

A holistic context for understanding the categories of religion and state

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Our view of knowledge

Total length (includes approaches)	389 metres (1,276 ft)
Length of main arch span (pier to pier)	161.8 metres (531 ft)
Rise of arch (above pins)	55 metres (180 ft)
Clear height (above high water level)	26 metres (85 ft)
Total height (above high water level)	59 metres (194 ft)
Width (bridge)	17.08 metres (56.0 ft)
Width (approaches)	24 metres (79 ft)
Total weight of steelwork (arch only)	3,556 tonnes
Total weight of steelwork (including approaches)	7,112 tonnes
Total number of rivets (including approaches)	777,124



Did I tell you anything about the Tyne Bridge or what it *means*?

The Epistemological grid v1

- Evidence based judgements
- The empirical as intrinsically more valuable
- Reason as the supreme arbiter of all things
- The analytic mode
- Works well for “hard sciences” (Physics, Chemistry)
- Unparalleled prevalence within the 19th and 20th century
- Reached its intellectual zenith with logical positivism
- Popularised in “new atheism” (scientism)

The Epistemological grid v2

- There is a whole class of propositions that empirical data is of no significance but they are still meaningful (Wittgenstein)
- To distance discussion of religion and state from theology reifies it of most of its content
- Soft sciences interpret data
- Data itself is just information, it acquires meaning as it is interpreted

Separating church and state, religion and politics 1

Kant – philosopher of the Enlightenment

- Pietism emphasised personal religious experience rather than dogma
- Kant's parents were pietists
- He had a pietist education
- Reason was to judge all things
- Kingdom of God and civil polity were bound together in by a commonwealth of ethical principles (the 'pure laws of virtue', 'the Good Principle')
- Dump the latter, assert the former as arbiter of all truth

Separating church and state, religion and politics 2

The intellectual descent

- Empiricism
- Atheism
- Naturalism – the putative heirs of positivism
- Fundamentalism
- Premillennial dispensationalism
- Dump Kant's foundation but keep reason as the arbiter of all things
- Tolerate the church on the fringes of society

Rediscovering religion and state 1

- The papal superstate
- John Wycliffe – a sovereign has authority over the clergy within his realm
- Moses separated his executive authority from the priestly authority
- Moses established civil government where leaders were chosen by the people, for the people
- The priestly role included education, primary healthcare, building inspection, arbitration in civil disputes involving moral issues
- The physical world was of equal importance to the priest as the spiritual
- Luther and Calvin believed in vocations, reforming society has a whole
- The State was to deliver justice and to facilitate at a national level in crisis

Rediscovering religion and state 2

- Religion and state were separate but not independent
- The state could censure the religious leaders when they failed in their duties to the people
- The religious leaders ensured the state remained just
- State and church, religion and politics are expressions of the divine creation mandate to subdue and rule the Earth – to create culture

The presumption of atheism

- Autophagic capitalism
- The rotting offal of modernity

