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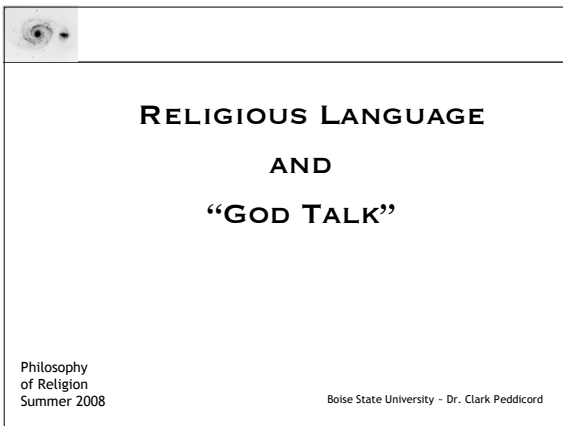
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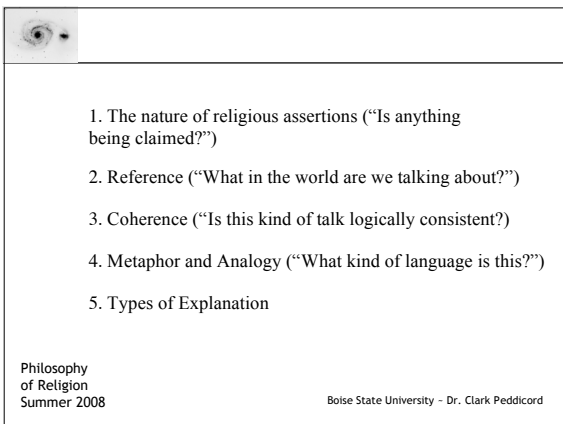
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1. The nature of religious assertions (“Is anything being claimed?”)

2. Reference (“What in the world are we talking about?”)

3. Coherence (“Is this kind of talk logically consistent?”)

4. Metaphor and Analogy (“What kind of language is this?”)

5. Types of Explanation

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1. The nature of religious assertions (“Is anything being claimed?”)

Do religious assertions make “statements”?

A conversation from *The Da Vinci Code*

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“There’s an enormous difference between hypothetically discussing an alternate history of Christ and . . .” He paused.

“And what?”

“And presenting to the world thousands of ancient documents as **scientific evidence** that the New Testament is false testimony.”

“But you told me that the New Testament is based on fabrications.”

Langdon smiled. “Sophie, *every* faith in the world is based on fabrication. That is the definition of *faith* – acceptance of that which we imagine to be true, that which we cannot prove. Every religion describes God through metaphor, allegory, and exaggeration, from the early Egyptians through modern Sunday School. Metaphors are a way to help our minds process the unprocessable. The problems arise when we begin to believe literally our own metaphors.”

“ . . .”

Sophie looked skeptical. “My friends who are devout Christians definitely believe that Christ *literally* walked on water, *literally* turned water into wine, and was born of a *literal* virgin birth.”

“My point exactly,” Langdon said. “Religious allegory has become a part of the fabric of reality. And living in that reality helps millions of people cope and be better people.”

“But it appears their reality is false.”

Langdon chuckled. “No more false than that of a mathematical cryptographer who believes in the imaginary number ‘i’ because it helps her break codes.”

Sophie frowned. “That’s not fair.”

A moment passed.

“What was your question again?”

“I can’t remember.”

He smiled. “Works every time.”

Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*, 341-42.  
(New York: Doubleday, 2003)

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2. Reference (“What in the world are we talking about?”)

“There is nothing more basic to thought and language than our sense of similarity; our sorting of things into kinds.”  
W.V.O. Quine, “Natural Kinds”.

“god” / “God”

What is “existence”? (as in the sentence “God exists.”)

Existence and *identification*

“No entity without identity!”  
W.V.O. Quine

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4. Metaphor and Analogy (“What kind of language is this?”)

A word from Humpty Dumpty and Spinoza

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When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less.

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“When I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less.”  
 “The question is,” said Alice, “whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.”  
 “The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master - that’s all.”  
 Alice was too much puzzled to say anything: so after a minute Humpty Dumpty began again. “They’ve a temper, some of them - particularly verbs: they’re the proudest - adjectives you can do anything with, but not verbs - however, *I* can manage the whole lot of them! Impenetrability! That’s what *I* say!”  
 “Would you tell me, please,” said Alice, “what that means?”  
 “Now you talk like a reasonable child,” said Humpty Dumpty, looking very much pleased. “I meant by “impenetrability” that we’ve had enough of that subject, and it would be just as well if you’d mention what you mean to do next, as I suppose you don’t mean to stop here all the rest of your life.”  
 “That’s a great deal to make one word mean,” Alice said in a thoughtful tone.  
 “When I make a word do a lot of work like that,” said Humpty Dumpty, “I always pay it extra.”  
 “Oh!” said Alice. She was too much puzzled to make any other remark.”

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 Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*  
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**Can the term "personal", as applied to human beings, be applied to God?**

Spinoza says "No!". Indeed, for him *no* term, when applied to God, can have a univocal meaning as when applied to anything else.

"It is a general principle in Spinoza's philosophy, which he constantly repeats to prevent misunderstandings, that no term when applied to God can possibly bear the meaning which it has when applied to human beings."  
 Stuart Hampshire, *Spinoza*, revised edition, Harmondsworth, 1962, p. 49

"If intellect and will appertain to the eternal essence of God, we must take these words in some significations quite different from those they usually bear. For intellect and will, which should constitute the essence of God, would perforce be as far apart as the poles from the human intellect and will, in fact, would have nothing in common with them but the name: there would be about as much correspondence between the two as there is between the Dog, the heavenly constellation, and a dog, an animal that barks."  
 Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part I, Prop. XVII, Cor. 2

"Men have not so clear a knowledge of God as they have of general notions, because they are unable to imagine God as they do bodies, and also because they have associated the name God with images of things that they are in the habit of seeing, as indeed they can hardly avoid doing, being, as they are, men, and continually affected by external bodies. Many errors, in truth, can be traced to this head, namely, that we do not apply names to things rightly."  
 Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part II, Prop. XLVII

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4. Metaphor and Analogy ("What kind of language is this?")

A word from Humpty Dumpty and Spinoza

Plato vs. Aristotle

Univocal / equivocal / analogy

Duns Scotus vs. Thomas Aquinas

"God loves perfectly."  
 "God is a loving father."

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“We can and do perform the feat of using imprecise language to introduce more precise language. This is like the use of all tools - we use less-refined tools to manufacture more refined ones.”  
 Hilary Putnam, *Philosophical Papers*, Vol. 1.

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5. Types of Explanation

Scientific Explanation  
 Personal Explanation

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Explanatory Power

Predictive Power

*“Disqualifiers”*

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