

LIfe After Death: John Hick - Replica Theory

# Starter Tasks.

*“ I saw the double of my dear departed husband walking in the park the other day”.*

What explanations might there be for the event described in this statement?

Hick’s Replica Theory.

Hick is a materialist, he believes the body and soul are one and at death both the body and soul die. However in certain circumstances he argues that it would be possible that the dead could exist after death as themselves if an exact replica of them were to appear. This replica could be identified as the same person who had died and therefore, according to Hick, is the same person. Hick argues that God is all-powerful therefore it is no problem for God to create a replica body of the dead person. This replica will be complete with all the characteristics and memories of the dead person and is therefore the same person. Hick believes that although death destroys us, God recreates us in another place;

… as a resurrection replica in a different world altogether, a resurrection world inhabited only by resurrected persons. This world occupies its own space distant from that which we a re now familiar. That is to say, an object in the resurrection world is not situated at any distance or in any direction from the objects in our present world, although each object in either world is spatially related to every other object in the same world.

John Hick, Philosophy of Religion, 1990.

Criticisms of Hick’s Theory.

Some philosophers have criticised Hick’s replica theory as they argue that a replica is not the original and therefore the individual has not survived death. In the same way as an art expert would not be prepared to pay millions for a replica of the Mona Lisa because it is not an original.

Another criticism is that Hick is relying on the existence of God to create the replica and as the existence of God is not accepted by all philosophers as proven, then the replica theory is also disproven.

# Explain....

1. Would it be of any consolation to a dying person to know that an exact replica of themselves were to appear somewhere else, the instant they died? Explain your answer.
2. What criteria could be used to show the individuality of identical twins?
3. Note down a summary of Hick’s theory (in bullet point or diagram form if you wish).
4. What is your opinion of Hick’s theory? Explain your answer.
5. How have other philosophers criticised the replica theory?



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Video Questions.

1. What is Hick’s Replica Theory concerned with?
2. What did Hick say about body and soul?
3. What is this belief called?
4. What does Hick think happens to the soul when the body dies?
5. What does this mean for the person?
6. If Hick’s ideas about body and soul are correct (in questions 4 & 5) how can there be an afterlife?
7. Why do some people disagree with Hick’s theory?
8. What was Hick’s response to these criticisms?
9. How does Hick explain this further?
10. Apply Hick’s analogy to life after death.



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Video Questions.

1. What is Hick’s Replica Theory concerned with?

What happens to our bodies and souls in the afterlife.

1. What did Hick say about body and soul?

Body and soul are inseparable.

1. What is this belief called?

Materialism.

1. What does Hick think happens to the soul when the body dies?

The soul dies

1. What does this mean for the person?

The person no longer exists.

1. If Hick’s ideas about body and soul are correct (in questions 4 & 5) how can there be an afterlife?

God creates an exact replica of you in a new world, therefore it is the same person.

1. Why do some people disagree with Hick’s theory?

They say a replica is not the original therefore the person has not survived death so cannot go onto an afterlife.

1. What was Hick’s response to these criticisms?

He said the replica is the exact same person with the same thoughts, ideas etc.

1. How does Hick explain this further?

A man called John disappears from America whilst with his friends. He turns up in India with the same memories, and exactly the same physical characteristics, therefore there is no reason to think the John in India is not the same as the John that disappeared from America.

1. Apply Hick’s analogy to life after death.

John dies and God creates a replica of John in a new world. Therefore, as in the analogy, there is no reason to believe John is not the same person.