

Examiners' Report
June 2015

GCE Religious Studies 6RS02 1B

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Introduction

The 2015 examination season was another very successful season for candidates who presented inspirational studies in the Investigations Paper. The quality of candidates' work is a testimony to the high level of engagement with selected studies drawn from a very wide range of academic fields. The high standard of work evidenced in June 2015 was no exception to historical high standards as candidates demonstrated a very high level of independent enquiry which clearly demonstrated what their chosen area of investigation had meant to them as a learning experience. Candidates showcased their knowledge of a particular academic field in the way they identified a line of enquiry, clearly expressed their view, analysed key concepts and deployed evidence with coherent understanding of their task whilst fluently evaluating a wide range of source material that they had at their disposal. The enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, the chosen topic was clearly conveyed in many answers that were truly academic in their approach. A few centres continue to focus on the same or similar topics for all their candidates, whereas other centres permitted considerable choice for individual candidates. Candidates were mostly very well prepared for the examination and it was evident that centres used their specialist resources and interests to encourage candidates to research in depth a particular area of study. It is important to stress again that the 'Investigations' unit has a definite academic purpose. The aim is to involve students as active participants pursuing open-ended enquiries with an emphasis on independent learning. Questions were designed to be inclusive of all possible approaches to various topics and all valid answers were considered. At this stage in the life of the specification it is difficult to find new things to report because, in the main, centres possess a very high degree of expertise and this is clearly evidenced in the work that is produced on the day of the examination.

There are still a few areas for development that are reported similarly each year and once again 2015 showed evidence of a small minority of centres that need to take this on board. Centres are encouraged to review their performance in 2015 against all or some of the following points:

- Whilst most centres had entered their candidates for the correct option there were still a few entries for particular Areas of Study where consideration regarding entry for a different Area of Study may have been beneficial to the candidate. It is important to ensure candidates know which area of their investigation is the best fit for the question they answer on the paper.
- There was evidence of candidates choosing a different question on the paper to the question they had clearly prepared for before the examination. In some of these cases the candidate was using material suitable for Question 1 to answer Question 3 (or vice versa) and not really grappling fully with the demands of the question. This practice does not always work to the best effect as the candidate might end up answering neither question as fully as possible. It must be noted that each question was written for ONE of three topics within each particular Area of Study. Whilst it is good to note that less candidates than 2014 attempted this approach there were still some candidates in this session who answered a question they had not prepared for and may need to be reminded which question their material is best directed at and be advised to answer that question.
- Centres should ensure that candidates are entered for the option that matches their Area of Study and that candidates are clear about which question they have been prepared for on the paper. There is still evidence of centres studying Paper 1B and 1F being entered for 1A. This might be an oversight regarding filling out the form - centres must choose 6RS02 and then identify which of the seven papers from 1A to 1G is the specific entry.

- Variation in achievement was related to the two assessment objectives. These objectives should receive prominent attention in the process of the investigation. Importantly there must be explicit attention to both objectives in the examination answer and also to the question that is intended to focus the answer. Each question consistently referred to the assessment objectives with the trigger word 'Examine' for AO1 and 'Comment on' for AO2. These dictated the structure of the question and helped candidates to plan their answers. It would be advisable for candidates to pay regular attention to the level descriptors for these assessment objectives as a way of monitoring their development and progress during their investigations. The phrase 'with reference to the topic you have investigated' will always appear in the question to ensure that the generic question can be answered with material from any appropriate investigation. The mark scheme itself is generic to all questions but the answer itself is not necessarily generic as candidates are expected to use their material to answer the question. The purpose of the question is to challenge candidates to adapt their material so that at the highest levels they may demonstrate a coherent understanding of the task based on the selection of their material. Widely deployed evidence/arguments/sources were evident in well structured responses to the task whereby a clearly expressed viewpoint was supported by well-deployed evidence and reasoned argument. There was skilful deployment of religious language in many answers and the fluency of good essays showed command over the material; such command makes for high outcomes and rewards the amount of hard work done by the candidate. Many candidates had clearly learned much in the process and their overall grasp of the issues involved and command over their material was highly commendable.
- Candidates at the lower end of achievement struggled with the demands of the question. In preparation for this examination some candidates may find it useful to write up their investigation under exam timed conditions to a variety of different possible questions. They might build up a number of different essay plans to different possible questions. The important point in these activities is to enable candidates to develop their management of material such as how to best structure their content to answer the specific question. However, success can be undermined by writing up a rote-learned answer which was not adapted to the question set or by answering a question that has been written for a topic they have not studied. In 2015 there was still far too much evidence of rote learned answers using the same structure and material inclusive of quotes; whilst much information was relevant to the topic and consequently was awarded in terms of AO1, there was a significant lack of engagement with the specific demands of the question and consequently marks for AO2 were low, with only generic evaluation provided. This approach is contrasted with another form where candidates were trained to answer the question; arguably, this is evidence of good practice but at the lower end some candidates thought it was sufficient to simply use the question stimulus at the end of each paragraph. The best answers were those which were guided by the statement as opposed to simply '*tagging it on*' to content that they were already anticipating to write about. A balanced approach to the question that meets the highest levels of achievement according to both assessment objectives is obviously desirable and the generic question accommodates many possible routes to success whereby any valid approach to the question was credited.
- Finally, there is increasing evidence of poorly written scripts that are almost illegible. Candidates are strongly advised to practice writing under timed conditions. Centres are assured that much time was invested in attempting to decipher illegible answers but there is always the risk that a badly written word/phrase/paragraph could be misinterpreted and it is best to avoid the chances of this occurring. Examiners understand the time constraints that candidates are writing under but this problem regarding illegible handwriting seems to be on the increase. Centres need to address this issue because the current format for examinations requires candidates' ability to sustain handwriting and academic standards under examination pressure.

That said, the excellent work of centres and candidates in 6RS02 bears testimony to the academic potential of candidates that is a joy to behold when it is fully realised.

Question 1

The majority of candidates produced thoughtful and authoritative essays which demonstrated comprehensive understanding of key ideas that were discussed critically with confidence and authority. Such essays were well structured, relevant and well written – these candidates gave comprehensive and detailed responses to the question. There was clear evidence of learning of subject knowledge and many candidates were able to use this knowledge to discuss the title in relation to their area of study. This question gave candidates the opportunity to really demonstrate the breadth and depth of their knowledge and understanding of the Philosophy of Religion in the context of the question (i.e. religious experience and claims about God and/or human nature). It was good to see that the majority of candidates made the most of this opportunity by making reference to the works of many philosophers and theorists on the matter. Most candidates also grouped a number of philosophers together in terms of their particular perspective/time period/field (i.e. existentialist, Greek, Scientific, etc). Moreover, some candidates began with one or two core philosophers from a particular perspective and then made reference to other philosophers whose understanding of the topic supported this particular perspective. Evaluation was evident through direct exposition of and critically appraising particular philosophical standpoints, mostly through the citing of a number of philosophers and their relevant ideas. This was good to see as it demonstrated a sound understanding of how a number of ideas and perspectives intersect around a particular philosophical issue.

The best answers related their study of the varieties of religious experience to understanding the mysterious nature of 'the holy'. These responses tended to be quite open minded and even handed in their assessment – to address both the advantages of religious experience and its problems.

Material from a wide range of scholarship was integrated into a coherent response rather than just re-telling a range of views/theories/life/work within the chosen investigation. There were some outstanding essays where the candidates had a coherent understanding of the task, and responded skilfully to the question with a clearly expressed viewpoint supported by well-deployed evidence and reasoned argument.

It was refreshing to read a variety of answers which explored the topic in original ways.

It is clear that many centres have chosen the topics very carefully indeed and so there appears to be more candidates taking on more demanding topics which offer a genuine challenge and which has led to some very thoughtful and probing work. The majority of essays were well structured, relevant and well written. There was clear evidence of subject knowledge and most candidates were able to use this knowledge to discuss the question in relation to their topic. Candidates are often very well prepared and some have researched their subjects very thoroughly.

Better responses in increasing numbers ventured towards a wider range of sources deploying a wide range of scholars, ideas and traditions. The psychology of religion material has increased in popularity and this material was well handled.

Many candidates of all abilities covered material on St Teresa, Julian of Norwich, the Toronto Blessing and conversion experiences; this material was handled critically by more able candidates and sharply contrasted the uncritical approach typical at the lower range of achievement.

Overall the majority of candidates were well prepared for this question and had no difficulty in responding to it.

However, it was disappointing that some candidates reproduced learned material with only limited reference to the question and depressed achievement simply through failure to address the question. The structure of candidate responses in the lower range of achievement were evidently framed by reliance on a model answer which fitted a range of likely questions that might come up. Although such reliance does not negatively impact on examiner marking it is important to note that such modelling may lead to constraining the natural and nurtured ability of candidates to produce something original and compelling to read. As such, many candidates missed out on a higher level of achievement despite their ability. Most students had very good subject knowledge but a significant number did not select the information as readily as one might have hoped. These students tended to be less analytical. These essays were also the more likely to not refer/answer the question save for the very end of the essay, if at all. An emerging issue this year is the quality of spelling and since last year a persistent problem with legibility.

Some candidates had more difficulty with manipulating their material.

Weaker and more pedestrian scripts focused on types of religious experience and their outlines of 'scholars' were often confined to descriptive accounts that lacked understanding of the issues at stake.

Whilst they still produced essays of merit, there was evidence of a formulaic style of answers by some candidates who apparently relied on the same source(s) and quotes; A02 achievement was undermined when

weaker responses became overly descriptive of religious experiences at the expense of at least some essential philosophical analysis of their meaning and significance.

James, Persinger and Swinburne remain the most popular scholars for many candidates and, there were several cases of Dawkins being used uncritically regardless of whether the candidate agreed or disagreed with his views. In such cases the essays can be a little one sided and weaker responses lacked balance and had little appreciation of the conflict and debate within the area of study. A few candidates were over reliant on a study of Persinger's helmet or case studies of Near Death Experiences.

This year is no exception to former years where the phrase 'with reference to the topic you have investigated' led to responses ranging from general statements with little or no reference to a particular topic, to some very precise analyses of particular ideas and scholars. Some candidates covered a lot of topics, often in a rather shallow way, providing a general narrative account of views of religious experience. Of the weaker scripts, it was common to see accounts of miracles and a discussion of Hume interpreted by the candidate as an account and discussion of a religious experience. Some candidates gave a good outline of the argument for the existence of God based on religious experience and considered its strengths and weaknesses; such essays gained some credit, but these candidates struggled to relate their responses closely to the question set. Candidates must be reminded that the demands of this paper are different to the demands of 6RS03. Weaker analysis and evaluation amounted to an awkward juxta-positioning of ideas and perspectives e.g. 'Plato states this...whereas Darwin (or Dawkins) would say that...'. Stronger candidates' evaluation was blended within a myriad of perspectives e.g. 'Plato states this.... From which we can learn... this is interesting when compared with Darwin whose understanding differs from that of Plato in that he.... Etc'. Evaluation is more clearly obvious in the latter example.

Nonetheless, the point remains that the most able candidates produced original arguments and wrote in a fluent and interesting way with consistent reference to the question.

In some cases analysis and evaluation of ideas was exceptional or very good (as in the majority of cases), whereas some merely listed the opposing/numerous views.

There were still a very high number of responses that made a serious attempt to answer the question. The best answers considered the question against the background of the scholarship they had engaged with. These candidates assessed the persuasiveness of their argument in relation to the range of scholarship deployed and many answers were very well done.

Exceptional responses tended to respond to the question more directly, thus recognising the opportunity offered by a deconstruction/discussion of the question.

The candidate in the following essay extract presented a range of material that was framed on a model answer. The topic studied is corporate and charismatic religious experience plus the Toronto Blessing. This candidate strings the whole topic together in an opening statement proclaiming to have studied 'a corporate charismatic religious experience'. A reputable range of scholars is subsequently rehearsed with some understanding of their contribution with little reference, if any, to the question. The candidate continues to define religious experience and a range of terms across the first two pages before moving on to the Toronto Blessing. This essay illustrates the discussion above on how pre-prepared modelling might constrain the natural and nurtured ability of candidates. If they are to produce something original and compelling to read they have to move beyond merely rehearsing content towards a more critical appraisal of the viewpoints under discussion. The mark given to this essay demonstrates that examiners do not negatively mark – but it is clear that the approach of the candidate was already self-limiting especially in the A02 assessment objective. Throughout the whole essay there was insufficient attention paid to the question. We should not have to wait until the concluding paragraph to assess how far the question has been answered.

I have studied a corporate charismatic religious experience.

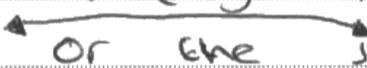
My definition of a religious experience is where someone has an encounter or an experience with a higher being than themselves which changes their life for the better. Paul Tillich definition of a religious experience is where someone has an encounter followed by a understanding of the moment revealing its religious significance.

Swinburne proposed ^{five} categories religious experiences fall into. The two main ones are public and private. The first public category is where an individual sees God or his actions in a public scene. For example someone may look at the night sky and say that is the work of God. Whereas someone else may just see the night sky. The second public is where the laws of nature are broken an example is Jesus walking

On ~~cases~~ The first private is where the individual can explain their experience in everyday language. The second private is where the individual cannot explain their experience in everyday language. The third private is where there is no experience but the individual feels as if God has acted upon them in some way.

They are many different types of religious experience, such as miracles, near death experience and numinous experiences.

A numinous experience is where someone gains greater spirituality which leads to God. Otto believed that numinous experiences are at the heart or centre of religious ~~experiences~~ ^{beliefs}.

A religious experience does not always have to be an individualistic experience. Sometimes they can be a corporate experience. A corporate experience is where a group or a large number of people have a similar  or the same religious experience. A charismatic experience is where the people involved gain the powers of the Holy Spirit. These powers are: healing, extra strong faith, tongue understanding.

of different tongues, miraculous powers. An example of a corporate charismatic experience is The Toronto Blessing. This occurred in 1993 at The Airport Toronto Vineyard church.* The most common account given at this experience was people being "slain by the spirit". This involved a large number of people laughing and screaming uncontrollably and being paralyzed as ~~the~~ ^{God} passed through them, ^{they fell} without hurting themselves and unable to move as the power of God was too much for them. God also replaced people's old metal fillings with new pure gold fillings.

Reverend Dr. Micheal Green said that he just saw a number of people beginning to shake, laugh and fall to the ground as the service was going on. This shows ~~us something about God's nature~~ in that ~~he~~ ^{he} ~~is~~ ^{is} said that God decided to meet his people. This shows us something about God's nature in that he wants to prove to us he is still omnipotent as he can still perform miracles and that he is a caring being as he wants us to know that he is still there.

and that he still care about his creation.

William James created ~~four~~ ^{four} categories ~~that~~ for religious experience. The first is inevitability which means that it gives the individual an understanding of important truth. The second is Noetic Ability, meaning that the individual cannot explain their encounter in everyday language. The third is Trans~~ient~~ ^{science}: meaning that the experience is over soon, in a couple of hours but the affects of it last a life time. The fourth is Animability meaning that the experience is being controlled from outside of the body. For James the test for a religious experience wasn't the encounter of the experience but it was the affect it had on the individual in the long run. An example of this from the Toronto blessing is that of Margaret T. Smith. Margaret was visiting Toronto with a friend and heard about how God came to meet his people. As a Christian she decided to go to church to meet God. She went to a service to meet

him and she did. As the service went on she started to feel strange as if something was passing through her. Half way through she passed out ~~for no~~ with no explanation. Her friend was worried as she didn't know what to do but then realised Margaret must be having a experience. Once Margaret had woken up it had been three hours since she passed out. She tried to explain what happened but couldn't, all she could say was that she couldn't control what was happening to her like she was being forced everywhere.

There are many ways in which we learn things about God's nature from religious experiences. Swinburne said that a omnibenevolent and a perfect God would meet and interact with his creations so that they know he is still there and that he still loves them. We also ~~do~~ know Otto believed that we also learn how powerful our creator is and what his power can do ~~to~~ ~~us~~ and that he wants to strengthen

his follower/believer's faith. However it does so that God ^{might} ~~maybe~~ not be omnipotent as he can perform small miracles like changing metal filings into gold one yet he can't stop hunger, droughts, famine and war from happening in the world.

There are many reasons not to believe in religious experiences. Hick said that there are so many encounters almost two thirds of the world's population has had one that some people will be lying so that they fit in with their society that they just say they have. ~~Hick~~ Hick said that religious experiences contradict themselves as a Christian will have an experience and meet God but a Muslim will have an experience and meet Allah. Therefore we shouldn't believe them. ~~Hick~~ Hick also said that encounters can not be trusted as the people can't be trusted as they are telling lies.

In conclusion I do not believe
religious experiences ^{do not happen as it is} do happen as it is
^{and shows feelings} subjective. I believe that a religious
experience ~~is~~ ^{our} are just illusions that
our mind is playing on us as it shows
what we want out of life at that
specific time. Believers who have had
a religious experience have just jump to
conclusion without giving any logical reasoning
they just believe what someone tell them
~~for~~ what they believe straight away.
Amer agreed that he said "religion is a
place that gives rational answers. Where there is
none, we need to be set free so we
can mature." I also agree with Freud who
believed it may be genetic or psychological
to believe in religious experiences. He called
it the "god gene" ~~He is~~



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Examiner Comments

In the introduction the candidate introduces the topic with an incorrect summary statement of the topic studied and proceeds to begin a range of definitions that are left undiscussed analytically.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Examining and commenting on a good range of appropriate scholarship often results in a well written, balanced study. The question is there to be addressed not ignored.

This is an example of a very good essay which serves to contrast against the last essay. The candidate presented widely deployed evidence that formed a structured response to the task. This essay is representative of the quality of work produced by able candidates who skilfully adapt their material to the demands of the question. The candidate explored religious experience through a wide range of scholarship and sustained a consistent line of argument throughout the entire essay. This was a substantial piece of work.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Remember answer ONLY ONE question.

Chosen question number: Question 1 Question 2 Question 3

According to William James, a religious experience is an encounter with the divine. He said that it is a non-empirical occurrence that brings with it an awareness of something beyond ourselves, and that it can be described as a "mental event" which is undergone by an individual and of which that individual is aware. One form of religious experience is prayer. Prayer, in simple terms, is a method of communication between man and God. This communication may make it easier to understand ^{the nature of} God, ^{or the} despite the fact that there are many types of religious experience.

St Teresa of Avila attempted to define prayer, and after R.A. Gilbert added to her attempt, prayer was divided into the four classifications of: The Prayer of Quiet; The Prayer of Union;

Ecstasy, and Spiritual Marriage. Although there have been several attempts to define prayer, this classification is particularly useful as it notes from clearly distinguishable psychological points.

The Prayer of Quiet is a state which is achieved through consistent contemplation and/or meditation. The contemplation itself is accompanied by "distractions" which can be described as "thoughts" or "images". Some people may believe that these "thoughts" or "images" are placed in their head by God, which may make it easier for them to understand the nature of God or the ~~Holy~~ why despite there being many types of religious experience.

The Prayer of Union is the intermediate stage between a "Quiet" and "Ecstasy". It was described by St Teresa of Avila in Fifth Mansions as ~~God~~ a state in which "God implants himself on the interior of the soul in such a way that when it returns to

itself. It cannot possibly doubt that God has been in it and it has been in God. So, people who have this kind of religious experience will have no doubt about the existence of God. This may make it easier for them to understand the nature of God, ^{or his} despite the fact that there are many types of religious experience.

The state of Ecstasy is accompanied by a complete loss of sensory perception and the power of voluntary movement, although it would appear that commands from the "spiritual superior" are obeyed. For an individual to lose sensory perception and the power of voluntary movement may lead them to believe that God is real, since a logical reason for this to happen is that it is a result of a divine power. Knowing that God exists may make it easier to understand his ^{or the Holy Spirit's} nature, despite there being many types of religious experience.

In the state of Spiritual Marriage an individual feels as though they are in "complete wedded bliss" with God. St Teresa described this feeling as "a sweetness impossible to describe, for which reason it is better to say no more about it". This suggests that the Spiritual Marriage is ineffable, which is one of William James's four main qualities of a religious experience. It could be argued that the ineffable nature of a religious experience proves that it is real, but, Richard Dawkins would disagree with this, because he believes that religious experiences are an expression of an individual's psychological needs. So, it is likely that he would argue that the ineffable nature of a religious experience is a result of an individual being unable to create a deliberate deception which sounds plausible, which someone may do to try to prove

The existence of God. This idea is supported by Sigmund Freud, who believed that religion is an illusion that is created by individuals in order to come to terms with feelings of sexual guilt. This therefore links to the idea that religious experiences are an expression of an individual's psychological needs. This therefore implies that the nature of God ^{and the nature of the holy} cannot be understood, regardless of the fact that there are so many different types of religious experience, because he does not exist. However, Wittgenstein ~~Auguste Sabatier~~ ~~was a French Protestant theologian~~ would use his language games theory to disagree with ~~Franklin~~ ~~Darwin~~, and to argue that one had to have had a religious experience to understand the language used to describe it.

Auguste Sabatier was a French Protestant theologian who attempted

to place prayer in its authentic religious context by saying that "religion is an intercourse, a conscious and voluntary relation entered into by a soul in distress with the mysterious power upon which it feels itself to depend... Prayer is religion, in act... wherever prayer rises and stirs the soul, even in the absence of forms or doctrines, we have living religion". Many would assume that the "mysterious power" of which Sabatier speaks is God, so for an individual to enter into a "voluntary relation" with God suggests that some communication occurs. This communication may make it easier to understand ~~God~~ the nature of God or the holy despite there being many types of religious experience.

William James was the writer of the best known book ever written on religious experience - "The varieties of religious experience".

In his studies, James investigated whether religious experiences can be used to prove the existence of God, since they cannot be used in any kind of "scientific study" and so they cannot be tested by others. But religious people may argue that this was God's intention, and so that people would seek him out themselves rather than worshipping him vicariously through others. This view makes the nature of God ^{harder} ~~easier~~ to understand despite there being many types of religious experience.

James identified four main qualities of a religious experience: passivity; ineffability; transcendence and noetic quality.

The transcendence of a religious experience refers to how it is ~~not~~ ^{not} quite soon, lasting no more than a few hours, although the effects could last a lifetime. James believed that the real test of a religious experience

is the long term change in the individual. However, these changes do not ~~at~~ illuminate anything about God, which may lead some to believe that the nature of God is difficult to understand when there are so many types of religious experiences.

When Swinburne was concerned with the ~~credibility~~ credibility of religious experiences like prayer, because he believed that we cannot work realistically on the basis of always doubting people's accounts of religious experiences. Under his principle of testimony, he said that unless we have evidence ~~to~~ to the contrary, we should believe people when they claim to have had a religious experience, saying that: "In the absence of special considerations, the experiences of others are (probably) as they report them". Furthermore, Swinburne argued that

and so many ~~of~~ people claim to have had a religious experience, it is a basic principle of rationality to believe them. He called this his principle of testimony, as that unless one have overwhelming evidence to the contrary, one should believe things as they seem to be. In "The Existence of God", Spinoza ~~has~~ wrote "the overwhelming testimony of so many millions of people ~~and~~ to occasional experiences of God must, in the absence of counter evidence, be taken as tipping the balance decisively in favour of the existence of God". For God to have, allegedly, changed the lives of so many people only make it easier for an individual to understand the nature of God ^{(or the} ~~nature~~ ^{of the} ~~world~~ ^{universe}) despite there being so many types of religious experiences, even if they have not had a religious experience themselves. However, since many

people claim that their experiences are entirely individual, personally I do not see why they should ~~have~~ ^{have any} relevance of my life. So, ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~not~~ for people such as myself, the nature of God ^{is difficult to} understand even ^{through} the study of the many ^{different} ^{paths of} ~~the~~ religious experiences.

The problem of unanswered prayers raises questions on the existence of God. Far more people have had unanswered prayers than people who have entered into the spiritual marriage state, which is an idea that can be used to support the ~~argument~~ ^{found's} argument that religion is an illusion and that God doesn't exist, and therefore that the nature of God ^{is the only} cannot be understood ^{regardless of the} many ^{different} types of religious experiences.

But, ~~if~~ ^{if} someone prays in order to lead their life of

suffering, then God not answering
this prayer can be just, as per
the Irenaean Theodicy. This
theodicy states that humans have to
endure suffering in order to
~~be~~ ^{develop} into the likeness of God. So,
if God answered these prayers
then this development cannot
occur. So, even this lack of a
religious experience can make it
easier to understand the nature
of God ^{despite} there being so
many types of religious
experience.

Overall, I am unsure as to
whether the nature of God or the
holy is difficult to understand
when there are so many types of
religious experience because I
am unsure as to whether they
exist. This idea is supported by
Hick, who believed that the
world is sufficiently ambiguous
to be interpreted theistically or
atheistically. He said this as a
part of his Eschatological

verification, in which he argued that religion can only be verified or falsified in the after life, or the lack thereof. So, before this point, it is impossible to know if the nature of God or the holy can be understood because one cannot know if they are real. But, ~~Agers~~ ~~Verifi~~ ~~ing~~ some people may use Agers verification principle to disagree with me, ~~and to~~ ~~is~~ ~~a~~ this principle states that all religious language, including the concept of "God", is meaningless. So, these people may argue that the nature of God, ^(or the holy) can never be understood, regardless of the different types of religious experiences, because they believe that God ^(or the holy) does not exist.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

In the introduction the candidate interacts with the question by discussing very concisely the contribution of William James. The essay is clear throughout and the conclusion follows on with conviction.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Clearly adapting your material to the question makes for a good outcome. Solid study of the topic involves studying at least some of the most notable scholars in the field. Work logically through your material to answer the question.

Question 2

There was less reliance in this question on the nuanced opinion and intricacy of ideas of different theorists and philosophers, and more reliance on situating these accounts into particular approaches which meant that the opportunity for philosophical in-depth analysis was lost. Much of the comments regarding question 1 are also relevant to question 2. However, the polarisation noted last year continues in that, on the whole, the responses to question 1 were of a higher standard than those of question 2; whilst other candidates produced outstanding scripts for this question. These quality scripts were of a higher order and did in fact go into depth of analysis and brought differences of opinion to a debate rather than a simple presentation of a 'for and against' argument. The fact remains that variable achievement for this question is a movement away from the predominantly outstanding achievement of the past. It is hard to say how far this movement is happening but it is reported that many of the responses to question 2 were limited in their breadth of their knowledge of 'the philosophy of mind' or even how this can be understood in relation to the 'philosophy of religion'. The consequence of this was a much reduced number of philosophers and thinkers being referenced, too descriptive prose on the perspective – rather than allowing a flow of debate between ideas and perspectives or even a depth of analysis/evaluation of these perspectives. Candidates need to resist the temptation to merely rehearse learned material because it is essential that there is clear engagement with the question. There are still rather a lot of low to middle ability scripts where candidates provide (often lengthy) accounts of near-death and out-of-body experiences. Some weaker scripts tend to present the various positions in the debate as a list with insufficient commentary and discussion. Many candidates provided a systematic account of various positions in the mind/body debate, covering monism, materialism, behaviourism, dualism etc. These topics are generally very well understood, but some candidates disadvantaged themselves by not relating these positions to particular scholars.

Having noted the above caution regarding achievement in the mid to lower range; this question continues to attract outstanding scholarly responses and was very well done by able candidates who were effective at analysing the question and discussing the relevance of their research in this context.

The best answers systematically examined forms of monism and dualism and tackled issues of interaction, some then with Life after Death as more of a case study as to how these theories might then play out in relation to the question. It was very pleasing to read the high proportion of scripts which handled the material from key scholars in a balanced and critical way. The majority of scripts discussed the various viewpoints of dualists, monists and materialists very effectively. The question invited some very thorough responses from many candidates offering a technically competent, detailed, analysis of dualism and monism accompanied by an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses that was skilfully targeted at the question.

There was evidence, however, of good candidates who did not do justice to their A01 material in their evaluation because they were less confident about discussing the question. It is encouraging to see such a wide range of scholars included in responses and generally there were few really weak answers in this Area of Study; weaker candidates included rote learned material which did not answer the question and were defined by a simplistic approach and difficulty in manipulating the material. Weaker candidates confined their response to describing accounts of Near Death Experiences and Out of the Body Experiences whilst stronger responses were fluent in their handling of a wide range of scholarship in their discussions of Descartes, Plato, Aristotle and Ryle with the best of them focussing effectively on Greek philosophy particularly well. As with other questions, weaker candidates did not always tackle the question on the paper. It is also a matter of some concern that many candidates seem to have a confused sense of the historical context of the scholars they refer to. By contrast, better candidates often discuss the cultural context of ideas, thereby demonstrating a very authoritative grasp of the subject.

This candidate begins with a plan and gets off to a tentative start in this 7 page essay with a brief opening paragraph. The second page is devoted to outlining the mind body problem and then acknowledges the question half way down by suggesting dualism might solve the issue. In the next few pages the candidate moves through standard material on the mind body relationship and answers the question in the concluding paragraph. The candidate does not really offer a detailed analysis of any one position but clearly understands the topic. This candidate has clearly studied a useful range of material but the length of the essay does not allow for a more in-depth exploration of these ideas. This essay is indicative of the range of good candidates who did not do full justice to their A01 material in their evaluation because had not really explored the topic more fully. The candidate shows some critical evaluation but not enough to take this into the highest levels of achievement.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Remember answer ONLY ONE question.

Chosen question number: Question 1 Question 2 Question 3

Plan - Address the question -

Relationship between mind & body accounted for.

Why the mind-body problem occurs -

Dualism

Substance

~~Consciousness~~

~~Doubt~~

What Am I talking about?

Property

- Divisibility

- Criticism -

Interaction problem.

Doubt = I think therefore I am.

- Consciousness

- Rationality

- Extension

Critics

- Interaction problem.

Divisibility = Can be broken up.

~~AAA~~

~~The mind-body problem~~

Whether or not the relationship between the mind and body can be fully accounted for is debatable. In this essay I will attempt to examine and comment on this claim, with reference to Dualism.

First of all, the whole 'mindy-body' problem occurs because the mind and the body are both radically different from one another. How can two different things with such different properties work in accordance with each other. It is hard to assume that they're the same, because their features are completely opposite. Also, how would they work if they were on their own, could the mind function without the body, and vice versa.

I am going to ~~first~~ discuss a possible solution through Dualism, if the mind and body relationship can be fully accounted for. First off, dualism states that the mind and body are two completely different things, there are two types of Dualism - Property and Substance.

Substance dualism is the oldest form of dualism, coming from Plato and Descartes. It claims that the mind and body are made up of different elements, different substances, therefore are different. However,

I have ventured into property and substance dualism, and all its different arguments for and against, in order to find a solution to whether we mind and body's relationship can be fully accounted for.

In conclusion, I believe that ^{there} is obviously a relationship between the mind and the body. Without one ~~to~~ working ~~any~~ side the other, it cannot function, that's science, basically. And we know that, yes, they have radically different features, but that's what makes them work together so well. If they were the same, how would we function? With reference to dualism, ~~the~~ which claims ^{that the} mind ~~is~~ + body as different but still rely on each other, I believe the mind body relationship can be accounted for. But whether 'fully accounted' for, it's unknown, because of the interaction problem that crops up. There is a relationship accounted for, but not fully; there are still aspects we don't understand.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This essay is a rehearsal of the main concepts within the mind-body debate. No theory is covered in great detail. The candidate addresses the question at the end of the essay.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Knowing the topic in detail will help to you to substantiate any valid comment on the question. General coverage of essential ideas does not meet the requirement of the highest level descriptors. Material must be well selected to demonstrate emphasis and clarity of ideas and widely deployed to answer the question.

This essay, is an example of a more detailed piece of work that pays close attention to the question. The candidate sets out their stall in the introduction and sustains the promise of some comment on the question itself. Whilst there were other essays that were arguably worthy of more than the available marks (!) this candidate has certainly done enough to earn full marks. The inclusion of a range of material from Plato, Hinduism and Buddhism enhances the discussion.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Remember answer ONLY ONE question.

Chosen question number: Question 1 Question 2 Question 3

There are contrasting standpoints on whether there is a relationship between the mind and body. ~~There are two main~~ The debate dates back as early as ancient Greek times, where Plato and Aristotle commented on the relationship between the body and soul, which led to the development of Dualism and Monism. Modern Atheist Scholars, such as, Dawkins, have also commented on this claim. This led to the development of materialism. The body is described as the physical entity of the individual, which walks and talks etc. Whereas the mind is described as the blueprint of the body, which defines the thing as being what it is, this determines mental characteristics and behaviours.

Dualism is one of the standpoints on the relationship between the mind and body. Dualists believe that the mind and body are distinct and separate entities, though

each can influence the other. There are different theories of Dualism. Interactionists argue that the body can affect the consciousness and emotions can have physical effects. However, Epiphenomenalists believe that mental events cannot cause physical events, the mind cannot control the body. Ancient Greek philosopher, Plato, believes that the body is physical, it is part of the four dimensions of time and space. It is part of the world of sensations. The body is subject to change and decay. Plato suggests that the soul is part of the realm of ideas, it is the 'form' of the human being. The soul is what defines the loose collection of chemicals as a human being and not a loose collection of chemicals. This is described as a physical thing (body) having a blueprint (soul). The Greeks believed that the soul was in some way trapped and imprisoned in the body. When the person dies, the components that make up a human being are separated, this includes the separation.

of the soul. Plato also draws the Charioteer Analogy, which ^{is used to describe the} suggests that the soul works ^{inner workings of the soul} best when the Charioteer/reason is in charge. Plato ~~draws~~ suggests 3 aspects which are present within the soul: the appetite, the spirit and the reason. The soul works best when the Charioteer/reason is in charge. Unfortunately the horses often pull in different directions. The appetite leads us to things that aren't helpful, the spirit is needed to make us determined to do the right thing. Plato thinks that reason needs to rule within the soul. This illustrates that, the relationship between the mind and body can't be fully ~~account~~ accounted for, as the mind and body are separate entities, although the mind defines the body and both can influence each other. Aquinas believes that the soul is the animator of the body, ^{it is} what drives the body. A man can not be just mind without a body, if man were just mind, he would not directly experience things as he clearly does when he senses.

French philosopher, Descartes, supported substance dualism. He suggested that whilst the body was spatial, but not conscious the mind was non-spatial and conscious. ~~However~~ Descartes also suggested that the relationship between the mind and body was not fully accountable for. He suggested that when we talk about the soul we are really talking about mental characteristics and personality, 'behavioural dispositions'. When the body dies the soul lives on. "Our soul is of a nature entirely independent of the body, and consequently it is not bound to die with it... and since we cannot see any evidence that the soul is destroyed, we are naturally led to conclude that it is immortal." This illustrates that the relationship between the mind and body is not fully accountable for as Descartes also believed that the mind and body ~~interact~~ interact with each other through the workings of the brain. Suggesting the mind and body are separate but continue to interact with each other.

However, modern atheist scholar, Dawkins, challenged this. He suggested that the Plato's idea of the 'soul'. He suggested that the soul would only consist of the development of our intellectual activities and nothing else. He said that the soul was nonsense for the weak-minded and there was in fact no soul. The soul was a mythological concept invented by the ancients to explain the mysteries of consciousness. It was, according to Dawkins, "not an explanation but an evasion." This challenges the full relationship between mind and body as there may not even be a soul.

Hindu beliefs lend support to dualism. They believe that the Atman (soul) is eternal. Reunification, ^(moksha) with life itself is the aim of the reincarnation cycle. The aim of the soul is to ~~escape~~ Based upon a complex system of ethical behaviour, the aim of the soul is to escape the birth and death cycle.

and enter the realm of Nirvana. The understanding of the self as eternal, that the soul can inhabit temporary bodies, supports the idea ~~that~~ of reincarnation. The *Twa* is the only thing that links the bodies and carries the memories of the series of lives. There is also a 'subtle body' (*linga sharira*) that survives death and carries the karma forwards. Another example of this is near death experiences, which presents the possibility for disembodied existence, and challenges the assumption that consciousness is dependent on a functioning brain. This illustrates that the mind is separate from the body and their relationship can't be fully accounted for.

However, Buddhists believe in rebirth and not reincarnation. They do not believe in a permanent soul that can inhabit temporary bodies. They also have a different view of karma, they believe it is the effect of working

through significant past actions. These actions ~~are~~ aren't carried forward but do influence the next life.

The new person is not identical to the old, nor completely different. It is simply the ~~the~~ continuing stream of consciousness. This illustrates that the mind and body are still separate entities, so their relationship is not fully accounted for.

In contrast the monistic theory challenges dualism, but is similar to that of property dualism. This suggests the mind emerges from the physical as a property of it. The monistic view clearly states that the relationship between the mind and body can be fully accounted for, as it states that the mind and body are one entity. This is described as the mind and body being a psychophysical unity. The body is the physical entity, which walks and talks. The mind determines mental characteristics. Aristotle challenges Plato's idea of 'form', which suggests

it is something separate from the object. Aristotle argues that this is unnecessary as a property is not additional to the object. Russell gives an example of this; football could not exist if there were no footballers. In the same way the mind/soul could not exist without the ~~the~~ body. Illustrating that the relationship between the mind and body can be fully accounted for.

Hick rejects the traditional belief in body-soul dualism and supports the monistic view. He also believes that the mind and body are a psychophysical unity, and when we talk about the soul we are really talking about the value of our whole selves. In death and eternal life, Hick introduces the replica theory, and suggests God can create a replica of the person who dies on Earth to live in another realm. His aim was to illustrate that the concept of life after death doesn't depend on human beings having

souls in the Platonic sense. He suggests that it is logically possible that when the physical body dies there is no separate soul to live on. This does not mean however, it is logically possible for an all-powerful God to recreate a person to live in another realm after death i.e. heaven. God creates this replica as an exact copy of the person who dies on Earth to live on after death. This depicts that the mind/soul cannot live on without the body, therefore they are one unity, suggesting the mind and body relationship is fully accounted for.

Hick's replica theory links to the Abrahamic religion's belief of resurrection. Resurrection is the raising of the body after death. Empiricists believe that the Christian view that the body will be resurrected after death is a reward for the righteous. St Paul wrote about resurrection as the transformation of the person, and the 'glorifying' of the body. 'It is sown a natural

body, it is raised a spiritual body.' Many Christians believe that although the body dies, the soul is immediately united with God. It is a growing tradition in Jewish literature for an understanding of resurrection that doesn't involve the reanimation of dead bodies. Muslims believe that life is a test, and that deeds done in the body will either be rewarded for the good they have done or punished or forgiven for the wrongs they have done. However there are problems with resurrection, if the soul reanimates the body as it finds it, then for anyone who has been physically dead for over about 3 days, or for anyone who died violently or whilst not strong, then these bodies are not in a condition anymore to be reanimated. This ~~illustrates~~ illustrates that mind and body relationship is ~~not~~ fully accounted for, as ~~it is not possible~~ the soul either reanimates the body or dies with the body.

Materialism is another viewpoint relevant to the discussion, as it challenges the distinction of the mind and body relationship completely. Dawkins takes a biologically materialist position and suggests that a soul may only consist of the development of our intellectual abilities and nothing else. He thought that the concept of the soul was nonsense for the weak-minded and didn't believe in the soul. This again suggests the mind and body relationship isn't fully accounted for, as there is no proof of the soul's existence.

In conclusion, the relationship between the mind and body is only partially accounted for. The views taken by Aristotle and Hick show a strong relationship between the ~~soul~~ ^{mind} and body, however is a weaker argument as there is no proof that the person is recreated in another realm ~~after~~ by God after death. Plato's view of dualism is the strongest as there is possibility for the soul to survive after death, as there

is no evidence of it being destroyed. This is supported by the Hindu beliefs of transmigration. Dawkins argument is the weakest, as there is still possibility of the existence of the mind shown by real life experiences, such as near death experiences, disembodied existence and reincarnation. The relationship between the mind and body is accounted for by monism however challenged by the beliefs of dualism and materialism.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The introduction sets out the structure of the essay and promises a more substantive coverage of the topic.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Establish a position in relation to the question and then argue for or against it.

Work logically through your material to answer the question. More detailed work brings its own reward in higher outcomes.

Question 3

Candidates chose to demonstrate the breadth and depth of their understanding by using a number of philosophers of religion and their ideas throughout to answer the question directly towards supporting their own conclusion. This question asks candidate to respond using one or more philosophers they have investigated. Although positive marking was employed in all cases, candidates who were able to introduce more than one philosopher into their answer warranted a higher mark. As always, this question attracted a large variety of answers, including some truly outstanding responses to the question. Candidates routinely demonstrated a very accurate, comprehensive and often sophisticated understanding of the key ideas of a scholar with really good accounts of the works of Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes, Hume, Kierkegaard, Nagel, Nietzsche, Leibniz, Kierkegaard, Bonhoeffer, Marx and Sartre.

One of the most popular combinations was Kierkegaard and Sartre.

The obvious enthusiasm so many candidates had for the area of study was clearly conveyed by very mature essays in which the significant features of the work of philosopher/philosophers within the philosophy of religion was discussed. The best answers referred to a range of ideas or works by the chosen philosopher and put them in the correct context of their time or the impact on subsequent thought which made for interesting, thoughtful and scholarly analysis of their ideas. Good quality answers focussed on an interesting range of philosophers with many candidates choosing to compare and contrast two different philosophers; thus allowing for easier AO2 comment on any useful insights into religion and/or God that might be derived from any the study of the philosophy of religion. Candidates were well versed with the significant features of the work of the philosopher(s) they had studied and most gave an accurate analysis of the philosopher(s) they had investigated. The best answers referred to a range of ideas or works by the chosen philosopher and placed them in the correct context of their time whilst assessing the features of their work with great ease.

There was a discrepancy in the way candidates at the lower end responded to the question; some simply offered a biographical account of a scholar and could have addressed the question itself more explicitly. This particular problem is more evident in weaker scripts.

Some candidates discussed both Sartre and Kierkegaard and did less well because of time constraints; they just did not cover the material they clearly had intended to cover. In this range not many answers included much by way of comment from scholars on the views of their philosophers, and although this was not a requirement it did enhance the answers of candidates who were able to do it. Some candidates chose one idea/argument from their philosopher and did a strengths or weaknesses of that view; whilst this was not necessarily a bad approach it was most often done at a simpler level and not fully focused on the question in terms of concluding about the significant features of their philosopher(s) within the philosophy of religion. Weaker answers focused on Aquinas but largely through the 5 Ways only.

The followers of Dawkins increase year on year and are often hallmarked by one-sided analysis and discussion that is coupled with a certain enthusiasm for Dawkinian rhetoric. These interesting essays can be improved by connecting the ideas under discussion to a wider range of philosophers in the field. It is a fact that candidates who are able to discuss more than one philosopher generally produced better quality essays – this is because they compared and contrasted the ideas better and carried their overall response to the question more successfully. Some candidates made one or two philosophers the main subject of their response and introduced the ideas of other philosophers and/or theorists along the way and at appropriate times, in order to make a critical comparison and/or evaluate a point.

There is continued evidence of whole centres following the same structure for a pre-prepared answer that was not subsequently manipulated by candidates to answer the question. Some candidates tended to argue from the outset for the existence of God rather than answering the question; this was especially apparent in responses that focussed on Aquinas or Paley. A few problems persist with candidates answering an apparently different

question without paying due attention to the question on the paper. It is expected that pre-prepared material addresses the question on the paper. Some candidates who had clearly studied material directly related to Question 1 on Religious Experience attempted this question. Whilst there is nothing to prohibit this, candidates might limit achievement if they attempt a question for a different topic to the topic they had been prepared for; especially if they are not explicitly answering the task set by the question. Centres are reminded that the three questions on the paper are written for three different topics.

This essay is another example of a well-executed piece of work showing clear command of the topic. The candidate answers the question fluently. The candidate understands Hume's work on empiricism and scepticism and does not confine the study to Hume's critique of miracles. The candidate clearly conveys essential elements of Hume's thought with insightful reflection on the question.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Remember answer ONLY ONE question.

Chosen question number: Question 1 Question 2 Question 3

David Hume is a seventeenth century economist, historian and philosopher, known for his controversial views in regard to the philosophy of religion. Hume was an ~~empiricist~~ empiricist and a sceptic - he believed all knowledge to be derived from the senses, and that certainty in knowledge is impossible. Hume's sceptical ideas can be seen in both his problem of induction and bundle theory - which question human perception. This leads on to his religious ideas, possessing atheistic tendencies, as he is doubtful of religious truth. This can be seen as an indication that philosophers prior to this have struggled to answer questions on God and religion - as Hume was doubtful of religious claims.

Hume wrote in a contextual stage of doubt, which indicates a struggle within the realm of answering religious questions sufficiently. Religious struggles could be seen here, as there was a political concern for religious tolerance, and horror in regard to religious warfare. This indicates a struggle to answer religious questions, as there is conflict over the answers; this shows a inability to form universal answers. There was also a longing for anticlericalism, and a longing for a religion which defined moral unity ^{during the enlightenment}. Hume, however, became suspicious of religion, as it was a cause of immorality, and not of an empirical form. It can be inferred that the lack of empiricism in religion during this time was the cause of the lack of sufficient religious answers. Hume attempted to define a more empirical understanding through rejecting religion. Hume's ideas are best portrayed by the quote "the science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences". Here, Hume is agreeing with the posed statement, as he indicates that answers given currently struggle to pose an answer. Hume rejected religion on three bases— origins, lack of proof and counter proof.

Hume rejected religion on the basis of its origins. He believed religion to be derived from superstition, ignorance and fear. In his ~~no~~ Natural History of Religion, Hume made an account for the growth and survival of religious notions. He believed that ignorance led mankind to misconceiving abstract notions of ~~the~~ a deity as fact - giving God imaginary characteristics. He also stated that superstition was a motivator for religion, as it ~~incentivizes~~ allows believers to avoid fear of the unknown. Hume can be seen to struggle to answer religious questions here, as his controversial view of God being a mere psychological entity was ~~generally~~ not accepted in his time of ~~writing~~ writing.

Hume also wrote against religion in terms of counterproof, particularly the problem of evil. Hume wrote of this in his 'Dialogues'. The problem of evil can be used as a great example of philosophers struggling to answer questions of religion, as logically it is impossible for theistic God to exist alongside a world of evil and suffering. In part X of Dialogues, Democ presents evil as a problem

which can be overcome with God, whilst Philo suggests that coexistence of theistic God and suffering to be impossible, Hume emphasises Philo's questioning on whether the world we live in is what we would expect from an omnipotent, omnibenevolent deity. Hume uses Philo's analogy of a perfect architect building an imperfect house. Here, it can be seen that philosophers struggle to answer questions on God and religion, as logically, many arguments for God in this regard can be considered invalid. However, Hume's approach can be considered valid, as it uses logical rigour.

Some theistic approaches to the problem of evil can be seen to answer questions of religion ~~well~~ as Leibniz theorises that our world is the "best of all possible worlds".

The Irenaean theodicy sees evil as a means for development. Swinburne supports this, stating that natural evil develops positive characteristics. The Kantian view sees that God uses the human conscience to prevent evil action, this is supported by Augustin's theodicy, which sees that evil is a result of mankind.

turning away from God. These arguments suggest that Hume has struggled to answer religious questions, as he doesn't consider ~~these~~ ^{the} alternate possibilities, however, Hume's logical basis can be ~~credited~~ ^{credited}, as it uses empirical rigor.

Another basis which Hume rejects religion, is lack of proof. One example of this is miracles. Hume writes of miracles in 'Enquiry's, he references his problem of induction here, criticising the human tendency to make inductive inferences. He believes that infrequent events are mistaken for divine ones, but that such occurrences are simply improbable. He believes "all miracle stories" found in history to be "sacred and profane", and observed amongst "ignorant and barbarous nations". Here, Hume's argument can be seen to outline the struggle of religious answers in regard to miracles. He sees that evidence is misinterpreted, and so philosophers have struggled to provide an answer in this sense.

There are also arguments against Hume in regard to miracles. Vardy stated that to

dismiss miracles was 'idiotic' as ~~the~~ such occurrences were often backed up by science. Vardy also criticised Hume's rejection of religion on this basis, as religion has a foundation of faith rather than miracle stories. Vardy suggests Hume has struggled to answer questions on his rejection of religion here, and Hume can be seen to have struggled to ~~have answers~~ answer questioning of his religious rejection here. Wiles also wrote against ^{Miracles} religion, stating that such a God would be 'arbitrary and partisan', and therefore not perfectly moral. Quantum Mechanics can be seen to go against answering whether there is a God through miraculous events, as miraculous events could be the result of random behaviour on a quantum level. This indicates that the existence of God through this means is not valid. Such events are improbable but not divine. This suggests that empirical science answers questions on religion with more success than religious philosophy.

Another form of lack of proof for Hume was the design argument, which Hume wrote of in part XI of 'Enquiry's and in Dialogues part V. This argument is based off of the appearance of design in the universe, and sees that this is evidence of an intelligent designer, or God. This was the most popular basis for empirical theism during the 17th/18th century. Paley, who wrote post-Hume, posed a watch analogy in his Natural Theology. He saw similar characteristics between a watch and the universe, and as the watch has a designer, concluded that the universe must also have a designer. Here, Paley is offering an answer - that God must exist, as there must be a designer to create such complexity. Hume's arguments in this regard suggest that Paley's argument struggles to pose a valid answer. Philo, in part V of 'Dialogues', states that we cannot ~~be~~ infer an infinite, nor incorporeal creator - as we only have experience of finite, corporeal creators. He also states that we can only infer something 'like design'. This suggests that despite the popularity of

the analogy - it struggles to answer questions on God and religion.

Hume theorised design was 'chance permutation of particles', which was later supported by Darwin's theory of evolution, and the motivation for Dawkins' atheism. Newton supported the design argument. He, like Hume, believed that nature was orderly. Since then, ~~the~~ science suggests nature is not orderly. This removes Newton's foundation of belief. This offers support to the idea that scientific exploration of religion struggles ^{less} ~~is~~ than a philosophical exploration.

Hume was very influential, mainly due to his controversial and innovative views. He had a large influence on Immanuel Kant; famously awakening him from his 'dogmatic slumber'.

Kant's views were similar to Hume's, though unlike Hume, looked to an alternate religion. Kant's moral argument provides a rational argument for God. He sees that ~~as~~ humans are intrinsically obligated to strive for virtue. God must exist to ensure that happiness and virtue coincide. The argument

is a posteriori, and should be an acceptable premise on Hume's terms, whilst providing an alternate conclusion. This form of argument can be seen to struggle less to provide an answer to questions of religion, due to its logical rigour and empirical nature.

Marx was inspired by Hume, and looked to define the role of religion in society. He concluded that it was to legitimise social dominance. This indicates that Hume's answers are valid as it supports his sociological views of religion based on origins.

It can be seen that philosophers of religion struggle to answer questions of both religion and God - as many arguments are of a subjective form, and have many weaknesses in terms of logical foundation. From Hume, it can be seen that empirical explorations of religion are more valid, as they're logically structured, and act independently to subjective opinion. Regardless, it is undeniable that answers posed have been successful in the sense that they induce religion, which can be

considered an aim, it seems that the philosophy of religion poses valid, and influential answers to the philosophy of religion, though ~~struggled~~ struggle to overcome questions of validity in their conclusions. personally, I believe Hume's exploration to be strong as it poses answers from an empirical basis. To conclude, the philosophy of religion does not struggle to answer questions of religion, though it does struggle to validate ~~its~~ its conclusions. Philosophy of religion is most valid when empirical, ~~or~~ ~~which~~ which validates Hume's approacher quite significantly.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

The candidate's clear style of writing helps the reader to follow the argument. The juxtaposition of ideas shows a clear and thorough understanding of the task in hand as the essay progresses. The essay was not overly long but achieved a high outcome nevertheless.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Last year's tip is repeated again because there is no substitute for knowing your field. Assimilation of the essential concepts in preparation for the exam helps the essay to flow easily. Coherence within the structure of an essay is related to proper selection and deployment of material. Work hard to get this right. It pays off in the quality of your work.

This essay, like many other essays at this level, answers the question and shows a clear command of the topic. The candidate understands existentialism very well and clearly conveys essential elements of the thought of Kierkegaard and Sartre. This candidate clearly understood the ideas and deployed material coherently.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Remember answer ONLY ONE question.

Chosen question number: Question 1 ☒ Question 2 ☒ Question 3 ☒

'Philosophers of religion' struggle to answer questions about God and/or religion
 Examine + comment on this claim with reference to one or more philosophers you have investigated.

~~Many philosophers of religion struggle to~~

PLAN

Intro - struggle with
 Existentialism - focus on - emphasises the importance of the individual and ~~to~~ freedom.

Intro main phil

~~Kierkegaard~~ - contrast to Hegel
 - despise church + institutionalise
 - social rather than faith
 3 aspects - Sunday church / lemonade middle
 - fideism - passion + faith more important than reason.
 - Leap of faith
 - Abraham - teleological suspension of ethical
 - Dostoevsky - reason

Same - Atheist - WWII
 - Nihilism - Nietzsche - God is dead
 - Paper knife existence presence

own choice / studied / example
 K → Anguish - + authentic existence
 - legislate for all man → create our (I + W)
 - dread - fear the monstrosity of our freedom
 - fear of our desire and desire of fear.

Abandonment - Sartre + K → K sees as good
 - makes faith more important.
 - Sartre God may as well not be. either way we are free.

Weaknesses
 - murder
 - nihilism
 - not all free - refugees + mass

Sartre's contempt / lib. Christianity
 - faith between
 - freedom absolute

3. 'Philosophers of religion struggle to answer questions about God and/or religion'

Examine + comment on with ref to 1 or more philosophers.

Many philosophers of religion struggle to answer questions about God and religion, within the philosophy of existentialism there are many contrasting views about each and so, therefore existentialists struggle to conclusively answer questions on either. Existentialism emphasises the importance of the individual and the individual's freedom to make their own choices and determine their own lives.

~~This was first~~ This philosophy was first introduced by Danish philosopher Søren ~~Kier~~ Kierkegaard (1813 - 1855) who is often referred to as the father of existentialism despite ~~never~~ the term not actually being used until the 1900s by ~~the~~ Jean Paul Sartre (1905 - 1980). Kierkegaard was theist yet unlike other existentialist philosophers such as Hegel, he believed that faith and institutionalised religion were incompatible due to the ~~own~~ contradictory and inherently paradoxical nature of the bible. He greatly disliked the institutionalised church ~~due to~~ ^{which he referred to as the} ^{height of bourgeois stupidity}

this as he saw it producing ^{what he referred to as} ~~what he called~~ 'Sunday Christianity' in his ^{work} ~~books~~ "Either/Or". Kierkegaard argued that the church could easily be preaching 'lemonade kvaddel' as people went to church due to social pressure as opposed to going because of their faith. Hence for Kierkegaard answering questions about religion is very different to answering questions about faith and God.

Kierkegaard instead urges us to be actors instead of spectators, and to use our freedom to make our own choices and to live by a subjective truth - something ~~is~~ true to ourselves which we live our lives by and would live or die for. For Kierkegaard this is faith, and something out of reach for spectators, as he states "the crowd is untruth". Kierkegaard believes that to reach our subjective truths we move through several stages in life, the ~~of~~ aesthetic sphere, the ethical sphere and the religious sphere. In the aesthetic sphere individuals live a hedonistic lifestyle which leads them to rotating pleasures as it would otherwise leave you bored and discontent. In the ethical sphere individuals begin to become more committed

and so might do things with greater meaning such as getting married, yet still they have not found their subjective truth.

In the religious stage sphere, individuals find their subjective truth, this is the highest stage of existence when we are closest to God, ^{he refers to people in this stage as} ~~where~~ ^{knights of faith.}

Kierkegaard ~~was a fideist~~ found fideism of the utmost importance here as he believed passion and faith to be above reason. This is explained in the Abraham story where an angel tells ~~Ab~~ God tells Abraham to kill his ~~only~~ son Isaac in order to test his faith. Although Abraham did not want to, God and his faith were his subjective truth which led to the teleological suspension of the ethical when he attempted to kill Isaac. Abraham was rewarded for his faith by God's intervention and Isaac was allowed to live. For Kierkegaard, Abraham is the ultimate example of a knight of faith as his subjective truth was the most important to him. ~~This is~~ Consequently he believes we must take a 'leap of faith' as our faith should be above ethical rules and reason.* || This point is ~~highly~~ ~~cont~~ strongly

contradicted by modern day philosophers and philosophers such as Paulskis, who argues that unless there is empirical evidence to support an idea then it is ludicrous to believe it. This conflicts with Kierkegaard's notion that faith should be absurd. Philosopher Stephen Law also argues against Kierkegaard's point about the teleological suspension of the ethical and knights of faith as he believes that these ideas could be applied to modern day terrorists or people with mental health problems ^{hearing voices} telling them to do things. This ~~does not~~ ~~make~~ is not ethical.

In contrast to Kierkegaard, Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980) ^{a post WWII french} ~~another key~~ existentialist philosopher was atheist. He was influenced by Nietzsche's (1844-1900) statement that 'God is dead'. Whilst Kierkegaard argued that God's abandonment of humanity simply made faith and fideism more important, Sartre argued that if God has abandoned us he might as well be dead as he ~~seems~~ ~~to~~ has the same impact. For Sartre
For the existentialist this is an exciting prospect as opposed to one of ~~dread~~ ~~to~~ terror as it allows us to be truly free. Therefore ~~and~~ Sartre

does not feel he has to struggle to answer questions about God as even if he did exist and had simply abandoned us, he would be irrelevant to humanity. If God is dead there is no right and wrong.

Sartre introduced ~~the~~ a key idea to ~~the~~ ~~study~~ existentialism when he stated that 'existence precedes essence'. He uses ~~the~~ the paperknife analogy to explain this idea. Before there were paperknives someone had the idea that they needed something to cut paper ~~so~~ with. Here the essence of the paperknife existed before the paperknife. For ^{traditional} theists this would also apply to humanity, God had the idea of humanity and then created us. Therefore we inherently have a human nature and soul. However for an atheist, Sartre argues that as 'God is dead' our existence must precede our essence, this leaves us free to become anything we want to be, do anything we want to do and determine ourselves and our own character and nature. Sartre wants us to all live authentic existences, which is when we realise / recognise the magnitude of our own freedom. Simone de Beauvoir long term partner, feminist

philosopher Simone de Beauvoir supported these ideas with her notion that one is 'not born a woman but becomes one'. ‡

Sartre says that ~~existence~~ this authentic existence leaves us free to make our own choices, we are not suppressed by ethical rules but ~~are~~ are instead free to choose our own actions. There is no set right and wrong as God does not exist. ‡

Sartre also suggested that an existentialist feels anguish as we are scared of the extent of our own freedom, as ~~this~~ we cannot make excuses for bad things happening to us as they are as a result of our own actions. We are responsible for ourselves. An existentialist may also feel anguish as in choosing an action we are not only affecting our own future but condoning the action. In acting we legislate the action for the rest of mankind. Therefore we have a responsibility not only for ourselves but for the rest of humanity. ~~If we~~ To summarise by choosing an action, we effectively ~~also~~ say that the rest of the world could also choose to act that way so we are effectively creating our own right

and wrong and ethical standards which are individual to us, separate from those from religion.

This idea of Anguish is similar to the idea of dread introduced by Kierkegaard. This dread is the inherent fear of ~~our own~~ the monstrosity of our own freedom which we all feel. According to Kierkegaard we ~~also~~ have a fear of our desire and desire of our fear which leads to this angst/dread. It is a by-product of our own freedom.

Existentialism can be a very attractive philosophy as it has meant more liberal forms of Christianity such as Paul Tillich's definition of God as pure existence have developed. ~~It also~~ The idea of complete freedom can also be very attractive. However many people have issues with existentialist ideas. For instance that it can lead to nihilism, a disregard for traditional values and ~~its~~ Sartre's statement that there is no right and wrong is very questionable. Many would argue it is abhorrent to suggest that things like murder and rape were not right and wrong but simply a person's choice.

Many could also criticise newpoints such as we are all totally free ~~and~~, as there is injustice in the world. surely same is not suggesting that child refugees are as free as a person living in the western world. Marx would argue none of us are totally free as we are bound by the constraints of modern society and secular religion. However existentialism does avoid arguments for the existence ~~of individual ph~~ of God which many regard as pointless, and simply focuses on the here and now. ~~This makes~~ It also means that ~~of~~ individuals are not bound by ethical theories ~~etc~~ such as deontology or utilitarianism which although ~~they~~ sound good are hard to practice, especially as many conflict with each other. Instead the existentialist is bound by his own moral code and nothing else. which he has the freedom to create himself.

~~Consequently whilst ph etc ph etc~~

I would argue that ^{existentialist} ~~existentialist~~ philosophes may not individually struggle to answer questions about God and religion they are not of the utmost importance to them and are

not key aspects of their philosophies. Due to this many ~~would~~ existentialists would produce different answers to these questions as existentialists can be religious or non-religious and allows you to be scientific whilst being existentialist. Therefore existentialism as a philosophy would struggle to produce answers for questions on religion and God. This being due to its subjectivity. ~~and~~.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

The plan indicates the range of material that will appear in the essay. The first two pages clearly shows the grasp the candidate has over their material and this control is sustained throughout the essay.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Do not be afraid of choosing a topic that is of interest to you nor of reading material that pushes the boundaries of your thinking beyond knowledge into critical appreciation. Excellent studies always stand out as distinctively engaged with the nuances of the topic and its adaptation towards the question.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Do not ignore the question.
- A generic question is not best answered with a generic answer. The question is made up of two parts. The question itself and the generic phrase 'Examine and comment with reference to the topic you have investigated.' Answer the question.
- Use appropriate sources and, if possible, include recent scholarship.
- Well deployed material will show how well you understand your topic and how you are using your material to answer the question.
- Do not forget to comment on your material in relation to the question.
- Use your evidence to substantiate your argument.
- Comment on alternative views if you know them.
- Express your viewpoint clearly.
- Practice writing under timed conditions as part of your preparation.
- Do not spend too much time on your essay plan to the detriment of the essay itself.
- Write legibly.

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