

Final Oral Examination: Develop and reflect on the theses or answer the questions (if applicable), drawing from the readings.

1. Discuss Lauer's conception of authentic faith. According to him, how can a believer's encounter with **non-believers** and **anti-believers** lead to more authentic belief? How can a believer's reflection on his own **inauthentic belief** lead to more authentic belief?
2. Sartre's rejection of God is grounded in the view that existence precedes essence. The experiences of anguish, forlornness, and despair all stem from the existentialist's acceptance of her deep and radical responsibility for her own life and for all of humanity. The radicality of this responsibility is evident in the way that Sartre conceives of values and the "good." For Sartre, the existentialist finds authentic fullness in her freedom.
3. Marcel distinguishes genuine faith from opinion and conviction. Faith is an act of trust. As faith is purified, the believer grows in her capacity to pray, "*Fiat voluntas tua.*"
4. For Marcel, to hope is to be victorious against the temptation to capitulate to darkness. It is, however, different from both optimism and stoicism. To hope is a response of positive non-acceptance to a situation of captivity in which I find myself.
5. In contrast to the cyclical nature of despair, hope ceases to be fixated on a specific outcome, gradually moving from egoism to greater communion. This movement is a rejection of empiricism, and is characterized by an openness to creativity and time.
6. For Marcel, hope is expressed most fully in the appeal, "I hope in Thee for us." This deepest form of hope is a movement of greater love that transcends all conditions, even the threat of the solitude of death. In this sense, to hope is to trust in an infinite Being who is the grounds of all communion. The religious experience, then, can be understood as an experience of hope.
7. Discuss Thomas' Aquinas arguments for God's existence in way that clearly demonstrates the logic of the arguments [*I will pick 2 of 5 for you to narrate*]. In his arguments for God's existence, Aquinas demonstrates his confidence in the capacity of human reason to arrive at or explain some knowledge, albeit imperfect, of God. Tillich also accepts the necessity of human conceptualizations of God, but he instead emphasizes its limits, thus arriving at the conclusion that religious language is necessarily symbolic.
8. For Tillich, God is both symbolic and non-symbolic. For Tillich, maintaining the symbolic nature of mythical and ritual language prevents faith from degenerating into either superstition or a system of mere social demands. Tillich further argues that because it can only be expressed symbolically, faith is made real only within a community of a language of faith where mythical and ritual language are interdependent.