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Questions

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- 1. What does the notion of 'theological knowledge vs practical knowledge' refer to in the debate on omniscience?**
 - A. God's inability to know human experience**
 - B. The distinction between cognitive and experiential knowledge**
 - C. God's focus on philosophical truths**
 - D. The separation of theory from practice in divinity**

- 2. How does Donovan contribute to the discussion of religious language?**
 - A. By arguing that religious language is entirely propositional**
 - B. By outlining ways religious language can possess meaning beyond assertions**
 - C. By rejecting the validity of all religious claims**
 - D. By reaffirming the cognitive aspects of religious statements**

- 3. What concept did René Descartes famously coin?**
 - A. I think therefore I am**
 - B. Existence precedes essence**
 - C. Knowledge is power**
 - D. The unexamined life is not worth living**

- 4. According to Swinburne, how should personal testimonies of religious experiences be regarded?**
 - A. They should be dismissed as unreliable**
 - B. They should be accepted as credible**
 - C. They are only valid if supported by evidence**
 - D. They must align with religious texts**

- 5. What is one strength of the via negativa approach to religious language?**
 - A. It simplifies the description of God**
 - B. It allows for anthropomorphic understanding of God**
 - C. It respects the ineffable nature of God**
 - D. It encourages a literal understanding of God**

- 6. How does Plantinga respond to Gaunilo's example of the perfect island?**
- A. Islands lack intrinsic maximums unlike God**
 - B. Islands are a poor analogy for divine perfection**
 - C. Only a fool believes in the existence of islands**
 - D. Perfection cannot be applied across different categories**
- 7. Which argument for the existence of the soul suggests we know universals that are unaffected by physical changes?**
- A. Linguistic argument**
 - B. Knowledge argument**
 - C. Argument from recollection**
 - D. Cycle of opposites**
- 8. How does Aquinas describe God's role in justice?**
- A. He only judges through love**
 - B. He performs good actions and establishes distributive justice**
 - C. He removes evil from his creation entirely**
 - D. He rewards only the righteous**
- 9. What aspect of God does the Catholic Church assert through the attribute of divine impeccability?**
- A. God is always changing**
 - B. God is historically flawed**
 - C. God cannot sin**
 - D. God possesses human-like traits**
- 10. Which of the following is NOT one of the four criteria of religious experiences according to William James?**
- A. Ineffable**
 - B. Metaphysical**
 - C. Noetic**
 - D. Transient**

Answers

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1. B
2. B
3. A
4. B
5. C
6. A
7. B
8. B
9. C
10. B

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Explanations

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1. What does the notion of 'theological knowledge vs practical knowledge' refer to in the debate on omniscience?

- A. God's inability to know human experience**
- B. The distinction between cognitive and experiential knowledge**
- C. God's focus on philosophical truths**
- D. The separation of theory from practice in divinity**

The notion of 'theological knowledge vs practical knowledge' in the context of the debate on omniscience refers to the distinction between cognitive and experiential knowledge. This distinction is important in understanding how God's omniscience is conceptualized. Cognitive knowledge denotes an understanding of facts, concepts, or theoretical truths—essentially, knowledge that can be articulated and reasoned about. In theological discussions, this reflects God's comprehensive knowledge of all truths, including abstract concepts and the ultimate truths about existence. On the other hand, practical knowledge encompasses the knowledge gained through experience and practice, often related to how one behaves or interacts in the world. This form of knowledge can imply a deeper understanding of situations through lived experiences and the application of knowledge in real-life scenarios. The debate surrounding omniscience often tackles whether God's knowledge is purely cognitive, encompassing all facts and truths, or if it includes a form of experiential knowledge gained through human experiences. Thus, recognizing the difference between these two types of knowledge helps clarify discussions about how and what God knows about the human condition and the world. The other options do not accurately capture this distinction. Some suggest limited aspects of God's knowledge or focus, but they do not adequately explain the rich interplay between cognitive and experiential knowledge as it pertains to

2. How does Donovan contribute to the discussion of religious language?

- A. By arguing that religious language is entirely propositional**
- B. By outlining ways religious language can possess meaning beyond assertions**
- C. By rejecting the validity of all religious claims**
- D. By reaffirming the cognitive aspects of religious statements**

Donovan's contribution to the discussion of religious language emphasizes that such language can convey meaning that transcends mere assertions or factual statements. He explores the multi-dimensional aspect of religious expressions, suggesting that they may encapsulate a range of significances—such as emotional, metaphorical, or experiential dimensions—beyond their literal interpretations. This approach recognizes that religious language often serves expressive purposes, allowing individuals to articulate their beliefs, values, and experiences in a way that may not be strictly propositional but is nonetheless meaningful in a broader sense. This perspective invites a deeper understanding of how individuals use religious language to engage with their spirituality and the complexities of human experience. Other positions, like asserting that religious language is entirely propositional, limiting it to cognitive claims, or outright rejecting the validity of religious claims, do not capture the richness and depth of meaning that Donovan identifies within religious discourse.

3. What concept did René Descartes famously coin?

- A. I think therefore I am**
- B. Existence precedes essence**
- C. Knowledge is power**
- D. The unexamined life is not worth living**

René Descartes coined the phrase "I think therefore I am" (in Latin, "Cogito, ergo sum") as a fundamental element of his philosophy. This statement encapsulates Descartes' exploration of existence, consciousness, and self-awareness. Its significance lies in the assertion that the very act of thinking is proof of one's own existence. In the context of Descartes' method of radical doubt, he sought to find an indubitable foundation for knowledge. By doubting everything that could be doubted, he found one certainty: the existence of his own consciousness as a thinking being. This idea was pivotal in laying the groundwork for modern philosophy, especially concerning subjects of knowledge, identity, and existence. The other concepts, while significant in philosophical discourse, do not originate from Descartes. "Existence precedes essence" is associated with existentialist philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre, "Knowledge is power" is attributed to Francis Bacon, and "The unexamined life is not worth living" comes from Socrates as recorded by Plato.

4. According to Swinburne, how should personal testimonies of religious experiences be regarded?

- A. They should be dismissed as unreliable**
- B. They should be accepted as credible**
- C. They are only valid if supported by evidence**
- D. They must align with religious texts**

Swinburne argues that personal testimonies of religious experiences should be accepted as credible due to the intrinsic nature of the experiences themselves. He believes that individuals can gain direct knowledge of God through these experiences, which holds value that goes beyond mere subjective feelings. This perspective is grounded in the principle that people generally have no reason to lie about their genuine experiences, and such testimonies can provide a valid basis for belief in God. Moreover, Swinburne employs the principle of credulity, which posits that if it seems to someone that they are experiencing something, in the absence of strong evidence to the contrary, it is reasonable to accept that their experience reflects reality. This principle allows for personal accounts of religious experiences to be given serious weight, contributing to the overall discourse on the existence of the divine. In this view, the credibility of personal testimonies is not contingent upon external validations or alignment with religious texts but rather on the honesty and sincerity of the individual's experience. By asserting that these accounts deserve acceptance, Swinburne highlights the importance of subjective experience in the realm of religious belief.

5. What is one strength of the via negativa approach to religious language?

- A. It simplifies the description of God**
- B. It allows for anthropomorphic understanding of God**
- C. It respects the ineffable nature of God**
- D. It encourages a literal understanding of God**

One strength of the via negativa approach to religious language is that it respects the ineffable nature of God. This approach posits that God transcends human comprehension and language, making it more appropriate to describe God in terms of what can be said He is not, rather than what can be positively asserted about His nature. By emphasizing negations, such as stating that God is not limited, not imperfect, or not contingent, the via negativa acknowledges that any positive description may fall short of capturing the divine essence. This is significant because it encourages believers to maintain a sense of humility regarding their understanding of God, recognizing that the divine reality is ultimately beyond human articulation and experience. This method fosters a deeper reverence and mystery surrounding the divine, aligning with many theological traditions that emphasize God's transcendence.

6. How does Plantinga respond to Gaunilo's example of the perfect island?

- A. Islands lack intrinsic maximums unlike God**
- B. Islands are a poor analogy for divine perfection**
- C. Only a fool believes in the existence of islands**
- D. Perfection cannot be applied across different categories**

Alvin Plantinga responds to Gaunilo's famous example of the perfect island primarily by arguing that islands do not possess the same kind of intrinsic maximums as God does. In Gaunilo's argument, he claims that one could conceive of a perfect island in the same way that Anselm conceived of a perfect God, thus suggesting that the reasoning used to demonstrate God's existence could also be used to demonstrate the existence of such an island. Plantinga counters this by explaining that the nature of God is fundamentally different from that of any created entity, including islands. God, as defined in classical theism, is a necessary being, meaning that His existence is not contingent on anything else. He embodies maximal greatness and perfection in a unique manner that does not apply to islands or other contingent beings. While one can imagine an island, it lacks the necessary qualities that are intrinsic to the concept of God, such as omnipotence, omniscience, and moral perfection. Therefore, the distinction between the nature of divine perfection and the qualities of temporal, contingent entities like islands is central to Plantinga's response, validating the idea that one cannot simply substitute islands for God in the ontological argument.

7. Which argument for the existence of the soul suggests we know universals that are unaffected by physical changes?

A. Linguistic argument

B. Knowledge argument

C. Argument from recollection

D. Cycle of opposites

The knowledge argument is grounded in the idea of universals and plays a significant role in discussions about the nature of the soul, particularly in the context of Plato's philosophy. This argument posits that humans have knowledge of abstract concepts, such as justice or beauty, which remain consistent and unchanged regardless of the physical state of the world or our individual experiences. This suggests that if we can comprehend these unchanging truths, they must exist in a realm that is distinct from the physical, indicating the presence of the soul. This line of reasoning posits that the ability to grasp such universals is evidence for a non-physical essence within us, thereby aligning with the notion that the soul exists independently of material changes in the body or the environment. Such a perspective reinforces the argument for the soul's existence as an immaterial entity that possesses knowledge that is not contingent on the physical realm.

8. How does Aquinas describe God's role in justice?

A. He only judges through love

B. He performs good actions and establishes distributive justice

C. He removes evil from his creation entirely

D. He rewards only the righteous

Aquinas describes God's role in justice primarily through the concept of distributive justice, which refers to the allocation of goods and responsibilities in society. He argues that God, as the ultimate source of justice, performs good actions and establishes what is fair and right within creation. This understanding encompasses God's role in ensuring that individuals receive their due based on their actions, which aligns with Aquinas' views on moral order and the common good. The choice indicating that God "only judges through love" simplifies and limits the understanding of divine justice. While God's love is an essential attribute, Aquinas asserts that justice involves more than love; it includes rightful judgment based on moral law. The statement that God "removes evil from his creation entirely" does not reflect Aquinas' view that while evil exists, God's justice aims to bring about good and order within the framework of a fallen world. Lastly, the assertion that God "rewards only the righteous" overlooks the broader implications of divine justice that Aquinas discusses. Justice, as Aquinas interprets it, involves a balance of love and moral rectitude, not merely a reward system for the righteous. Thus, the notion that God performs good actions and establishes distributive justice accurately captures Aquinas' comprehensive

9. What aspect of God does the Catholic Church assert through the attribute of divine impeccability?

- A. God is always changing**
- B. God is historically flawed**
- C. God cannot sin**
- D. God possesses human-like traits**

The attribute of divine impeccability refers to the belief that God is incapable of sinning. This concept is essential in Catholic theology, as it supports the understanding of God's nature as wholly good, perfect, and free from any moral imperfection or wrongdoing. The affirmation that God cannot sin emphasizes His absolute purity and moral authority, distinguishing Him from humanity, which is fallible and prone to sin. The idea of divine impeccability aligns with other attributes of God, such as His omniscience and omnipotence, reinforcing the belief that God's will is inherently good and cannot lead to evil. In this view, God's flawless moral character is foundational when considering His relationship with humanity and the moral order of the universe. Other options suggest attributes or characteristics that do not align with these theological views, emphasizing change, flaw, or human-like traits, which are contrary to the traditional understanding of God's perfection and immutability in Catholic doctrine.

10. Which of the following is NOT one of the four criteria of religious experiences according to William James?

- A. Ineffable**
- B. Metaphysical**
- C. Noetic**
- D. Transient**

William James outlined four criteria of religious experiences in his work "The Varieties of Religious Experience." These criteria are ineffable, noetic, transient, and passive. Understanding each term helps clarify why 'metaphysical' is not one of the criteria. 'Ineffable' refers to the idea that religious experiences often cannot be adequately expressed in words; they transcend ordinary language. 'Noetic' indicates that such experiences provide a kind of knowledge or insight that is unique and significant. 'Transient' highlights that these experiences are often temporary, lasting for only a short time but leaving a lasting impact on the individual's life. Lastly, 'passive' suggests that individuals do not actively create their religious experiences; rather, they are often seen as being influenced by a higher power or reality. The term 'metaphysical,' while related to discussions of reality and existence, is not one of the criteria James identified. Instead, it is a broader philosophical category related to the nature of reality and being, without the specific dimensions James emphasized regarding the nature of religious experiences. Thus, identifying 'metaphysical' as not one of the four criteria aligns with an accurate understanding of James's framework around the nature of religious experiences.