

Examiners' Report
June 2015

GCE Religious Studies 6RS04 1A

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications come from Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk.

Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

ResultsPlus

Giving you insight to inform next steps

ResultsPlus is Pearson's free online service giving instant and detailed analysis of your students' exam results.

- See students' scores for every exam question.
- Understand how your students' performance compares with class and national averages.
- Identify potential topics, skills and types of question where students may need to develop their learning further.

For more information on ResultsPlus, or to log in, visit www.edexcel.com/resultsplus. Your exams officer will be able to set up your ResultsPlus account in minutes via Edexcel Online.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk.

June 2015

Publications Code UA042533

All the material in this publication is copyright
© Pearson Education Ltd 2015

Introduction

Important information about mark schemes: Detailed mark schemes are available on the Religious Studies web site. Examiners at standardisation are reminded that the mark scheme contains:

(i) General Marking Guidance: This consists of eight bullet points including, 'Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.'

(ii) Generic mark scheme: This divides each level across both AO1 and AO2 into three sub-levels – low, mid and high. Each concludes with a statement about quality of written communication.

(iii) Indicative level descriptors: These are meant to be indicative rather than definitional of content at each level.

The introduction to the indicative level descriptors states: Examiners should be reminded that any legitimate approach to the clarification and discussion of the passage must be rewarded and there is no need for candidates to cover every idea mentioned in the extract.'

(iv) In addition, on pages 120-121 of the Specification there is an abbreviated guide to the level descriptors.

Introduction to the paper: This year examiners commented that they had read some of the most competent and confident answers they have seen on this paper. The most able candidates engaged with all aspects of the passage including the nuances of the argument and candidates displayed high levels of achievement in dealing with its strengths and weaknesses. Candidates at this level of success made the best use of the synoptic opportunities from related anthologies in 6RS04 and relevant material in 6RS03, plus, where appropriate, the two AS units: 6RS01 and 6RS02. Those candidates scoring at the higher levels had an excellent understanding of how to present an argument, combining a thoughtful and carefully worded expression of personal opinion, properly backed up with reference to scholars, traditions and arguments.

Lower levels of work had a more basic understanding of the passage with limited scholarship to support the claims being made. There were instances of unsatisfactory time management relating to the respective demands of the two assessment objectives. A few spent too long on AO1 with too little attention to AO2 and vice versa. A few candidates merged AO1 and AO2. Typically, these paid scant attention to the issues of the implications of the passage for understanding religion and human experience. This year there were some candidates who were not familiar with the passage but quite good on related arguments and hence whilst their AO1 marks were lower they tended to score better in AO2. Nevertheless their overall mark was lower than more balanced answers.

Question 1

Good practice and areas for improvement

AO1 characteristics of good quality:

- Comprehensive understanding of the passage
- Well-managed and coherent answers
- Competent analysis of complex issues and problems
- Analysis of terms including 'religious knowledge' and 'intuition'
- Confident use of scholarship to support their explanations, including Buber, Owen, Baillie
- Effective and appropriate use of the other anthology sources by Ayer and Westphal
- Expansion of ideas briefly mentioned in the passage but developed elsewhere.

AO1 work that requires improvement:

- Evidence of extensive reference to a passage from a different set text, especially Ayer at the expense of the selected passage on the exam paper
- Answers were not systematically focused on the passage in an explicit manner
- A simple comprehension task and typically short
- A generic account of the whole source from the anthology
- A general account of related ideas on religious experience with limited ability for drawing out the specifics in the passage
- Reference to scholars' names but with little analysis of their ideas.

AO2 characteristics of good quality:

- Impressive presentations with confident evaluations, as a result of engagement with Religious Studies over a two year period
- Effective selection and management of arguments and implications
- An ability to discuss key ideas such as the claim that 'intuitive awareness may be claimed as a way of knowing God'
- Critical remarks about Donovan's distinction between theological and philosophical epistemology
- Sustained debate with purposeful use of views for and against, including Swinburne, Ayer and Flew.

AO2 work that requires improvement:

- Basic points of view with limited use of argument and evidence
- Isolated viewpoints without appropriate exemplary support.
- The following scripts are examples of good practice.

a) In his essay 'can we know God by experience' Donovan is considering the possibility of gaining direct intuitive knowledge of God from experience.

In this specific passage he is considering the views of a "number of mid-twentieth century theologians and philosophers of religion, such as H. Power, who argue ~~ea~~ God can be known through religious experience, from intuition which he defines as a sense of inner conviction. H. Power believes we can gain knowledge of God through intuition as opposed to 'reasoning or argument'. For Owen intuition is a huge aspect of human experience and can be used to know God in a better way than through logical arguments or evidence. Donovan also looks to D. Bailhe who believes God can communicate sacramentally through nature and we can know his mercy and compassion through this intuition. Therefore as Donovan says "God, to these theologians is known through "finite things-events and experiences in time and space". Therefore humans need intuition, according

to Mr Power to get a grasp of the reality of God as the divine creator.

Therefore in this specific passage Donovan is setting out his question ~~and~~ as he says "writers who present this position draw attention to the part played by direct, intuitive awareness in other areas of knowledge" Therefore given that Donovan is considering the possibility of intuition being reliable ($2+2=4$, I know I have two hands) he is now debating whether it can be extended to religious matters. This is different from Swinburne's inductive ~~argument~~ argument from religious exp where the conclusion 'God exists' is deduced from the premises. Instead it is not an argument at all but an immediate apprehension of knowledge of God from experience of God.

Donovan then goes on to point out how this idea of ~~God~~ knowing God intuitively fits with established, Christian teaching of God being a personal being present throughout history as he is known "indirectly and in and through such media".

However he then goes on to distinguish being right on logical grounds and psychological feelings of certainty and he associates religious experience with the latter. This is because our sense of certainty is often mistaken, an observation he takes from Bertrand Russell. However ~~Russell suggested that people~~ William Craig would challenge this as he thinks intuition is a good source of knowledge. People rely on their 'proper senses' and therefore as we know by intuition that you or I exist we can apply this to religious experience and God.

Nevertheless this idea of knowing other people through intuition is exactly what Bertrand Russell disputes. Human personal relationships are often champion intuition as a way of describing their certainty that they know the person e.g. "I know he loves me" or "we're soulmates". However people often deceive each other, as Bertrand Russell points out, so this shows how "intuitive awareness in areas that are well established" are not beyond dispute as our sense of certainty is often

Wrong and so we must first refer to intellect and evidence before intuition. This relates to ~~what~~ ~~head~~ Eric Kandel's critique of intuition as he says it is nothing special only are brains trying to process information unconsciously and therefore it should not be used as a reliable source of knowledge in any areas, despite what the likes of H. Power says.

Donovan (he considers the possibility of religious experience being a form of personal encounter (I-You) but he rejects the idea that on it's own intuition is a form of knowledge. Therefore he concludes intuition cannot be the sole guide to gaining knowledge of God but ^{as} it may help in conjunction with other evidence, ~~therefore~~ this does not undermine the value of religious experiences altogether.

Although there are no secondary points to explain Donovan's passage relates to some key debates within other areas of philosophy. By considering the possibility that intuitive knowledge of God exists he is also contributing to the debate to whether God exists. This relates

directly to the natural theology of philosophers such as St. Thomas Aquinas and William Paley.

St Thomas Aquinas devised the cosmological argument that states that due to the chain of cause and effect evident everywhere within nature, the same chain must apply to the world. Therefore it must have a first cause i.e God.

William Paley was a Christian philosopher that devised a teleological design argument based on creation. He said as the world was created so systematically and so methodically, it must have ~~had~~ been designed. He used the analogy of the watch; the watch's design was so ordered ~~and~~ specific and created for a purpose - it was not stumbled across. It had an intelligent designer.

* Therefore although Donovan contrasts with the inductive and deductive arguments of the classical theists - they are all to the same end; stating that the existence of God was something we could know.

* Donovan offers an alternative way to prove God's existence; through intuition.

Donovan is also, mainly contributing to the debate over religious experience as if one could gain intuitive knowledge from God from experience it would only follow that those experiences would be genuine. This supports the views of philosopher Swinburne who argued it was reasonable God would seek to interact with his creations to bring about goodness and this could be felt empirically through the senses and through the religious sense. He argued for the principle of testimony, which said only special considerations (drugs, drink, mental health) could render a testimony unreliable, so we should take people on face value. He also offered the ~~principle~~ principle of credulity which states as so many people have had religious experiences it is the basic principle of rationality to believe them. This also fits in with the pragmatic approach from William James that allows religious experiences to be genuine on the basis of change (radical) (saintliness / it often causes in people's lives. However anti-theist

Dawkins would disagree as he calls religion a virus. Psychologist Freud would also disagree as he called religion a mass neurosis that in it's basic form was a projection of the human mind onto the world.

Finally Donovan is contributing to the debate over the status of religious language because if we could ^{not} have intuitive experiences it only follows we could ^{not} talk meaningfully about it in a way Logical Positivist Ayer and philosopher Flew said. For them religious intuition was unverifiable (Ayer) and unfalsifiable (Flew) and thus was devoid of meaning. However if there was religious ^{knowledge from} intuition it could only follow that we could communicate this knowledge in ways such as "The light of the Lord was upon me."

To conclude, Donovan rejects H. Power and D.M. Baillie's view that "intuitive awareness arising from interpretations of experience can be claimed as a way of knowing" on it's own, but he is cautious not to take an 'all or nothing' approach.

B) In this specific passage, Donovan is arguing H. P. Owen's perspective that intuitive knowledge can provide knowledge of God, ~~as a whole~~ I do not agree with this but prefer to side with Donovan as I do agree 'taking an all or nothing' approach is dangerous.

If we agreed with H. P. Owen we could assume that God exists and is an immanent being who interacts with his creations. Therefore this would have huge implications for religion as there would be no room for atheism, so arguments from the likes of Dawkins or ~~Freud~~ Hume would be made redundant. Furthermore, biblical stories such as that involve revelation or ~~personal~~ ^{personal} encounters would be seen as authority and as a result extremist groups could use intuition to justify their aims. This may as a ^{scientific} result create more conflict between races and cultures, as intuition to them would be self-evident.

Ultimately all intuitions and senses of certainty would be believed so this may cause an ^{emphasis on} individualistic society. This therefore has drastic implications as

If all intuitions are equally valid, ~~due~~ due to the vast amount of differing intuitions would we ever be able to posit the idea of a universal God as everyone would not have the same personal ~~contact~~ ^{concept} with him. Finally, if God is an immaterial being this highlights a serious moral flaw of God in that he does not react when bad things happen. Why did he not send Hitler a profound religious experience to stop him for carrying out the holocaust. Therefore if religious intuition was proved right, along with God's existence the problem of evil would implicate God's morality.

However if Bertrand Russell was correct this would have a huge impact for religious experience, if we were to always rely on intellect and reason for everything. If we apply this to subjective feelings as he does then the notions such as love or trust are no more than a chemical change, like hunger or thirst and thus would be little more than a psychological state. If we applied this to morality this would

have terrifying consequences as we could never condemn anyone else's actions as this would imply there are moral facts about the world that we measure ourselves by. E.g. killing is wrong is a moral statement most of humanity would agree with but as Emotivists point out in their "boo-hiss" theory this is a statement based on personal preference with no evidence to say it must apply. Theories such as Deontology and utilitarianism would also be wrong as they confuse moral facts with opinions, such as pleasure or duty. ~~therefore~~

Therefore as we can see from both A.P. Owen and Bertrand Russell taking an 'all-or-nothing' approach is dangerous for human experience and religion.

Therefore I agree with Russell that intuition can be used to help develop our knowledge and we should never rule for it or against it unless it is in conjunction with other evidence.

The implications for this for religion would be that biblical accounts of personal encounters e.g. Moses and the

burning bush would be dubious or doubtful unless we could find evidence against it. Although one may think this would encourage atheism, I think Donovan's opinion is a good basis for agnosticism in that ~~the~~ evidence of intuition would be undecided but ~~&~~ its authenticity would still be a genuine proposition.

This may allow people to turn away from religion if the *main ^{way} sense of knowing God is doubtful, and as a result people may not strive to act morally anymore as their sense of purpose has had 'holes poked into it'. However I do not think we need evidence of a higher power for people to continue believing or to strive for the better. As Donovan notes in his essay, just saying 'you might not be right' is never convincing for a believer to quit their faith.

For human experience this would also have drastic implications as intuition would be secondary to logic, reason and evidence. Therefore we could never be certain of our every day sense of 'just knowing' and we ~~could~~ would always

need other guides to help us act. F. E. Moore says with his intuitionism that we know instinctively what's wrong and that we act by our intention but Donovan would say this isn't enough.

In a way, science seems to have won here in the fact we need evidence to make claims.

But the main reason I agree with Donovan is that he is an anti-realist so religious statements can still have subjective meaning and content.

We agree with Aquinas who says we must use analogical language to collect facts and avoid anthropomorphism therefore as religious language is separate it cannot be judged in same way, nor have less value.

Intuition is important for a person, not a science classroom.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This answer merited full marks. Overall, it is clearly structured across both AO1 and AO2. It covers a wide range of material. In AO1 it pays careful attention to specific detail within the passage. There is excellent use of scholarship, integrated into the body of the answer.

AO2 answers the full demands of this objective. The candidate evaluates a range of contrasting views and presents explicit material on the implications for understanding religion and human experience.

Peter Donovan's 'Can we know God by experience?' article ~~discusses~~ discusses the possibility of whether we can gain direct knowledge about God through ~~an~~ personal experience and intuition. Intuition is defined as knowledge that we know ~~and~~ without the use of logical reasoning. ~~As~~ Thus Donovan uses twentieth century philosophers such as H. P. Owen and Bertrand Russell in his work. ~~in~~ In this particular passage, Donovan speaks about gaining knowledge through intuition alone without the need for reasoning.

'Religious experience is a source of religious knowledge... arises... from intuition', as Donovan states in the passage, religious experiences provide knowledge to the mystic that cannot be used by scientists or mathematicians. These experiences provide religious knowledge that only the mystic can understand themselves. The knowledge gained is gained specifically through intuition, there were no statistics, facts or other accounts about the experience, it is completely personal and the knowledge gained is personal. The fact that religious experiences exist and provide some sort of knowledge to

The mystic shows that intuition is enough to prove that God exists to a person. Both religious experiences and intuition are completely personal and only that person can understand what their intuition is telling them. This is similar to what William James claimed about religious experiences, they are completely personal and just because another cannot understand them, does not mean they are false. James went on and further explained that there are 4 hallmarks to a religious experience. The first being passivity, the second being ineffable, the third is noetic and finally the fourth is transcendent. Religious experiences have these 4 hallmarks and these hallmarks make these experiences completely personal. This is the same with intuition, intuition is personal and subjective, the knowledge that people claim to receive from intuition cannot be proved or disproved because it is completely personal.

'God is known through finite things... events and experiences in time and space', Donovan states that God makes his presence known through events and experiences. These events

and experiences include religious experiences, creation, nature and order etc. God makes himself known through ~~the~~ finite ~~small~~ things, he makes his presence known both directly (through religious experiences) and indirectly (through nature). This is similar to Aquinas' analogy of attribution in the sense that there is some reflection of God in the world. Aquinas further explains by using the analogy of the bull and its urine, you can ~~see~~ examine some of the bull's health through its urine, but not all of it. That is the same with God, you can see some of his reflection in nature, but you can't see all of him. 'But he is also known indirectly', Descartes further explains that God makes himself known indirectly through nature and the fact that there is some sort of order to the world shows God's presence in an indirect way. However, Hume criticises this and states that if this is true, then God must be reflected in things such as natural disasters. Can we analogically link God to the problem of evil, and if we can then God is not

omnibenevolent.

'Direct, intuitive awareness in other areas of ~~our~~ our knowledge', Donovan discusses the fact that ~~we~~ humans use intuitive knowledge in other areas of our ~~of~~ lives. For example, the people we know. We use the intuitive knowledge we have gained through their actions to judge the type of person they are. We use that intuitive knowledge everyday in our lives when we ~~not~~ meet new people or see ourselves in new situations, the intuitive knowledge we have gained from previous experiences help us to deal with the new experiences in our lives. We claim to know people because of our intuitive, ~~we can~~ humans claim to know things without logical reasoning. The same can be applied to religious experiences, ~~we~~ humans just know things because of ~~that~~ ^{the} intuitive knowledge they already have and gained from that ~~part~~ particular experience. This ~~contrast~~ contrasts heavily with what Ayer states as he argues that knowledge only counts as knowledge if it can be empirically verified. Knowledge that is

claimed to ~~have~~ be true by others is meaningless unless there is evidence which says that knowledge is correct.

The passage finishes by saying 'it is knowledge of God that the intuition grasps'. The passage argues that through intuition, people are able to gain knowledge about God because of religious experiences. Religious experiences rely heavily on the mystic's intuition, and the intuitive knowledge that person has gained about God from the experience cannot be proved or disproved. ~~That is, the intuitive knowledge~~ The intuitive awareness created by religious experiences can be argued as a way of knowing knowledge about God because we use intuitive awareness in other areas of our lives for knowledge, this is no different. This contrasts with Persinger's God Helmet experiment in which people claimed to have experienced God, and they used their intuitive ~~knows~~ ~~ledge~~ awareness in order to come to that conclusion. ~~That is, the intuitive knowledge~~ People's brain waves were being stimulated by an

apparatus that was placed on their head, and their intuition told them that they were experiencing a higher being. The experiment showed that not all cases of intuition intuitive knowledge should be taken as fact.

In conclusion, ~~the passage~~ the passage argues that the knowledge gained through intuition is enough and can be classed as 'knowing'. Religious experiences provide religious knowledge for the mystic and is completely personal. Donovan states that some philosophers believe that knowledge gained from religious experience is accurate because it relies on our intuitive awareness, which we use for our other areas in our lives, and it doesn't cause us problems. Intuition is enough and knowledge gained through religious experiences is enough to prove God's existence.

b) Donovan argues that while intuition can provide some form of knowledge, it is not enough to prove the existence of God.

This is a view I agree with as I believe that intuition is personal and cannot be completely ruled out, however, it is simply not enough to say 'I knew God is there'.

Donovan argues that there is a difference between 'being right' and 'feeling certain'. An implication for understanding human experience is that how are we meant to know when we are right, or when are we just feeling certain? In times of making moral decisions, it is risky to base a decision on 'feeling certain' that that decision is the best one. However, how can we truly know the difference between being right and feeling certain. This is not made clear by Donovan.

If what Bertrand Russell states in the article is true, that intuition about what we know may indeed be false, this has implications for both understanding religion and human experience. It's an implication for understanding religion because the claims made by the Bible which relied

an intuitive knowledge are false, and if these claims are false, what else is false in the Bible? It is an implication for understanding human experience because it can cause problems for personal ~~relationships~~ relationships. As Russell pointed out, people in love think they know each other because of their intuitive knowledge of the other person, yet partners often deceive each other. This could cause many personal issues in relationships such as trust issues.

Donovan doesn't rule out all religious experiences and argues they all have some sort of meaning. This has an implication on religion because anyone can claim to have experienced a religious experience, and according to Donovan, it would automatically be true. Religious experiences would lose their special meaning and significance. They would no longer be a special experience caused by God because now everyone can claim to have a religious experience and no one could argue

against them.

M.P. Owen ~~arg~~ stated that God is in nature and God is accessible to everyone. All humans can have a direct contact with God. This has implications on both religion and human experience. The implication on religion is that God is not transcendent, he is available to everyone, everyone can know him. He loses what makes him special and mysterious. The implication on human understanding is that because Owen claimed anyone can contact God, people can use that excuse to ~~commit~~ do immoral acts and claim 'God told me to do it'. People wouldn't be able to argue ~~back~~ back. ~~Communicating~~ God may become an excuse to ~~commit~~ commit crimes or deviant acts and society would just collapse.

In conclusion, ~~while Donovan agrees that religious experiences~~ I agree to a certain extent of what Donovan argues in his article. I disagree with the view

That all religious experiences hold meaning because anyone can claim to have experienced a religious experience, it doesn't make it true or significant. I agree with Bertrand Russell that intuition, can in fact be wrong, and what people think they know, might not even be the actual truth. Donovan's views on intuition are views that I agree with here because I believe that intuition is different for every person, it is personal and we use intuition in our everyday lives. However, intuition is not fact, it is not reliable evidence to prove God's existence because it can not be empirically verified.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This candidate was well-informed about the topic of religious experience. This background knowledge was used to good effect in applying a range of detailed material to the Donovan passage. There was effective use of scholars to examine the passage, including Aquinas, Hume and Ayer.

There were good philosophical debates in AO2 including the distinctions between 'being right' and 'feeling certain'. The candidate engaged in critical debates regarding the contributions of scholars such as Russell and Owen to this topic.

H - H. P. Owen - acts, special moments

R - ~~Rudolf~~ Rudolf Otto - mysterium tremendum, fascinans

R - Richard Swinburne - inductive, cumulative, testimony

W - William James 4 feature I - no words W - nature T - too quick

P: no condition

D - ~~D. Z. Phillips~~ Donovan - feeling certain / being right

W - Wittgenstein - lang. James - Philosophical investigations

N - Nietzsche - Übermensch - subjectively meaningful, not objectively true

S - ~~S. Strauss~~ Strauss - shift to find meaning

B - Bultmann - demythologisation

J - John Hick

P - Peter Vardy - anti realism - car crash

W - Wittgenstein 'Tractatus' duck (abbd)

A - Ayer

M - Michael Perseus

F - Flew

S - Swinburne - & Mitchell (ip time)

P - Peter Cole = don't know God

D - D. Z. Phillips -

(a) Donovan believes that religious experiences are true and meaningful for the individual, but he states that they are not absolute proof of God. He explores Martin Buber's idea that our relationship with God is an I-you relationship and is mutual and holistic.

Donovan argues with a Kierkegaardian sense of

intuitive knowledge. He says that 'truth is subjectivity' and it is not what you know but how you live, H.P. Owen complements Donovan by saying that we can know God through special acts and moments, just like we can know people. This complements Donovan as Donovan believes that religious experiences are true for the individual.

Donovan refers to religious statements that Rudolf Otto explains in 'the idea of the holy' as wholly other. He states that there are 2 parts to this numinous experience. *Mysterium tremendum*, the tendency to invoke fear and trembling, and *mysterium fascinans* the tendency to attract and fascinate. This complements Donovan's view that religious experiences are meaningful for the individual.

Richard Swinburne also complements Donovan in his principle of testimony and his inductive and cumulative arguments. The inductive argument states that we can experience God so therefore he exists, and people who have had experiences look for similar characteristics in others who have had experiences. The cumulative argument states that if we put all arguments about religious experiences together it makes one convincing one, and Swinburne's principle of testimony states that people in general tell the truth, so if someone says they have encountered a religious experience, we should believe them. This complements Donovan's idea that we should believe that people can have religious experiences and that they are meaningful for the individual.

William James also complements Donovan with his 4 features of mystical experience. Firstly is ineffability which says that there are no words to describe a mystical experience. Secondly is noetic quality which gives us an insight into the true nature of reality, thirdly is transiency which states that mystical experiences pass too quickly to be explained, and finally passivity which says that a mystic has no control over their experience. This complements Donovan by explaining how a mystic feels after and during an experience and why they are so difficult to explain, yet they are true.

Donovan refers to ~~being~~^{feeling} certain and ~~feeling~~^{being} right, an example he uses is the Tennessee's pentecostal snake-handlers. They ~~are~~ feel certain that they will not get bitten, but they are not right due to one of the snake-handlers getting bitten. This explains how Donovan says you can feel certain that you have had a mystical experience, but you are not necessarily right about God existing.

Wittgenstein in his late work in 'Philosophical Investigations' complements Donovan using his language game theory. Wittgenstein says that religious language is like a game, you must understand the rules to understand the game. He uses surface and depth grammar to explain this, surface grammar is non-empirical and doesn't tell us much about a person, for example 'Are you going to Derby this weekend?' This ~~see~~ question does not give us any insight into the person who is asking it, however depth grammar

"expresses a passionate commitment to a system of reference" and is empirical and we can tell a lot about a person from it. For example 'Are you going to heaven?', this leads us to thinking that this person is religious and possibly goes to church on a Sunday. Wittgenstein ~~uses~~ he explores the ideas of private and communal language in his late work. Communal language is something everyone can understand and private is something only you can understand. He uses his "beetle in a box" to explain this. If everyone had a box with a different object in but they were all labeled 'beetle' everyone would call their individual object a beetle. This is an example of private language because it is meaningful to the individual. This complements Donovan as Donovan believes religious experiences to be meaningful to the individual who has experienced it, which is an example of private language.

Nietzsche also complements Donovan as he agrees with Donovan's view that religious experiences are not objectively true but are subjectively meaningful for the individual. Nietzsche believes we should be more like the Übermensch. In 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra' Nietzsche says we should 'give meaning to the Earth' and 'transvalue values'. He believes this to be subjectively meaningful. Like Donovan believes religious experiences to be subjectively meaningful for the individual.

Strauss* and Buttmann also complement Donovan's view. Buttmann is trying to 'demythologise' stories such

as Adam and Eve to find the kerygma (abiding truth) and Strauss is arguing for a shift to find the true meaning of a story. This complements Donovan as he believes peoples experiences to be meaningful to them.

(b) There would be many implications if Donovan's view were widespread and believed by many. Firstly, there would be increased secularisation in society, for example: more religious education in schools, universities and colleges. There would be more seats for Bishops in the House of Commons, and there would also be an increase in popular culture, ~~for~~ such as TV programmes about mystical experiences, and less appearances for people such as Richard Dawkins in the media.

John Hick would firstly disagree with Donovan's view that we could know God through intuition and that religious experiences are meaningful as through hicks eschatological verificationism he says that we can only know God when we die, not whilst we live, he shows this through his celestial city example, 2 people are walking down a road, one believes at the end of the road there will be a celestial city and the other does not, they will only find out when they get there, not before, just like we can't know God before we die.

Peter Vardy also disagrees with Donovan with his

anti-realism view, he says that things are different in different forms of life, for example. If a car crash were to happen, a Buddhist may believe it's karma that made it happen, a Christian may believe it was because they had done something God didn't agree with and an atheist may think it was just bad luck. As Vardy explains, things are different within particular forms of life.

Wittgenstein's early work in 'Tractatus' also disagrees with Donagan. Wittgenstein uses the duck rabbit to explain this, he says that some people see a duck and other people see a rabbit, it is ambiguously interpreted, just like religious experiences are ambiguously interpreted, therefore disagreeing with Donagan's ~~view~~ view that religious experiences are meaningful for the individual.

A. J. Ayer also disagrees with Donagan by saying that religious experiences are meaningless as they are not empirically verifiable (known through the senses) or analytic (true by definition).

Michael Persinger also challenges Donagan's view on religious experiences as he uses his 'God helmet' to show how religious experiences can be induced. The 'God-helmet' makes people believe that they are having a religious experience, this shows that religious experiences can be induced making them meaningless.

Antony Flew and his 'falsificationism' idea also challenge Donagan. Falsificationism states that if you

do not believe that your belief could be false then it is meaningless, Donovan is not willing to accept that his belief could be false therefore it is meaningless.

However, Richard Swinburne and Basil Mitchell respond to Flew's falsificationism principle. Mitchell states that people can have non-propositional faith, whereby you believe something to be true even if there is evidence against it, & he uses the example of the parable of the partisan, whereby the partisan meets a stranger who tells him he is the leader of the resistance, even when there is evidence of the ~~par~~ stranger working against the resistance, the partisan still remains faithful because he has non-propositional faith. Richard Swinburne agrees with Mitchell and uses the 'toys coming alive at night' as an example. He says that children believe their toys to come alive at night, they do not believe that this could be false, but it is still meaningful to them. Therefore Swinburne and Mitchell complement Donovan by saying your belief is still meaningful even if you don't believe it could be false.

Peter Cole challenges Donovan by saying that there is no way God could exist, we have never encountered him and we do not know where he is so how could we know he exists? He uses the example of that if we ~~seen~~ recognised someone in that person's hometown we would assume it was them, but if we recognised someone out of that person's hometown we would probably believe it is not be them. We have never seen God so he cannot exist.

Finally, D. Z. Phillips also challenges Donovan by saying that religious language is about morality not immortality. It is about living a moral life now, not when you die. This is backed up by Jesus in the gospel of Matthew in which a rich young man asks Jesus what he should do to gain eternal life. Jesus replies 'sell all you have and give to the poor' because it is about leading a moral mortal life, not about being moral when you die.

I disagree with Donovan's view that religious experiences are meaningful to the individual as there are many convincing criticisms to prove that religious experiences are meaningless and that Donovan is wrong.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This candidate has developed a distinctive style regarding the use of scholars within an answer. Virtually every paragraph is constructed around scholars. Sometimes they are used in relation to their contributions to the topic and in other paragraphs there are debates and comparisons between scholars. This method may not work with some candidates and some tasks. This candidate, however, has refined this style to a high level of sophistication. It is worthy of full marks.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are encouraged to develop important study skills. This unit opens up the possibility of developing a range of study skills applicable to a number of career and HE routes. There are many excellent sources available. One noteworthy edition is:

The Arts Good Study Guide 2nd Edition 2008 Open University Worldwide, Chambers, Ellie and Northedge, Andrew.

This includes a scrutiny of:

- A range of reading and note making techniques
- The craft and process of writing good essays
- Significance of analysis and evaluation
- Preparing for examinations.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

Ofqual
.....



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL.