

- [Start Here](#)
- [Member Resources](#)
- [Blog](#)
- [Common Room](#)
- [Contact](#)



- [Announcements](#)
- [Settings](#)
- [Logout](#)

[← Back to ToK Notes](#)



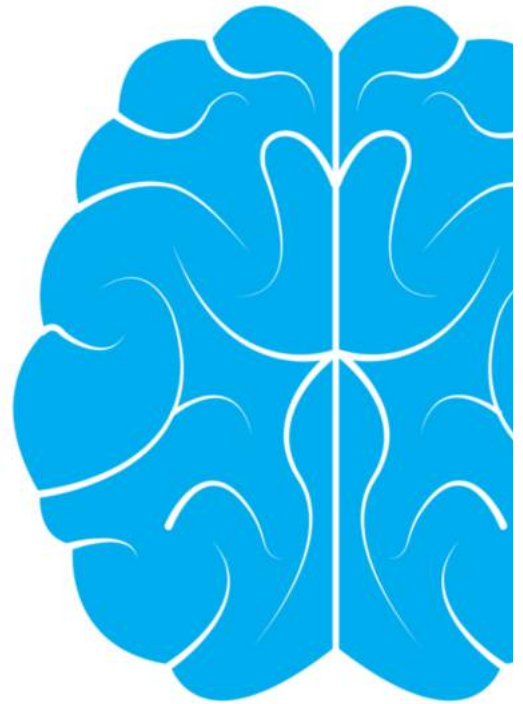
Faith Notes

Post 3/17

TOK NOTES

WOKs: Language, Sense Perception, Emotion,
Reason, Imagination, Faith, Intuition and
Memory

AOKs: Arts, Ethics, History, Human Sciences,
Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Mathematics,
Natural Sciences, and Religious Knowledge
Systems



ToK Notes

[Mark as Complete](#)

Faith Quotes

- "Faith consists in believing when it is beyond the power of reason to believe." (Voltaire)
- "Faith means believing the unbelievable." (Anonymous)
- "Some, indeed, demand to have the law proved, but this is because they lack education; for it shows lack of education not to know of what we should require proof, and of what we should not. For it is quite impossible that everything should have a proof; the process would go on to infinity, so there would be no proof..." (Aristotle, Metaphysics)
- "Faith is a passionate intuition." (William Wordsworth)
- "Faith is to believe what we do not see, and the reward of this faith is to see what we believe." (St Augustine)

Faith Definitions



- "Strong belief in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual conviction rather than proof." (Oxford)
- "Firm belief in something for which there is no proof." (Merriam Webster)

The insights of faith

- Faith is capable of **providing important insights to believers**. Some might not see this as a strength, but for believers faith can serve a purpose, helping the person to learn and grow.
- William James argued that some types of decisions could not be decided on intellectual grounds and that religious decisions were of this type. He argued that **faith is justified because it allows the evidence (the insights of faith) to come**. "Access to the evidence for whether or not certain beliefs are true depends crucially upon first adopting those beliefs without evidence" (The Will To Believe). If we accept this argument, then we also need to accept the idea that believers are getting access to insights that non-believers are not.
- Faith can provide considerable certainty in areas, such as **fundamental moral truths**, which other domains may not be able to.



The limits of faith

- The Christian Bible discusses faith as "... the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). This idea of faith serving as evidence can be risky, because not all beliefs are true. **If someone has a great deal of faith in something which is untrue, it could be very hard for them to realise this** because they would never be expected to justify their faith. Therefore, it can be difficult to know which things to believe, as the usual tests (i.e. critical thinking) cannot be applied. It is also normally considered socially inappropriate to criticize people's faith, which can further entrench wrong beliefs.
- Insights of faith **can work to exclude the insights of other aspects**. For example it can seem difficult to hold on to faith while also developing one's critical thinking skills or becoming an expert in a natural science.
- Richard Dawkins criticises faith quite, labelling it as "belief without evidence, a process of active non-thinking" (Dawkins). He sees faith as actually **degrading peoples' understanding** of the natural world because it allows anyone to make a claim about nature that is based solely on their personal thoughts (and possibly distorted perceptions). This approach lacks both testing against nature and peer review, so it can't provide reliable or consistent predictions (Dawkins).
- Even if faith doesn't promote violence, views based on faith can become so entrenched and **immutable** that **it can be very hard for people of faith to accept opposing beliefs**. And this can make it hard to people of faith to learn from each others' insights and it can lead to conflict. As Sam Harris puts it, "We have a choice. We have two options as human beings. We have a choice between conversation and war. That's it. Conversation and violence. And faith is a conversation stopper."



Sources

- Dawkins, Richard. Is Science a Religion? Skeptical Science.com <http://www.skeptical-science.com/essays/science-religion-richard-dawkins/>
- Oxford. Faith Definition. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/faith>
- Merriam Webster. Definition of Faith. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/faith>
- The Will to Believe. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Will_to_Believe

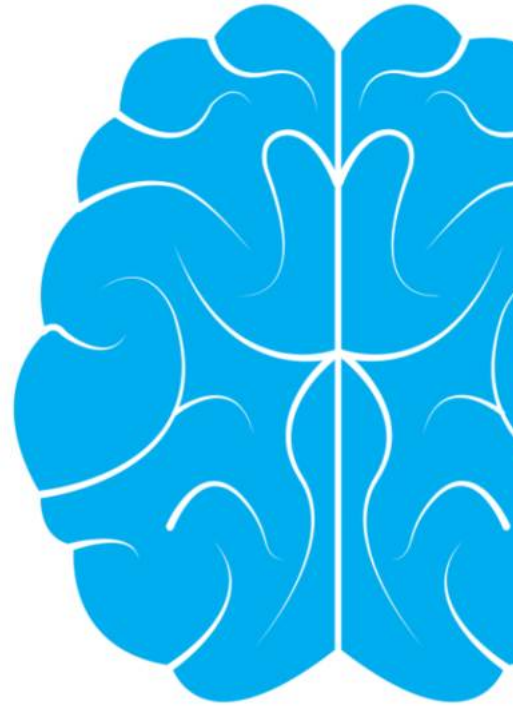
Say something interesting...

Add Comment

0 Comments

TOK NOTES

Imagination



Coming Up

Imagination Notes

[Previous](#) [Next](#)



Tim Woods

ToK Teacher



[Terms](#) | [Privacy](#).

© 2016 IBMastery

