

My Revision Notes: AQA AS Religious Studies: Religion and Ethics and Philosophy of Religion

AS Unit C Philosophy of Religion: Now test yourself answers

3.1 The cosmological argument

1. The unmoved mover does not itself change but it changes other objects so they acquire new forms.
2. It is an inductive argument. The premises of the cosmological argument do not demand the conclusion that God exists. It is an argument that leads to degrees of probability but not certainty.
3. Contingency implies dependency and therefore requires something non-contingent to account for its occurrence. A necessary being is the only explanation.
4. Infinite regress is to deny any final explanation. Aquinas argued that there was a final explanation, and that explanation is God.
5. Key concepts are movement, cause and effect, contingency, infinite regress, necessary existence.
6. God is uncaused. He is not another in a series of movers. God is of a totally different order and not subject to the same conditions as the Universe.
7. Unmoved mover, uncaused causer, necessary being, temporal first cause, ontological first cause, sustainer.
8. '*In fieri*' implies a temporal first cause. This means that God, having begun the process, could now cease as it does not depend on him to complete it. *In esse*' has the idea of sustainer and therefore everything continues to depend on God.
9. Fallacy of composition is the fallacy that what is true of the parts is true of the whole. It is claimed that supporters of the cosmological argue that because an event in the Universe has a cause, the Universe must have a cause.
10. Hume challenged the cosmological approach by saying its conclusions go beyond the available evidence; we could not have knowledge about concepts such as cause and necessary beings as they were not open to the empirical approach.
11. The Big Bang theory suggests the Universe had a starting point. This can be challenged by questioning the evidence for the Big Bang theory or arguing that matter could exist necessarily.
13. Possible answers might include: the Cosmological argument is flawed; it draws conclusions that go beyond the evidence; proof would leave no room for faith.

3.2 Religious experience

1. For example: Angels of Mons: group/angel; Virgin Mary at Lourdes: individual/religious figure
2. Sudden (though could be argued it was gradual as Paul is mentioned at death of Stephen); direct experience; volitional (though could be argued it was self-surrendering as his persecution of Christians may be indication of his inner conflicts); passive (happened unexpectedly); transforming (Paul later died for being a Christian).
3. Augustine's conversion was from no religion to a faith. John Wesley's conversion was from a believing faith to a trusting faith.
4. Nature, monistic, theistic, extrovertive, introvertive.
5. Ineffability, noetic quality, transiency, passivity.
6. Beliefs that are not derived from any other beliefs. They are self-justifying.
7. It is reasonable to believe that the world is probably as we experience it to be, unless there are special reasons for thinking the experience is false.
8. The cumulative argument holds that it is more probable than not that God exists, the balance lies with the sceptic to prove their case as the evidence for religious experiences would appear more likely to be true than delusive
9. Most religious experiences are subjective since they happen in the mind of the individual person rather than events that can be witnessed by others. However, some religious experiences are claimed to be objective events such as group happenings e.g. the angel of Mons.
10. As religious experiences are claimed to be experiences caused by God, it would be expected that the experiences would show some uniformity, since they all have the same origin.
11. Persinger's helmet indicates that religious experiences can be caused by stimulating the temporal lobes. This provides a natural explanation for religious experiences without recourse to a God.

3.3 Psychology and religion

1. The inherited memory of the guilt of the killing of the father.
2. The frustration, guilt and anguish of a son seeing his father as a rival to his mother's attentions and affections and his desire to replace the father. These feelings are repressed and hidden in the subconscious and eventually given release through neurotic symptoms.
3. This is the analogous stage for girls to the Oedipus complex, in which girls feel desire for their fathers and jealousy of their mothers.
4. Some think that there was a much greater variety of structure within the earliest groups and tribes; there is no evidence that the primal horde crime ever occurred; there is no evidence that guilt can be transmitted in the way that Freud argues.
5. (a) e.g. obedience to religious teaching that seeks to limit war and violence.
(b) e.g. fear of death overcome by the promise of life after death.
6. A symbolic form which all people share in their collective unconscious. The archetypes give rise to images in the conscious mind.
7. (a) the shadow
(b) the Self
8. It is through religious images that the personality achieves its goal of integration.
9. Primal horde theory; Oedipus complex; wish fulfilment.
10. An inner psychological experience (not an external being).
11. Atheism can also be psychologically explained.
12. To support the statement: Jung saw God as a deep inner reality. To experience the archetype of the Self was seen as a religious experience. To challenge the statement: Religious believers could argue that the experience which stems from the mind and is in no way external to the subject cannot be termed religious.
13. (a) Religious believers are likely to be optimistic and benefit from the certainty of their beliefs.
(b) Believers may be dogmatic, prejudiced and have strong guilt feelings.

3.4 Atheism and postmodernism

1. (a) The objection to moral absolutes challenges the need for a source of authority. Morality was no longer seen to require God and so a reason for believing in God collapsed.
(b) Different religions say different and incompatible things about the nature of ultimate reality and the mode of divine activity, and about the nature and destiny of the human race. Which religion you follow largely depends on where you are born. It has little to do with truth.
2. God is now replaced by science and philosophy. God is redundant and no longer a source of received wisdom.
3. (a) Positive atheism is the claim that no God or gods exist. Negative atheism does not claim this but refers to a lack of positive belief.
(b) Negative atheism is a lack of positive belief in God or gods with a possibility of coming to a belief. Agnosticism argues that the existence of God or any ultimate reality is, in principle, unknowable.
4. One possible response: the Cosmological and Design arguments for the existence of God appeal to empirical evidence to argue for a creator and designer. Second possible response: there are limits to empirical evidence. Sense experience cannot account for all human beliefs.
5. A theodicy provides possible justifications for God allowing even suffering. An example is that the presence of evil helps people to grow and develop.
6. Religion reflects the way society expects people to behave. Our concepts and the way we categorise and see the world are formed and influenced by the particular culture or society we live in.
7. There is a growth of religions worldwide. Growth in spirituality and postmodern living-faith and a lack of certainty in science.
8. Supporting atheism: religions contradict themselves. Supporting religion: God reveals himself to all peoples in different ways to suit their culture and understanding.