DOWNLOAD PDF THE HUMAN SEARCH FOR TRUTH: PHILOSOPHY, SCIENCE, THEOLOGY

Chapter 1 : Against accommodationism: How science undermines religion

*The Human Search for Truth: Philosophy, Science, Theology: the Outlook for the Third Millennium, International Conference on Science and Faith, the Vatican, May [Saint Joseph's University Press] on www.nxgvision.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers.*

From Dialogue to Intellectual Integration: Ways for Developing the Dialogue between Theology and Science. When Theology approaches Science: How Theologians look at the Sciences. The Intellectual Endeavor carried out by Thomas Aquinas. Room for a Theology of Science and a Theology of Nature. Towards a Genuine Development of Christian Doctrine. Introduction Theology seeks to provide the understanding of the Word of God in the light of faith. It seeks to explain the internal coherence of this Word and to clarify the different implications it entails. In so doing theology naturally encounters other sources of knowledge and takes into account their contents. The need for such a dialogical movement was already shown by St. When the scientific method was established, claiming its autonomy with respect to philosophical knowledge, theology had been confronted with two different interlocutors, philosophy and science, as well as two different realms, i. Thus the task of theology became ever more complex because of the different methods and different epistemological viewpoints adopted in each subject area. In the Modern Age, the complexity of the task of theology increased due to the breakthrough of two major issues or, perhaps, simply their modern re-proposition , namely the new perspective brought about by the relevance of history and the debate about the possibility of a quest for the truth. Questioning the use of the results of the natural sciences in the work of theologians goes beyond simply questioning about the dialogue between science and theology. Rather, it should be considered as the natural outcome of the dialogue itself. In fact, scientific results not only supply a deeper understanding of Revelation, but they might also require a new reading of the Word of God. Science asks for reading such a Word under new lights, and perhaps within unprecedented frameworks, which in turn raise new problems and call for more in-depth analyses. To use scientific results in theological work means, rather, to see them as sources of inspiration and of dogmatic development. It is a role that obliges theologians to take upon their shoulders the work of understanding how to interpret these results and the intricacies that they entail. If we compare the relationship existing between theology and philosophy to that between theology and the natural sciences, we detect some resemblances and marked differences. On the one hand, the interpretation of scientific data is often theory laden and hence requires some discernment by theologians, just as it happens when considering philosophy. Experience plays a key-role for both philosophy and science and it is taken into due consideration by theology as well. The realist framework theology usually works with provides a precise vision of the link existing between history and truth, and reassures that an access to the truth starting from reality is possible. However, with respect to our topic, a relevant difference between philosophy and science must be underlined here. Whereas theologians are acquainted with the main notions of philosophy, whose role is well acknowledged by their official curriculum of studies, the kind of expert knowledge needed for a thorough understanding and evaluation of scientific results today escapes the great majority of theologians, also on account of the sophisticated theoretical and experimental tools used by contemporary science. If they have any scientific competence, it comes from training received in parallel with their own philosophical and theological studies. In this essay, after introducing some epistemological assumptions which I believe should govern the dialogue and the interaction between theology and science Section II , I present a brief status quaestionis of the presence of the natural sciences in theological works Section III. The main scientific achievements with which theology has to reckon with today will be shortly summarized Section IV , and, finally, a few guidelines for a proper use of science in the development of dogmatic theology will be schematically suggested Section V. Some Epistemological Grounds Today, new philosophical premises and a new cultural climate allow for theology and science to overcome conflictual relationships and to foster a fruitful dialogue. There is a general agreement amongst various authors on the factors that have produced this

change of perspective cf. Polkinghorne, , ; Gismondi, ; Haught, ; Barbour, , They usually refer to the decline of the deterministic and mechanistic views of science, and of the closed, self-referential intent of logic and mathematics, within which scientific knowledge had entangled itself for such a long time, preventing it from engaging in dialogue with other sources of knowledge. Finally, we witness today the rise of philosophical, and sometimes even existential and religious questions, from within the scientific work, though, clearly, these cannot be formalized nor solved on the basis of scientific method alone. In the domain of history and culture, one could also mention the rediscovery of a meaningful link between Christian theology and the development of Western scientific thought. On the part of theology, an important changing factor is now the gradual, though slow, reception of the contemporary scientific view on the physical cosmos, on life and the evolution of the human being, a view that today constitutes the legitimate horizon to correctly understand the Biblical doctrine of creation and the history of salvation. The most obvious area of reflection in such a dialogue is provided by the interpretation of reality. Once you come to recognize, thanks to more correct hermeneutics, the possibility of simultaneous and different readings of reality, no longer at odds with each other, past errors may be clarified and the foundations laid for future peaceful interaction. In this way, the epistemological problem is redirected to a more anthropological domain. In this respect, I observe that scientific thought itself has gradually re-evaluated a number of factors of knowledge of a personal, heuristic, aesthetic, and intuitive kind. For a long time, science has underestimated these factors by reductively identifying rationality with formal-logical rationality. It is the path offered in a masterly way by J. Newman in his work A Grammar of Assent In the process we must overcome every regressive tendency to a unilateral reductionism, to fear, and to self-imposed isolation. What is critically important is that each discipline should continue to enrich, nourish and challenge the other to be more fully what it can be and to contribute to our vision of who we are and who we are becoming. The possibility of including firm scientific results into theological reflection has a dogmatic grounding in the equivalence that theology recognizes between the Word which creates the world and the Word which interprets and directs history, i. Revelation renders this unity certain, showing that the God of creation is also the God of salvation history. It is the one and the same God who establishes and guarantees the intelligibility and reasonableness of the natural order of things upon which scientists confidently depend, and who reveals himself as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The evaluation of theories and results coming from a scientific domain certainly has a cost for the theologian; it requires a new effort as well as the acquisition of new competencies. Exploring new paths is a task of theological reflection, not of official dogmatic formulations. The latter compound in an authoritative and stable form the outcome of an in-depth study which may, as history shows, take centuries. However, true progress in dogmatic formulations, though the fruit of a slow and pondered elaboration, would not be possible without a speculative development of theological reflection. If theology is meant to see the natural sciences as a positive source of development, it ought to engage in clarifying a couple of important issues. Actually, many of these results turn out to be quite independent of any specific philosophical framework. In relation to the first clarification, theology should not insist too much either on the fallibility of scientific enterprises â€”as if it were a necessary premise to dialogueâ€” or on the supposedly utterly conventional nature of scientific knowledge, overemphasizing the complete equivalence and the continuous change of its interpretative models. Though these epistemological approaches may be partly justified, if we use them incorrectly we may end up averting scientific knowledge from its goals. The world of experience is not a closed and self-referring courtyard, but it is the gate through which one enters in order to ascend towards the essence of things. It may be significant to note, in this respect, that the document just cited mentions the acquisition of knowledge by empirical science in order to show â€”in analogy with philosophical thinkingâ€” that the search for truth is not genetically frustrated, but it is capable of resting on secure data: When scientists, following their own intuition, set out in search of the logical and verifiable explanation of a phenomenon, they are confident from the first that they will find an answer, and they do not give up in the face of setbacks. They do not judge their original intuition useless simply because they have not reached their goal; rightly enough they will say that they have not yet found a

satisfactory answer. It would not be difficult to show that even those limitations of which science becomes aware while reflecting on its own methodology incompleteness, unpredictability, inadequacy of reductionism, need for holism, etc. These level correspond to more general formal objects and languages, which transcend science but lead science to recognize its very foundation, which lay upon a philosophical, meta-empirical ground. If we think to the path followed by Ludwig Wittgenstein in logic, that led him to realize the need for transcending language, we can easily see that a similar road can be followed also in other branches of knowledge. If that particular statement of science is truly scientific, based on arguments developed in compliance with correct methodological procedures, theologians should expect that, in principle, that statement would not contradict Revelation, even as a hypothesis. A second question concerns the use in theological discourse of terms with a strong cosmological connotation, such as earth, heaven, life, death, time, space, light, origin, , end, etc. Of course, the language of theology is necessarily richer than that of science, while resorting to analogical, symbolic, poetic, or doxological expressions: In the Middle Ages, theology and science used the same terminology: In treating the former, critical as it is to the entire theological discourse, theologians should be able to show at which level it operates with respect to the analysis of the sciences, and how it relates to the epistemological and anthropological openings of science itself; in the use of the latter, critical as it is to the entire scientific discourse, they should be able to explain in which way the experience of divine things and the experience of material things both intersect the sphere of the historical, sensible world. Gaudium et spes, 5. The implications in the pastoral domain are obvious to all: Similar caveats are contained in other pastoral documents of the Roman Catholic Church, just as the one issued in by the Pontifical Council for Culture cf. Toward a Pastoral Approach to Culture, A few years have passed since the declaration of the former Secretariat for the Dialogue with Non-Believers , now Pontifical Council for Culture, pointed out that: The language and the logic of personal commitment would be confined to religion only, while impersonal and thus universally objective knowledge would be proper to science only. According to this view, science itself would be only an expensive play, and theologians need not take scientific results too seriously. This certainly implies for theologians some problems to solve, but also lets them use scientific results in a positive way, as a valuable source of speculative reflection and dogmatic development. To do this, however, they must adopt exactly the opposite attitude: The greater weight attributed to the latter is due both to their role as auxiliary sciences in the study and the interpretation of the Sacred Scripture history, philology, etc. Recent examples of the little attention paid to the natural sciences are the absence of any reference to them both in the Vatican II Constitution Dei Verbum , devoted to divine Revelation, and in the Document of the PBC The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church Indeed there should be no real disagreement between the theologian and the physicist, provided that each confines himself within his own territory, watching out for this, according to St. One may well wonder why theological textbooks over the last 30 to 40 years have been so prudent, even quiet on this issue. The book series Mysterium salutis, which meant to identify the main lines of theological renewal from Vatican II onwards Mysterium Salutis. Up to the s, textbooks on Creation or on Theological Anthropology containing links with natural sciences were very rare. Usually, they addressed these issues in a cursory and imprecise fashion, almost as if treading on a minefield. As a consequence, the doctrine on divine Providence, which necessarily requires a look at the natural world as such, seems to have been eclipsed. He devoted major interest to the scientific language of theology and to the origin of human beings within an evolving world, including the problem of monogenism and the role of Christ in the cosmos. Pannenberg has developed a significant philosophical reflection in dialogue with science in a number of extensive monographs devoted to this issue cf. Pannenberg, , , , as well as in a number of scattered articles, the latter has developed a significant philosophical reflection in dialogue with science, especially in his Systematic Theology 3 vols. Clark, Edinburgh , cf. Moltmann has written a treatise on Creation containing interesting points for a dialogue with science and collected a number of essays on theology and science in the book Science and Wisdom cf. However, more than considering the influence of scientific data upon theology, he was mainly interested in fostering an alliance between science and religion in order to save our planet from the danger of a future

destruction. Alongside these three authors, it is worth mentioning Thomas F. Torrance , whose philosophical-theological production has copiously touched on the links between theology and science, especially regarding the search for a more satisfactory theory of knowledge and exploring the historical influences that the Trinitarian dogma and the doctrine of the Incarnation had for our view of the natural world, including our way of doing science cf. Torrance, , , , We should not forget the contribution made by Bernard Lonergan , whose philosophical insights originally grew out of his interest in searching for a theological method more respectful of contemporary rationality cf. All these scholars have worked in the area of theology, that is, they are properly known as theologians. Even bigger is the number of contemporary authors who devote themselves primarily to the study of the relationship between theology and science as such; again, their standpoint is mainly epistemology, not dogmatic theology, nor they are, strictly speaking, theologians, at least in the sense this word has in Roman Catholic circles. The case of the French Jesuit scientist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin is here worthy of particular attention. Teilhard was not a theologian, nor did he use the natural sciences within a systematic theological project.

Chapter 2 : Philosophy and Ideas: The Eternal Quest: What Is Truth?

One of the most important events that took place in Rome during the Great Jubilee Year was the International Conference on Science and Faith, "The Human Search for Truth: Science, Philosophy, Theology.

Back then, withdrawing a sizable amount of blood was considered standard treatment for almost any medical condition, including indigestion, insanity, and even acne. Why should they have? After all, bloodletting had been used for thousands of years by many different cultures. When bloodletting was finally examined more closely, doctors stopped using it for all but a few specific medical conditions. And we see that science can be a great tool in uncovering real truth. But it stops short of explaining the why. The famous physicist Albert Einstein also believed that religion and science have different, complementary purposes. First, we know scientific understanding will keep changing. We can depend on the unchanging gospel of Jesus Christ to help us make decisions between right and wrong. Nelson , President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and a renowned heart surgeon, has talked about how religion and science fit together. In reality, nothing that science reveals can disprove your faith. So if you like science, learn all you can about your area of interest! Your faith can even give you an advantage. Brother Richard Gardner, an associate professor of biology at Southern Virginia University, says that his faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ has been a big help to him. Brother Down also feels that his faith has helped him with his work in science. Professor Gardner gives an example: But what happens to our faith when these gaps are closed by the discovery of new fossils? Rather, we need to obtain positive evidence of God, through the Holy Ghost , and then we can rejoice in any scientific discovery instead of worrying about it. He wants them, and us, to use our brains, so He lets us work out the science, and His revelations to the Church are instead about how to organize the Church and especially how we can come to Christ and be saved. My father, a botanist, got me interested in science. Growing up, I used to play with his microscopes and other lab equipment and hear him talk about plants and fungi. And his geneticist father gave me some fruit flies when I was about nine. I took all the science I could in high school and especially enjoyed the assignment to create an insect collection. I determined when I was very young to get a PhD in science because I like to know how things work and I love learning. How have your scientific pursuits strengthened your faith? The more I have learned about the complexity inside a single cell, the more amazed I am. I have two large posters diagramming in small print most of the chemical reactions in a typical cell; all of these reactions are tightly controlled. Once I showed them to a priesthood class I taught. How has your faith helped you in your scientific pursuits? When I was doing research and now that I am mostly teaching science, my faith is important to me because I cannot have the complete picture without it. To learn how cells work but not why they or we are on this earth would leave me unsatisfied. See, for example, K. A Scientific Biography of Ignaz Semmelweis Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young ,

Chapter 3 : Truth - Wikipedia

The Human Search for Truth Philosophy, Science, Theology: The Outlook for the Third Millennium: International Conference on Science and Faith, the Vatican, May [Book Review].

Accommodationism of this kind gains endorsement even from official science organizations such as, in the United States, the National Academy of Sciences and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. But how well does it withstand scrutiny? Not too well, according to a new book by distinguished biologist Jerry A. On this account, religion and science do not overlap, and religion is invulnerable to scientific criticism. Importantly, however, this is because Gould is ruling out many religious claims as being illegitimate from the outset even as religious doctrine. Thus, he does not attack the fundamentalist Christian belief in a young earth merely on the basis that it is incorrect in the light of established scientific knowledge although it clearly is! He claims, though with little real argument, that it is illegitimate in principle to hold religious beliefs about matters of empirical fact concerning the space-time world: Certainly, most actual religions have implicitly disagreed. There is much controversy and disagreement. All the same, we can observe that religions have typically been somewhat encyclopedic, or comprehensive, explanatory systems. Religions usually come complete with ritual observances and standards of conduct, but they are more than mere systems of ritual and morality. They typically make sense of human experience in terms of a transcendent dimension to human life and well-being. Religions relate these to supernatural beings, forces, and the like. While Gould wants to avoid conflict, he creates a new source for it, since the principle of NOMA is itself contrary to the teachings of most historical religions. At any rate, leaving aside any other, or more detailed, criticisms of the NOMA principle , there is ample opportunity for religion s to overlap with science and come into conflict with it. Why Science and Religion are Incompatible Viking, He is not, for example, dealing with Confucianism, pantheism or austere forms of philosophical deism that postulate a distant, non-interfering God. Accommodationism is fashionable, but that has less to do with its intellectual merits than with widespread solicitude toward religion. Even if they are not religious themselves, many scientists welcome the NOMA principle as a tolerable compromise. Some accommodationists argue for one or another very weak thesis: For example, it is logically possible that current evolutionary theory and a traditional kind of monotheism are both true. But even if we accept such abstract theses, where does it get us? After all, the following may both be true: There is no strict logical inconsistency between the essentials of current evolutionary theory and the existence of a traditional sort of Creator-God. AND Properly understood, current evolutionary theory nonetheless tends to make Christianity as a whole less plausible to a reasonable person. In fact, the cumulative effect of modern science not least, but not solely, evolutionary theory has been to make religion far less plausible to well-informed people who employ reasonable standards of evidence. For his part, Coyne makes clear that he is not talking about a strict logical inconsistency. Rather, incompatibility arises from the radically different methods used by science and religion to seek knowledge and assess truth claims. As a result, purported knowledge obtained from distinctively religious sources holy books, church traditions, and so on ends up being at odds with knowledge grounded in science. Religious doctrines change, of course, as they are subjected over time to various pressures. Faith versus Fact includes a useful account of how they are often altered for reasons of mere expediency. One striking example is the decision by the Mormons as recently as the s to admit blacks into its priesthood. It is, of course, true that a system of religious beliefs can be modified in response to scientific discoveries. In principle, therefore, any direct logical contradictions between a specified religion and the discoveries of science can be removed as they arise and are identified. In practice, though, there are usually problems when a particular religion adjusts. Depending on the circumstances, a process of theological adjustment can meet with internal resistance, splintering and mutual anathemas. It can lead to disillusionment and bitterness among the faithful. The theological system as a whole may eventually come to look very different from its original form; it may lose its original integrity and much

of what once made it attractive. All forms of Christianity - Catholic, Protestant, and otherwise - have had to respond to these practical problems when confronted by science and modernity. Coyne emphasizes, I think correctly, that the all-too-common refusal by religious thinkers to accept anything as undercutting their claims has a downside for believability. To a neutral outsider, or even to an insider who is susceptible to theological doubts, persistent tactics to avoid falsification will appear suspiciously ad hoc. To an outsider, or to anyone with doubts, those tactics will suggest that religious thinkers are not engaged in an honest search for truth. Rather, they are preserving their favoured belief systems through dogmatism and contrivance. How science subverted religion In principle, as Coyne also points out, the important differences in methodology between religion and science might in a sense not have mattered. That is, it could have turned out that the methods of religion, or at least those of the true religion, gave the same results as science. At the dawn of modern science in Europe - back in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries - religious worldviews prevailed without serious competition. In such an environment, it should have been expected that honest and rigorous investigation of the natural world would confirm claims that were already found in the holy scriptures and church traditions. There might, accordingly, have been a process through history by which claims about the world made by the true religion presumably some variety of Christianity were successively confirmed. The process might, for example, have shown that our planet is only six thousand years old give or take a little , as implied by the biblical genealogies. It might have identified a global extinction event - just a few thousand years ago - resulting from a worldwide cataclysmic flood. Science could, of course, have added many new details over time, but not anything inconsistent with pre-existing knowledge from religious sources. Unfortunately for the credibility of religious doctrine, nothing like this turned out to be the case. As science advances historically, it increasingly reveals religion as premature in its attempts at understanding the world around us. Science has done much to disenchant the world - once seen as full of spiritual beings and powers - and to expose the pretensions of priests, prophets, religious traditions, and holy books. It has provided an alternative, if incomplete and provisional, image of the world, and has rendered much of religion anomalous or irrelevant. By now, the balance of evidence has turned decisively against any explanatory role for beings such as gods, ghosts, angels, and demons, and in favour of an atheistic philosophical naturalism. Regardless what other factors were involved, the consolidation and success of science played a crucial role in this. In short, science has shown a historical, psychological, and rational tendency to undermine religious faith. Not only the sciences! It has also come from work in what we usually regard as the humanities. Christianity and other theistic religions have especially been challenged by the efforts of historians, archaeologists, and academic biblical scholars. Those efforts have cast doubt on the provenance and reliability of the holy books. In the upshot, the sciences have undermined religion in recent centuries - but so have the humanities. He elaborates this as: But what is science? Hypothetico-deductive reasoning is, admittedly, very important to science. That is, scientists frequently make conjectures or propose hypotheses about unseen causal mechanisms, deduce what further observations could be expected if their hypotheses are true, then test to see what is actually observed. However, the process can be untidy. For example, much systematic observation may be needed before meaningful hypotheses can be developed. The precise nature and role of conjecture and testing will vary considerably among scientific fields. Likewise, experiments are important to science, but not to all of its disciplines and sub-disciplines. Fortunately, experiments are not the only way to test hypotheses for example, we can sometimes search for traces of past events. Quantification is also importantâ€¦ but not always. However, Coyne says, a combination of reason, logic and observation will always be involved in scientific investigation. Importantly, some kind of testing, whether by experiment or observation, is important to filter out non-viable hypotheses. If we take this sort of flexible and realistic approach to the nature of science, the line between the sciences and the humanities becomes blurred. From another viewpoint, of course, the modern-day sciences, and to some extent the humanities, can be seen as branches from the tree of Greek philosophy. If the English language eventually evolves in the direction of employing his construal, nothing serious is lost. For now, I prefer to avoid confusion by saying that the sciences and humanities are continuous

with each other, forming a unity of knowledge. With that terminological point under our belts, we can then state that both the sciences and the humanities have undermined religion during the modern era. The style is clear, and the arguments should be understandable and persuasive to a general audience. This seems to be the fate of any popular book, no matter how mild-mannered, that is critical of religion. Coyne displays a light touch, even while drawing on his deep involvement in scientific practice not to mention a rather deep immersion in the history and detail of Christian theology. In that sense, Faith versus Fact testifies to a worthwhile literary ideal. If an author works at it hard enough, even difficult concepts and arguments can usually be made digestible.

Chapter 4 : JUBILEE FOR MEN AND WOMEN FROM THE WORLD OF LEARNING

The human search for truth: philosophy, science, theology: the outlook for the third millennium, international conference on science and faith, the Vatican, May

It is a rewarding read that asks the Big Questions which humans have pondered since the dawn of the modern human mind, including: Why and how does the universe exist? From where do the laws of physics come? How did life and mind arise from inanimate matter on Earth? Science and religion have a common interest in the answers to such questions, yet many scientists and believers have been at odds for centuries. The author and contributors present a program for moving beyond the vastly different perspectives of reality offered by science and religion. Historical proofs for the existence of God are considered in light of the possibility that the universe may be only one in an eternal multiverse that contains an infinite number of other universes. Readers will find a modification of St. This book is suited to all with an interest in the crossing points of science and religion, providing much food for thought and reflection. The Search for Ultimate Meaning R. The Origin of Life R. Di Rocco and E. The Emergence of Mind in the Universe R. Mind Knowing Truth R. Consilient Truth and the Mind of God: Di Rocco and A. Man in Search of God: The Ecstasy of Prophets R. God in Search of Man: The Terror of Prophets R. Experimental Psychology and Biology. Tellige see raamat tutvumiseks meie kauplusesse! Raekoja plats 11, Tartu Juhul, kui soovite raamatuga enne ostu tutvuda, siis palun sisestaga allpool oma nimi ning e-mail.

Chapter 5 : Philosophy and the search for truth | Lloyd Strickland - www.nxgvision.com

search that does not reach absolute truth. Popper's philosophy of science abandoned the rigid conception of rational criteria of the traditional view and recognized the human element.

Lloyd Strickland Philosophia And indeed, in this paper I argue that many philosophers have in fact not been genuinely engaged in the search for truth in other words, many philosophers have not been doing philosophy and as such much of what passes for philosophy is in fact not really philosophy at all. Nietzsche The Standard Conception of Philosophy Philosophy, as it is understood and practiced in the West, is and has been generally considered to be the search for truth. Throughout the long history of the discipline some of its most celebrated practitioners have explicitly described philosophy this way, e. Hobbes , I, 3 and Descartes , I, And although it is L. In fact quite the opposite; a perusal of contemporary philosophical articles and monographs reveals very clearly that, in their practice of philosophy, the vast majority of philosophers consider themselves to be seeking out and advancing truths. There have been, of course, other conceptions of philosophy throughout its long history, though arguably most of these amount to little more than variations on the truth-seeking theme. Under this conception, it seems more correct to say that philosophy uncovers truths rather than discovers them. Common to all such conceptions of philosophy is the view that philosophy is ultimately truth-seeking. It is certainly the case that each conception differs in terms of what it holds to be the kind of truths one can attain through philosophy e. It seems reasonable, then, to conceive philosophy as the search for truth; in fact so popular has this conception 1 The view is, however, commonly found in the introductory literature; see for instance Cox , 27ff, and Soccio , 10â€” The elucidation of concepts has taken many forms; indeed, A. Ayer , ff identified no fewer than eight ways in which it can and has been done. It is worth noting that not all analytic philosophers held such a view of philosophy; some e. White , saw themselves as engaged on a process which aims to discover the necessary features of certain of our concepts, which makes philosophy straightforwardly truth-seeking in nature. It goes without saying that the Standard Conception cannot capture everything that philosophy is about, since no discipline is the search for truth simpliciter: For example, anthropology is the search for truths about the origins and social relation- ships of human beings; organic chemistry is the search for truths about the compo- sition, properties and reactions of organic compounds; physical geography is the search for truths about the features of the earth etc. Every truth-seeking discipline has its own particular domain, a part or aspect of reality which forms its subject matter and whose truths constitute its aim. What, then, is philosophy the search for the truth of? This is a question on which there has been and still is considerable disagree- ment, as should be clear enough from our discussion thus far. For while many ancient thinkers believed that philosophy seeks truths about how humans should live, many Scholastic thinkers held that philosophy seeks truths about God, and many contem- porary analytic thinkers hold that it seeks truths about our conceptual scheme s etc. Moreover, it is sometimes claimed e. Adjudicating between these competing claims is beyond the scope of this paper, as for our purposes it does not matter what philosophy is the search for the truth of, only that philosophy is the search for the truth about some part or aspect of reality. I wish now to note two rejoinders to the Standard Conception, the first of which I consider to be insignificant, while the second I deem to be very significant, so much so that I will argue that in light of it we should reconsider our understanding of what it is that many philosophers do. The first rejoinder is the oft-made criticism of philosophy that it has failed in its quest to discover truths, being nothing more than a long history of failed notions, ideas and hypotheses. And it is this lesser claim that concerns us here. Russell , 90; Urmson , 11â€”12 claiming that philosophy has at least served as midwife to the embryonic sciences of for example physics, biology, psychology and linguistics, and that these disciplines have made good headway with those questions that previously had been in the domain of philosophers. It is questionable, however, that this should count as a victory for philosophy, for even if the discipline can claim successful offspring this does not prevent philosophy itself being a perennial underachiever! This is the claim I wish to develop and defend in

the remainder of this paper. To facilitate this, it would be helpful to first identify a mark or test of genuine truth-seeking that will enable us to ascertain whether any given philosopher is truth-seeking or not. The Mark of Truth-Seeking At first glance it may seem unlikely that there could be such a mark of truth-seeking, since there are so many variations on the truth-seeking theme; after all, there are different kinds of truth e. Moreover, different people can seek the same truth for very different reasons e. Yet in spite of all these differences, all genuine instances of truth-seeking seem to display a common pattern, which is this: The truth-seeker begins in ignorance with regard to the truth he seeks, and as he considers this to be an undesirable state he makes use of a specific method or procedure of enquiry with the expectation that it will, when concluded, yield up the desired truth. It would be helpful to expand on this a little. In every case of truth-seeking it stands to reason that the truth-seeker begins in a state of ignorance with regard to the truth he seeks, since if one is seeking a truth it follows that one does not currently possess it, i. The truth-seeker may, however, believe that there is a specific method or procedure by which he may attain the truth he currently does not possess, and in order to move beyond the state of ignorance, the truth-seeker makes use of the truth-seeking procedure. This procedure may involve making observations, or introspecting, or undertaking analysis, or constructing an argument, and so on, or perhaps even making use of a combination of such practices. The truth-seeking procedure is then typically followed until it reaches an outcome, successful or otherwise. It is important to note that the truth-seeker, qua truth-seeker, will not know the result or the outcome of that procedure before it is concluded for if he did, he would not be seeking a truth at all, for the aforementioned reason. He may, of course, have an inkling or a suspicion of what the outcome might be, or perhaps even an expectation, but the genuine truth- seeker is, nevertheless, quite literally open to the outcome,6 i. Consequently, the outcome of the enquiry is, in a very real sense, not predetermined by the truth-seeker. Some philosophers, such as John Stuart Mill , 52 , have considered the Socratic injunction to represent the ideal for intellectual endeavours such as philosophy. Our concern is not with the success or failure of the truth-seeking procedure, but rather with the nature of truth-seeking itself. Consequently, all that concerns us here is that any truth-seeking discipline must be practised in the way I have outlined; whether that discipline succeeds in obtaining truths has no bearing on this. Now we saw in section I that according to the Standard Conception of philosophy, philosophy is the search for truth. As a truth-seeking disciplineâ€”perhaps even the original or the quintessential truth-seeking disciplineâ€”we can expect its practitioners to follow the simple schema outlined above. A strong prima facie case can be made for supposing that they do, since we have already considered albeit briefly several examples of philosophy in practice. On the basis of those we might think that the following is a plausible picture of how philosophers work: Philosophers begin in a state of ignorance with regard to certain truths, such as truths about how one should live, about God, about our conceptual schemes etc. The perceived undesirability of this state leads them to instigate an appropriate truth-seeking procedure or combination of such procedures ; common examples of such procedures are analysis, argument, dialectic, intuition, and thought- experiments. Philosophers see the chosen procedure through to its conclusion in the hope it will yield the truth s they seek. This is certainly how philosophers ought to operate if they are genuinely truth- seeking. But is it how they actually operate? I suggest that in many cases it is not. And now that we have our test of truth-seeking we are in a position to determine 8 For example, because the chosen truth-seeking procedures are themselves inherently flawed, or were not followed correctly, or perhaps becauseâ€”as some thinkers have arguedâ€”truth is itself arbitrary, or relative, or impossible for us to attain etc. In the next section I shall argue that many do not. Philosophers and Truth-Seeking As we shall see, there are various reasons for making such a suggestion. If Nietzsche is right, the process of philosophizing is something like this: For one thing, there is no initial state of ignorance in the rationalization schema, as on it the philosopher identifies at the outset the position he wishes to endorse. Moreover, on this schema the philosopher is not led to his chosen position by any kind of truth-seeking procedure, but instead reaches it by altogether different methods. Needless to say, any philosopher who followed the approach outlined by Nietzsche would not be a genuine truth-seeker due to its lacking any

truth-seeking procedure: So which philosophers have adopted such an approach? Nietzsche singles out Spinoza and Kant, though in doing so he elects not to support his claims about their insincerity with any evidence. This is perhaps not unsurprising, as neither Spinoza nor Kant publically presented his work as being nothing more than conjectures, whims, or fervent wishes, nor does there appear to be anything in the private writings of either thinker that could support such an interpretation. Nietzsche may have had his suspicions about Spinoza, Kant, and others, but I cannot see that this is enough to ground a claim that many or most philosophers are not truth-seekers. Suppose, for example, that there are grounds to believe that a certain philosopher has a exoteric philosophy, that is, a set of views that he defends publically and in his published writings, and an esoteric philosophy, that is, a different set of views that he fervently believes to be true but does not reveal to anyone except perhaps an inner circle of initiates or trusted confidantes. If such duplicitousness were to be discovered, there would be every reason to suppose that the philosopher in question was not a full-time truth-seeker on account of the fact that he had not followed the truth-seeking schema in developing his exoteric philosophy and so his exoteric philosophy had not been shaped by any kind of truth-seeking procedure. Indeed, his exoteric philosophy is more likely to have been shaped by expediency and so consist of views designed to curry favour, perhaps because they are orthodox or popular. For such a philosopher the process of philosophizing would appear to be that described by the rationalization schema, namely: Nevertheless, any philosopher who followed this schema would not be a genuine truth-seeker. But is it plausible to suppose that any given philosopher has developed a bogus exoteric philosophy in the way described? As it happens, yes. For example, the 13th century philosopher Issac Albalag claimed that Maimonides had publically defended the doctrine of creation while privately endorsing the notion of an eternal world. He did this, Albalag suggested, out of expediencyâ€”his audience would not have been sympathetic to the unorthodox theory of the eternity of the world, and if he had defended it in public he would very likely have been construed as denying the whole Torah. It is quite possible, then, that at least some philosophers have resorted to developing an exoteric philosophy, in which case the public work of such philosophers will have been developed according the rationalization schema. Our search for non-truth-seeking philosophers has thus begun to yield fruit, although the harvest is still quite a poor one. And it is likely to remain this way for as long as our attention is restricted to philosophers who have engaged in the sorts of activities considered thus far, namely developing and promoting an exoteric philos- ophy, and building philosophical hypotheses on nothing more than a whim or a wish. After all, there is little reason to suspect that more than a handful of philosophers have engaged in either practice, which is perhaps unsurprising since both involve an 10 See the account related in Sirat , f. In the remainder of this section we shall see that there are many more ways in which philosophers may unintentionally rationalize rather than truth-seek, and many more instances of them doing so. One obvious way in which this may happen is when a philosopher unwittingly falls victim to the pressures or influence of his social group, class, culture, religion etc. For example, the prescription for the good life that Aristotle outlines in the Nicomachean Ethics reflects the social values of the class to which he belonged, and is in effect a philosophical validation of the kind of life that someone in that class would expect to live. According to James, a philosopher cannot leave behind his temperament, no matter how hard he may try, and it has a stronger hold over him than any argument or reason: Of whatever temperament a professional philosopher is, he tries when philos- ophizing to sink the fact of his temperament. Temperament is no conventionally recognized reason, so he urges impersonal reasons only for his conclusions. Yet his temperament really gives him a stronger bias than any of his more strictly objective premises. It loads the evidence for him one way or the other, making for a more sentimental or a more hard-hearted view of the universe, just as this fact or that principle would. James only mentions rationalism and empiricism, but the point could easily be extended to cover other worldviews, such as theism, pantheism, atheism, naturalism, common sense etc. Moreover, it can do so to the point that the philosopher no longer acts in accordance with the truth-seeking schema. Consider, for example, the theistic worldview, the central tenet of which is usually a belief in the existence of God. There have, however, been philosophers who have advanced proofs of the

existence of God, though invariably they have done so from within the theistic worldview. Indeed, there is no evidence at all that Descartes was a non-believer prior to his devising those arguments; in fact the evidence points the other way, since Descartes was a lifelong Catholic. It is likewise highly doubtful that any philosopher who has developed an argument for the existence of God has been led to believe in God by that very argument. Wittgenstein , 85 noted as much: That is, they first identify the doctrine they wish to defend viz. For another example let us return to Descartes again. It is well known that in the Meditations Descartes defended the immortality of the human soul. Now if this doctrine was arrived at according to the truth-seeking schema then Descartes would have started out by wondering whether the human soul is mortal or not, and then made use of a truth-seeking procedure which eventually yielded the result that the human soul is immortal.

Chapter 6 : Religion and Science (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

1. What are science and religion, and how do they interrelate? A brief history of the field of science and religion. Since the s, scholars in theology, philosophy, history, and the sciences have studied the relationship between science and religion.

Constructivist epistemology Social constructivism holds that truth is constructed by social processes, is historically and culturally specific, and that it is in part shaped through the power struggles within a community. Constructivism views all of our knowledge as "constructed," because it does not reflect any external "transcendent" realities as a pure correspondence theory might hold. Rather, perceptions of truth are viewed as contingent on convention, human perception, and social experience. It is believed by constructivists that representations of physical and biological reality, including race , sexuality , and gender , are socially constructed. Giambattista Vico was among the first to claim that history and culture were man-made. Hegel and Marx were among the other early proponents of the premise that truth is, or can be, socially constructed. Marx, like many critical theorists who followed, did not reject the existence of objective truth but rather distinguished between true knowledge and knowledge that has been distorted through power or ideology. For Marx, scientific and true knowledge is "in accordance with the dialectical understanding of history" and ideological knowledge is "an epiphenomenal expression of the relation of material forces in a given economic arrangement". Consensus theory of truth Consensus theory holds that truth is whatever is agreed upon, or in some versions, might come to be agreed upon, by some specified group. Such a group might include all human beings, or a subset thereof consisting of more than one person. Pragmatic theory of truth The three most influential forms of the pragmatic theory of truth were introduced around the turn of the 20th century by Charles Sanders Peirce , William James , and John Dewey. Although Peirce uses words like concordance and correspondence to describe one aspect of the pragmatic sign relation , he is also quite explicit in saying that definitions of truth based on mere correspondence are no more than nominal definitions, which he accords a lower status than real definitions. Defined and named by William Ernest Hocking , this variation is known as "negative pragmatism". Essentially, what works may or may not be true, but what fails cannot be true because the truth always works. For Peirce, the idea of " As Feynman noted, an idea or theory " Pragmatism and negative pragmatism are also closely aligned with the coherence theory of truth in that any testing should not be isolated but rather incorporate knowledge from all human endeavors and experience. The universe is a whole and integrated system, and testing should acknowledge and account for its diversity. As Feynman said, " Deflationary theory of truth Modern developments in the field of philosophy, starting with the relatively modern notion that a theory being old does not necessarily imply that it is completely flawless, have resulted in the rise of a new thesis: This thesis is in part a response to the common use of truth predicates e. In common parlance, truth predicates are not commonly heard, and it would be interpreted as an unusual occurrence were someone to utilise a truth predicate in an everyday conversation when asserting that something is true. Newer perspectives that take this discrepancy into account and work with sentence structures that are actually employed in common discourse can be broadly described: Among the theoretical concerns of these views is to explain away those special cases where it does appear that the concept of truth has peculiar and interesting properties. In addition to highlighting such formal aspects of the predicate "is true", some deflationists point out that the concept enables us to express things that might otherwise require infinitely long sentences. This assertion can also be succinctly expressed by saying: What Michael says is true. The idea that some statements are more actions than communicative statements is not as odd as it may seem. Consider, for example, that when the bride says "I do" at the appropriate time in a wedding, she is performing the act of taking this man to be her lawful wedded husband. She is not describing herself as taking this man, but actually doing so perhaps the most thorough analysis of such "illocutionary acts" is J. Strawson holds that a similar analysis is applicable to all speech acts, not just illocutionary ones: Redundancy theory of truth According to the redundancy theory

of truth , asserting that a statement is true is completely equivalent to asserting the statement itself. Redundancy theorists infer from this premise that truth is a redundant concept; that is, it is merely a word that is traditionally used in conversation or writing, generally for emphasis, but not a word that actually equates to anything in reality. This theory is commonly attributed to Frank P. Ramsey , who held that the use of words like fact and truth was nothing but a roundabout way of asserting a proposition, and that treating these words as separate problems in isolation from judgment was merely a "linguistic muddle". A version of this theory was defended by C. Williams in his book What is Truth?. Consider the analogy between the sentence "Snow is white" and the character named Snow White, both of which can be true in some sense. To a minimalist, saying "Snow is white is true" is the same as saying "Snow is white," but to say "Snow White is true" is not the same as saying "Snow White. Philosophical skepticism and Certainty Philosophical skepticism is generally any questioning attitude or doubt towards one or more items of knowledge or belief which ascribe truth to their assertions and propositions. Philosophical skepticism comes in various forms. Radical forms of skepticism deny that knowledge or rational belief is possible and urge us to suspend judgment regarding ascription of truth on many or all controversial matters. More moderate forms of skepticism claim only that nothing can be known with certainty, or that we can know little or nothing about the "big questions" in life, such as whether God exists or whether there is an afterlife. Religious skepticism is "doubt concerning basic religious principles such as immortality, providence, and revelation ". Pluralist theories of truth Several of the major theories of truth hold that there is a particular property the having of which makes a belief or proposition true. Pluralist theories of truth assert that there may be more than one property that makes propositions true: Propositions about the physical world might be true by corresponding to the objects and properties they are about. Some of the pragmatic theories, such as those by Charles Peirce and William James , included aspects of correspondence, coherence and constructivist theories. In some discourses, Wright argued, the role of the truth predicate might be played by the notion of superassertibility.

Chapter 7 : Degrees and course requirements for the Theology program at ODU | Ohio Dominican Univers

JUBILEE FOR MEN AND WOMEN FROM THE WORLD OF LEARNING. International Conference on Faith and Science The Vatican, May The Human Search for Truth.

At the age of five, he was entered at Montecassino where his studies began. When the monastery became a battle siteâ€”not for the last timeâ€”Thomas was transferred by his family to the University of Naples. Returned to Paris, he completed his studies, became a Master and for three years occupied one of the Dominican chairs in the Faculty of Theology. The next ten years were spent in various places in Italy, with the mobile papal court, at various Dominican houses, and eventually in Rome. From there he was called back to Paris to confront the controversy variously called Latin Averroism and Heterodox Aristotelianism. After this second three year stint, he was assigned to Naples. In , on his way to the Council of Lyon, he fell ill and died on March 7 in the Cistercian abbey at Fossanova, which is perhaps twenty kilometers from Roccasecca. They were one of the principal conduits of the liberal arts tradition which stretches back to Cassiodorus Senator in the 6th century. The arts of the trivium grammar, rhetoric, logic and those of the quadrivium arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy were fragments preserved against the ruinous loss of classical knowledge. They constituted the secular education that complemented sacred doctrine as learned from the Bible. When Thomas transferred to Naples, his education in the arts continued. Here it would have been impressed upon him that the liberal arts were no longer adequate categories of secular learning: With the attainment of the Master of Arts at about the age of 20, one could go on to study in a higher faculty, law, medicine or theology. Extensive and progressively more intensive study of the scriptures, Old and New Testament, and of the summary of Christian doctrine called the Sentences which was compiled by the twelfth century Bishop of Paris, Peter Lombard. These close textual studies were complemented by public disputations and the even more unruly quodlibetal questions. With the faculty modeled more or less on the guilds, the student served a long apprenticeship, established his competence in stages, and eventually after a public examination was named a master and then gave his inaugural lecture. His commentary on the Sentences put the seal on his student days and many of his very early commentaries on Scripture have come down to us. But from the very beginning Thomas produces writings which would not have emerged from the usual tasks of the theological master. Some of his disputed questions date from his first stint as regius master at Paris. When he returned to Italy his productivity increased. He finished the Summa contra gentiles, wrote various disputed questions and began the Summa theologiae. In , at Rome, he began the work of commenting on Aristotle with On the Soul, and during the next five or six years commented on eleven more Aristotelian works not all of these are complete. During this time he was caught up in magisterial duties of unusual scope and was writing such polemical works as On the Eternity of the World and On There Being Only One Intellect. At Naples, he was given the task of elevating the status of the Dominican House of Studies. This was soon lifted, he was canonized and eventually was given the title of Common Doctor of the Church. But the subtle and delicate assimilation of Aristotle that characterized his work in both philosophy and theology did not survive his death, except in the Dominican Order, and has experienced ups and downs ever since. Philosophy and Theology Many contemporary philosophers are unsure how to read Thomas. He was in his primary and official profession a theologian. Nonetheless, we find among his writings works anyone would recognize as philosophical and the dozen commentaries on Aristotle increasingly enjoy the respect and interest of Aristotelian scholars. Even within theological works as such there are extended discussions that are easily read as possessing a philosophical character. How can a theological work provide grist for philosophical mills? How did Thomas distinguish between philosophy and theology? Sometimes Thomas puts the difference this way: The philosopher considers what belongs to their proper natures, while the believer considers only what is true of creatures insofar as they are related to God, for example, that they are created by God and are subject to him, and the like. The first and major formal difference between philosophy and theology is found in their

principles, that is, starting points. The presuppositions of the philosopher, that to which his discussions and arguments are ultimately driven back, are in the public domain, as it were. They are things that everyone in principle can know upon reflection; they are where disagreement between us must come to an end. These principles are not themselves the products of deductive proofâ€”which does not of course mean that they are immune to rational analysis and inquiryâ€”and thus they are said to be known by themselves per se, as opposed to per alia. This is proportionately true of each of the sciences, where the most common principles just alluded to are in the background and the proper principles or starting points of the particular science function regionally as the common principles do across the whole terrain of thought and being. The fact that they are known per se does not imply that they are easily known to just anyone who considers them. A good deal of experience of the world and inquiry, not to mention native intelligence, and the ability to avoid intellectual distraction, may be required for anyone in particular to actually apprehend their truth. By contrast, the discourse of the theologian is ultimately driven back to starting points or principles that are held to be true on the basis of faith, that is, the truths that are authoritatively conveyed by Revelation as revealed by God. Some believers reflect on these truths and see other truths implied by them, spell out their interrelations and defend them against the accusation of being nonsense. Theological discourse and inquiry look like any other and is, needless to say, governed by the common principles of thought and being; but it is characterized formally by the fact that its arguments and analyses are taken to be truth-bearing only for one who accepts Scriptural revelation as true. This provides a formal test for deciding whether a piece of discourse is philosophical or theological. If it relies only on truths anyone can be expected upon sufficient reflection to know about the world, and if it offers to lead to new truths on the basis of such truths, and only on that basis, then it is philosophical discourse. On the other hand, discourse whose cogencyâ€”not formal, but substantiveâ€”depends upon our accepting as true such claims as that there are three persons in one divine nature, that our salvation was effected by the sacrifice of Jesus, that Jesus is one person but two natures, one human, one divine, and the like, is theological discourse. Any appeal to an authoritative scriptural source as the necessary nexus in an argument is thereby other than philosophical discourse. More will be said of this contrast later, but this is the essential difference Thomas recognizes between philosophy and theology. To conclude, consider a passage in which Thomas summarizes his position. He is confronting an objection to there being any need for theological discourse. Whatever can be the object of inquiry will qualify as a being of one sort or another; but the philosophical disciplines seem to cover every kind of being, indeed there is even a part of it which Aristotle calls theology. So what need is there for discourse beyond philosophical discourse? The astronomer and the natural philosopher both conclude that the earth is round, but the astronomer does this through a mathematical middle that is abstracted from matter, whereas the natural philosopher considers a middle lodged in matter. Thus there is nothing to prevent another science from treating in the light of divine revelation what the philosophical disciplines treat as knowable in the light of human reason. The world is understood in that light. Philosophical discourse begins with knowledge of the world. If it speaks of God what it says is conditioned by what is known of the world. But even given the distinction between the two, Aquinas suggests here that there are in fact elements of what God has revealed that are formally speaking philosophical and subject to philosophical discussionâ€”though revealed they can be known and investigated without the precondition of faith. In other words, even something that is as a matter of fact revealed is subject to philosophical analysis, if religious faith is not necessary to know it and accept it as true. So it may happen that concerning certain subjects, as for example the nature of God, the nature of the human person, what is necessary for a human being to be good and to fulfill his or her destiny, and so on, there can be both a theological and a philosophical discussion of those subjects, providing for a fruitful engagement between the theological and the philosophical. Christian Philosophy It will be observed that the formal distinction between philosophical and theological discourse leaves untouched what has often been the mark of one who is at once a believer and a philosopher. It is not simply that he might on one occasion produce an argument that is philosophical and at another time one that is theological; his religious beliefs are clearly not put in escrow but

are very much in evidence when he functions as a philosopher. Many of the questions that can be raised philosophically are such that the believer already holds a position on the answers to them from his religious faith. How then can he be thought to be ready to follow the argument whither it listeth, as an objector might put it? Furthermore, the inquiries in which the believer who philosophizes engages will often indicate his religious interests. When such observations turn into objections, perhaps into the accusation that a believer cannot be a proper philosopher, there is often an unexamined notion of what a proper philosopher looks like. The proper philosopher may be thought to be someoneâ€”perhaps merely some mindâ€”without antecedents or history who first comes to consciousness posing a philosophical question the answer to which is pursued without prejudice. But of course no human being and thus no philosopher is pure reason, mind alone, without previous history as he embarks on the task of philosophizing. One has necessarily knocked about in the world for a long time before he signs up for Philosophy He has at hand or rattling around in his mind all kinds of ready responses to situations and questions. He very likely engaged in some kind of inquiry about whether or not to begin the formal study of philosophy in the first place. This may be acknowledged, but with the proviso that step one in the pursuit of philosophy is to rid the mind of all such antecedents. They must be put in the dock, put in brackets, placed in doubt, regarded with suspicion. Only after appropriate epistemological cleansing is the mind equipped to make its first warranted knowledge claim. Knowledge thus becomes a deliverance of philosophy, a product of philosophizing. Outside of philosophy there is no knowledge. The preceding paragraph has been meant to capture the salient note of much modern philosophy since Descartes. Philosophy is first of all a search for defensible knowledge claims, and for the method according to which it will be found. As opposed to what? As opposed to the view of philosophy described in paragraph 2, Thomas understands philosophizing to depend upon antecedent knowledge, to proceed from it, and to be unintelligible unless, in its sophisticated modes, it can be traced back to the common truths known to all. The pre-philosophicalâ€”I refer to the formal study of philosophyâ€”outlook of the believer will be characterizable in a given way, a way suggested above. It is more difficult to characterize the pre-philosophical attitudes and beliefs out of which the non-believer philosophizes. Let us imagine that he holds in a more or less unexamined way that all events, including thinking, are physical events. If as a philosopher he should happen take up the question of the immortality of the soul, he is going to regard with suspicion those classical proofs which rely on an analysis of thinking as a non-physical process. The Christian, on the other hand, will be well-disposed towards efforts to prove the immortality of the human soul and will accordingly approach descriptions of thinking as non-physical sympathetically. He is unlikely to view with equanimity any claim that for human beings death is the utter end. The importance of this is that a believer runs the risk of accepting bad proofs of the non-physical character of thinking and thus of the human soul. On the other hand, a committed physicalist may be too quick to accept a bad proof that thinking is just a physical process. He may be just as likely to run the risk of accepting bad proofs of the entirely physical character of thought as is the believer of the opposed claim. Such antecedent stances are often the reason why philosophical agreement is so hard to reach. Does it make it impossible? Do such considerations destroy any hope of philosophical objectivity on either side? Surely not in principle. Believers and non-believers should be able to agree on what counts as a good proof in a given area even if they expect different results from such a proof. Thinking either is or is not merely a physical process and antecedent expectations do not settle the question, however much they influence the pursuit of that objective resolution. But the important point is that antecedent dispositions and expectations are the common condition of philosophers, believers and unbelievers alike. Of course believers hold that they have an advantage here, since the antecedents that influence them are revealed truths, not just hearsay, received opinion, the zeitgeist, or prejudice. In addition they may be much more likely to be aware of and acknowledge those antecedents, insofar as they are explicitly held and inquired into.

Chapter 8 : Natural Sciences, in the Work of Theologians | www.nxgvision.com

3 This paper is organized around four different quests in the history and development of mathematics that could contribute to the science-religion discussion.

What are science and religion, and how do they interrelate? Science and religion is a recognized field of study with dedicated journals e. Journal of Religion and Science , academic chairs e. Most of its authors are either theologians e. The systematic study of science and religion started in the s, with authors such as Ian Barbour and Thomas F. Torrance who challenged the prevailing view that science and religion were either at war or indifferent to each other. Zygon, the first specialist journal on science and religion, was also founded in While the early study of science and religion focused on methodological issues, authors from the late s to the s developed contextual approaches, including detailed historical examinations of the relationship between science and religion e. Peter Harrison challenged the warfare model by arguing that Protestant theological conceptions of nature and humanity helped to give rise to science in the seventeenth century. Peter Bowler , drew attention to a broad movement of liberal Christians and evolutionists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who aimed to reconcile evolutionary theory with religious belief. It had contributors from philosophy and theology e. The aim of these conferences was to understand divine action in the light of contemporary sciences. Each of the five conferences, and each edited volume that arose from it, was devoted to an area of natural science and its interaction with religion, including quantum cosmology , Russell et al. See also Russell et al. The legal battles e. However, even if one were to focus on the reception of evolutionary theory, the relationship between religion and science is complex. For instance, in the United Kingdom, scientists, clergy, and popular writers, sought to reconcile science and religion during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, whereas the United States saw the rise of a fundamentalist opposition to evolutionary thinking, exemplified by the Scopes trial in Bowler , In recent decades, Church leaders have issued conciliatory public statements on evolutionary theory. Pope John Paul II affirmed evolutionary theory in his message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, but rejected it for the human soul, which he saw as the result of a separate, special creation. The Church of England publicly endorsed evolutionary theory e. Brown , including an apology to Charles Darwin for its initial rejection of his theory. For the past fifty years, science and religion has been de facto Western science and Christianityâ€”to what extent can Christian beliefs be brought in line with the results of western science? The field of science and religion has only recently turned to an examination of non-Christian traditions, such as Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, providing a richer picture of interaction. In order to understand the scope of science and religion and what interactions there are between them, we must at least get a rough sense of what science and religion are. Indeed, they are terms that were coined recently, with meanings that vary across times and cultures. Tylor , who systematically used the term for religions across the world. Philosophers of science have attempted to demarcate science from other knowledge-seeking endeavors, in particular religion. For instance, Karl Popper claimed that scientific hypotheses unlike religious ones are in principle falsifiable. They disagree, however, on how to precisely and across times and cultures demarcate the two domains. One way to distinguish between science and religion is the claim that science concerns the natural world, whereas religion concerns both the natural and the supernatural. Scientific explanations do not appeal to supernatural entities such as gods or angels fallen or not , or to non-natural forces like miracles, karma, or Qi. For example, neuroscientists typically explain our thoughts in terms of brain states, not by reference to an immaterial soul or spirit. Naturalists draw a distinction between methodological naturalism, an epistemological principle that limits scientific inquiry to natural entities and laws, and ontological or philosophical naturalism, a metaphysical principle that rejects the supernatural Forrest Since methodological naturalism is concerned with the practice of science in particular, with the kinds of entities and processes that are invoked , it does not make any statements about whether or not supernatural entities exist. They might exist, but lie outside of the scope of scientific investigation.

However, these stronger conclusions are controversial. The view that science can be demarcated from religion in its methodological naturalism is more commonly accepted. For instance, in the Kitzmiller versus Dover trial, the philosopher of science Robert Pennock was called to testify by the plaintiffs on whether Intelligent Design was a form of creationism, and therefore religion. Building on earlier work e. Still, overall there was a tendency to favor naturalistic explanations in natural philosophy. This preference for naturalistic causes may have been encouraged by past successes of naturalistic explanations, leading authors such as Paul Draper to argue that the success of methodological naturalism could be evidence for ontological naturalism. Explicit methodological naturalism arose in the nineteenth century with the X-club, a lobby group for the professionalization of science founded in by Thomas Huxley and friends, which aimed to promote a science that would be free from religious dogmas. The X-club may have been in part motivated by the desire to remove competition by amateur-clergymen scientists in the field of science, and thus to open up the field to full-time professionals Garwood For example, Kelly Clark argues that we can only sensibly inquire into the relationship between a widely accepted claim of science such as quantum mechanics or findings in neuroscience and a specific claim of a particular religion such as Islamic understandings of divine providence or Buddhist views of the no-self. For example, Mikael Stenmark distinguishes between three views: Subsequent authors, as well as Barbour himself, have refined and amended this taxonomy. For one thing, it focuses on the cognitive content of religions at the expense of other aspects, such as rituals and social structures. Moreover, there is no clear definition of what conflict means evidential or logical. Nevertheless, because of its enduring influence, it is still worthwhile to discuss this taxonomy in detail. The conflict model, which holds that science and religion are in perpetual and principal conflict, relies heavily on two historical narratives: The conflict model was developed and defended in the nineteenth century by the following two publications: Both authors argued that science and religion inevitably conflict as they essentially discuss the same domain. The vast majority of authors in the science and religion field is critical of the conflict model and believes it is based on a shallow and partisan reading of the historical record. Ironically, two views that otherwise have little in common, scientific materialism and extreme biblical literalism, both assume a conflict model: While the conflict model is at present a minority position, some have used philosophical argumentation e. Alvin Plantinga has argued that the conflict is not between science and religion, but between science and naturalism. The independence model holds that science and religion explore separate domains that ask distinct questions. The lack of conflict between science and religion arises from a lack of overlap between their respective domains of professional expertise. NOMA is both descriptive and normative: Gould held that there might be interactions at the borders of each magisterium, such as our responsibility toward other creatures. One obvious problem with the independence model is that if religion were barred from making any statement of fact it would be difficult to justify the claims of value and ethics, e. Moreover, religions do seem to make empirical claims, for example, that Jesus appeared after his death or that the early Hebrews passed through the parted waters of the Red Sea. The dialogue model proposes a mutualistic relationship between religion and science. Unlike independence, dialogue assumes that there is common ground between both fields, perhaps in their presuppositions, methods, and concepts. For example, the Christian doctrine of creation may have encouraged science by assuming that creation being the product of a designer is both intelligible and orderly, so one can expect there are laws that can be discovered. According to Barbour , both scientific and theological inquiry are theory-dependent or at least model-dependent, e. In dialogue, the fields remain separate but they talk to each other, using common methods, concepts, and presuppositions. Wentzel van Huyssteen has argued for a dialogue position, proposing that science and religion can be in a graceful duet, based on their epistemological overlaps. The integration model is more extensive in its unification of science and theology. Barbour identifies three forms of integration. The first is natural theology, which formulates arguments for the existence and attributes of God. It uses results of the natural sciences as premises in its arguments. For instance, the supposition that the universe has a temporal origin features in contemporary cosmological arguments for the existence of God, and the fact that the cosmological constants and laws of nature are

life-permitting whereas many other combinations of constants and laws would not permit life is used in contemporary fine-tuning arguments. The second, theology of nature, starts not from science but from a religious framework, and examines how this can enrich or even revise findings of the sciences. For example, McGrath developed a Christian theology of nature, examining how nature and scientific findings can be regarded through a Christian lens. While integration seems attractive especially to theologians , it is difficult to do justice to both the science and religion aspects of a given domain, especially given their complexities. For example, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin , who was both knowledgeable in paleoanthropology and theology, ended up with an unconventional view of evolution as teleological which brought him into trouble with the scientific establishment , and with an unorthodox theology with an unconventional interpretation of original sin that brought him into trouble with the Roman Catholic Church. Theological heterodoxy, by itself, is no reason to doubt a model, but it points to difficulties for the integration model in becoming successful in the broader community of theologians and philosophers. Moreover, integration seems skewed towards theism as Barbour described arguments based on scientific results that support but do not demonstrate theism, but failed to discuss arguments based on scientific results that support but do not demonstrate the denial of theism. Natural historians attempted to provide naturalistic explanations for human behavior and culture, for domains such as religion, emotions, and morality. People often assert supernatural explanations when they lack an understanding of the natural causes underlying extraordinary events: It traces the origins of polytheismâ€”which Hume thought was the earliest form of religious beliefâ€”to ignorance about natural causes combined with fear and apprehension about the environment. By deifying aspects of the environment, early humans tried to persuade or bribe the gods, thereby gaining a sense of control. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, authors from newly emerging scientific disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, and psychology, examined the purported naturalistic roots of religious belief. They did so with a broad brush, trying to explain what unifies diverse religious beliefs across cultures, rather than accounting for cultural variations. In anthropology, the idea that all cultures evolve and progress along the same lines cultural evolutionism was widespread. Cultures with differing religious views were explained as being in an early stage of development. For example, Tylor regarded animism, the belief that spirits animate the world, as the earliest form of religious belief. Comte proposed that all societies, in their attempts to make sense of the world, go through the same stages of development: The psychologist Sigmund Freud saw religious belief as an illusion, a childlike yearning for a fatherly figure. The full story Freud offers is quite bizarre: The sons felt guilty and started to idolize their murdered father. This, together with taboos on cannibalism and incest, generated the first religion. Authors such as Durkheim and Freud, together with social theorists such as Karl Marx and Max Weber, proposed versions of the secularization thesis, the view that religion would decline in the face of modern technology, science, and culture. Philosopher and psychologist William James was interested in the psychological roots and the phenomenology of religious experiences, which he believed were the ultimate source of institutional religions. From the s onward, the scientific study of religion became less concerned with grand unifying narratives, and focused more on particular religious traditions and beliefs. Their ethnographies indicated that cultural evolutionism was mistaken and that religious beliefs were more diverse than was previously assumed. They argued that religious beliefs were not the result of ignorance of naturalistic mechanisms; for instance, Evans-Pritchard noted that the Azande were well aware that houses could collapse because termites ate away at their foundations, but they still appealed to witchcraft to explain why a particular house had collapsed. More recently, Cristine Legare et al.

Chapter 9 : Science and Our Search for Truth - new-era

Truth. For so long it was the preserve of philosophers and theologians, but then came the Enlightenment, and science and rationalism stepped in. Today science's binary approach to seeking truth is well accepted: through observation and experimentation, we arrive at either-or, true-false.

For so long it was the preserve of philosophers and theologians, but then came the Enlightenment, and science and rationalism stepped in. But is truth a simple matter of true or false, black or white, this or that? Philosophers have long sought to understand and define truth. For most people today, however, truth is simply the opposite of falsehood. This idea is well entrenched in our societies, which commonly use true-or-false questions to test students all the way up to the university level. We have not arrived here by accident. The make-up of these estates varied from country to country and from time to time, but they represented layers of citizenry under the monarch, often expressed as clergy, nobility and common people. In the early 19th century some in Britain noted the rise of a fourth estate, namely the media; they began to see the newspapers of their time as a powerful additional force in shaping ideas and establishing truth. Knowledge increased, and by the early 20th century science had come to be viewed by some as a fifth estate. In fact, scientific methods and proofs have become much more rigorous over the past century and in the minds of many have fully replaced all earlier approaches, in particular philosophy and religion, as the way to truth. Exact results can be established, after all, by a process of repeated experimentation. It is also one of the largest. Society by its standards and approaches feeds this misconception. Our law courts claim to operate on the basis of truth, but they allow it to be shaped by the perceptions of the plaintiff, the defendant and the witnesses. The incidence of false convictions undermines such notions of truth. Even science may be based on the perceived reality of the scientist. Biologist and renowned atheist Richard Dawkins has made a name for himself by loudly proclaiming that reason is the only means by which truth can be established or knownâ€”that truth is what is discoverable by the human intellect, the product of our rational understanding and our increasing knowledge. Philosophers, of course, are unwilling to surrender their role in determining truth. Lord Martin Rees is an associate of the American Philosophical Society, but he is also past president of the Royal Society, the paragon of British scientific endeavor. He recently took issue with the claims of Stephen Hawking, another eminent British scientist who has found a means to dispense with God and thus in a sense joins ranks with Dawkins. In Discerning the Mystery: We feel comfortable with this, because it enables us to label and neatly organize everything around us in logical, black-and-white terms. Descartes is celebrated as the father of modern philosophical inquiry. English writer John Milton was contemporary with Descartes but not influenced by his approach. We know him best through his poetry, especially his epics Paradise Lost and Paradise Regainedâ€”not just poems but theological treatises. He viewed history as a narrative, a continuously evolving revelation of truth. First we might better ask yet again, What is truth? The subject features often in the Scriptures, whether Hebrew or Greek. Most people who profess Christianity view truth according to a statement by Jesus Christ Himself: Hence truth encompasses much more than we might comprehend in our use of the term today. It is a part of godly character, a quality that is to become a part of our character as well. That scriptural dimension is clearly absent both in current debates and in philosophical discourses of the past. Truth is neither solely empirical nor only the outcome of a philosophical discussion. Humanity has sought ultimate truth for millennia without success. Our only hope of finding it is through an appreciation of the character of God Almighty. A clear understanding is available to those who wish to understand: