143 M W F 9 42 M W F 12  
10

Office Gr 202 T 9-12  
Th 2-5

Class lists

Seating until names are learned

2. Intro to course. A notion of theology

- misconceptions

1) indoctrination, patterned for many on earlier experiences.

Assumption: that theology is somehow structurally a different kind of pursuit of knowledge and understanding fr. other disciplines.

Because it deals w. religion, assumed that theology begins w. the statement of the truth & does what it can to understand it.

Enlightenment (18<sup>th</sup> century), the age of the violent declaration of the autonomy of human reason from authority. Rise of modern science and the insistence on immanently generated knowledge.

→ all indoctrination is mystification

ideology  
alienating human intelligence  
from its spontaneity in the pursuit of  
understanding and truth.

Granted: a reasonable assumption based on past exp. w. religion courses & the Church

a reasonable feeling of resentment.

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Response: - modern science is the most successful exercise of human kn. yet achieved

- study of modern sci, not in its content, but in what scientists do, shows us what kn. is.

I.e., whenever I come to know something, I structure my performance in the same way as the scientist. 2 moments:

- a) questioning my experience for its meaning or intelligibility
- b) reflecting on the ending I have arrived at to ascertain if it is true

Thus all knowledge is a result of  
inquiring intelligence  
& reflecting reasonableness

and the final testing ground of all knowledge is human experience: does what I claim to be a correct understanding satisfy the data of experience? If it does not, it is not knowledge. And if it is not knowledge, it is not true. If it does satisfy the data of experience, does it do so exhaustively or with remainder? If exhaustively, it is true. If with remainder, it is on the way to truth.

Now I claim to be knowledge. If its claim has any substance, it must satisfy this structure. If it does not satisfy this structure, I is not knowledge, but mystification & ideology, & to be teaching I is to be indoctrinating, brainwashing.

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But if  $\Theta$  is knowledge, what is it knowledge of?  
I will be working from the following understanding

of  $\Theta$ :

Theology  
defined

Theology is the pursuit on the part of an intelligent and reasonable mind of accurate understanding concerning the moments of ultimacy in human experience, concerning the nature of their origin or source, and their meaning for the individual and cultural life of humankind.

There is only one element of this definition that needs clarification:

moments of ultimacy

Whole course

But intro by speaking briefly about religion.

2) Religion = the 2<sup>nd</sup> difficulty w. wh. many students come to a course in theology.

The central concern of every adult human being, of every human being from at least mid-adolescence to old age, is the constitution of himself or herself as this particular human being.

The secret source of all our anxiety is the at least dim awareness that it is ultimately left to me to decide for myself what I am going to make of myself.

This constitution of the self is a process continuing at least to the moment of death. Never completed. I will never have fully arrived. Moments of arrival are only starting pts. for further dev.

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Now frequently, perhaps even most often, religion is thought of as something extrinsic to the process of individuation.

Relating to God as something I do over and above, in addition to, the process of becoming this unique individual human being.

As something extrinsic to:

- the pursuit of truth in science
- the course of the dev. of my love for another human being & of my capacity for genuine intimacy
- the enjoyment of beauty in art & music
- the choice & execution of a career

Also as something extrinsic to my constitution of the world on the basis of the mps & values I discover & affirm in the process of my own individuation

And as sometimes conflicting with or contradicting or providing an obstacle to this process.

Such religion is an illusion. Any doctrine or belief or position that conflicts with the intelligent and reasoned pursuit of the self-constitution of the human being is an illusion.

Now, if I live by an illusion, I am not only wrong but destructive.

Of self = masochist

Of the web of human relationships = sociopath

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Let us call this notion of religion as extrinsic to the process of self-constitution & constitution of the world supernaturalism.

The assumption that there are 2 worlds:

- This world in which I make my way and to whose constitution I contribute by my decisions
- and another world to which some people claim to be related by religion

Let us also deny this assumption. There is only one world, and it is the world in which I constitute myself or fail to constitute myself as this unique individual, the world to whose ongoing creation I contribute by my decisions as to what I will do with my life.

vs. supernaturalism, the radical secularity of all experience. There is only one world, and it is this world, and all experience is this-worldly.

If all experience is this-worldly, so is all truth, for truth is nothing but the correct understanding of experience.

What happens, then, to religion?

Religion as supernaturalism is an illusion.

Is there another meaning to the term religion?

Religion is what the individual does with moments of ultimacy in secular experience

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- in the exp. of the pursuit of truth in science, history, literature, philosophy
- in the exp. of love for another human being
- in the exp. of the beauty of art & music
- in the exp. of choosing and executing a career.

Religion is not ~~that~~  
something one does over & above & in addition to the process of the self-constitution of oneself as an individual.

←  
What is a moment of ultimacy in secular experience?

Kierkegaard:

by relating itself to its own self  
and  
by willing to be itself  
the self is grounded transparently  
in the Power which posited it.

Rilke:

Catch only what you've thrown yourself, all is mere skill and little gain;  
but when you're suddenly the catcher of a ball thrown by an eternal partner  
with accurate and measured swing  
towards you, to your centre, in an arch  
from the great bridgebuilding of God:  
why catching then becomes a power --  
not yours, a world's.

But: Are there such moments of ultimacy?

If not, all religion is an illusion  
and theology is alienating ideology  
to be rejected by the autonomous reason  
that can catch only what it has thrown  
itself.

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The denial of such moments  
is central to modern culture

And in a course on religion & culture  
we must study this denial and see if  
it holds up.

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~~Assignments~~  
143

143 - Begin reading Whitehead, Religion in the Making  
for 1st part of course, read to p. 86

42 - Begin reading The Last Western.  
Journals by next Wed.  
on Bks. 1 & 2  
Paper, 5 pp.  
due Feb. 11  
"Did Willie fail?"  
Your own answer.