

Examiners' Report
June 2014

GCE Religious Studies 6RS03 01

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Introduction

It was a pleasure for examiners to mark candidates' contributions to this paper in 2014. The standard of work has risen considerably even over a 12 month period, and is the outcome of gradual development over the last few years. Teachers are to be congratulated on preparing their candidates so well, and candidates to be praised warmly for rising to the occasion in the exam. Some traditionally weak areas have seen real growth in understanding and candidates seem far more able to respond in detail and at length. More candidates are making connections between this paper and 6RSO4, which adds real depth to their answers. Although the familiar material continued to be used widely, a greater variety of scholars were appealed to this year and their work evaluated at a more sophisticated level.

Philosophy remains by far the most popular option for students to answer on, with ethics maintaining its position just behind. The majority of candidates answer two philosophy questions and one ethics question. Those who study New Testament frequently choose to answer two questions on the biblical text, particularly those who study the Fourth Gospel. Options and topics which could still see improvement are Luke's gospel (although this on the rise), religious language and critiques of religious morality.

A large number of candidates are still using the answer book incorrectly and many still using extra sheets of paper for no useful purpose. Centres are encouraged to inform their candidates of the correct procedures when using the exam booklet.

Congratulations are in order for a particularly successful year with this paper, suggesting that confidence in teaching and learning is at a high level.

Question 01

1(a) The Ontological Argument

This was extremely popular and generally well done. Students had a firm grasp of key features such as deductive, analytic, and *a priori*, and were able to work systematically through the subject. Some candidates employed a very good style using key features to examine more than one philosopher at a time rather than trawl through in chronological order. The standard of the answers has improved with fewer candidates making major errors and most candidates knew at least two versions of the argument and were able to adapt them to the question. A typical top band three answer for AO1 would contain information about Anselm, Descartes, Malcolm and Plantinga but the candidates that stood out from the rest were those who were able to genuinely analyse the distinctive features of the ontological arguments. There were still some weak answers and a few outstanding ones but, by and large, this question was answered competently if not always excitingly and candidates were aware that they needed to address the wording of the question.

Given that this is a complex and subtle argument teachers and candidates are to be congratulated on making it accessible and being able to grasp its challenges to produce competent responses in exam conditions.

1(b) Religious Experience

Many candidates rose to the challenge of this question very well and recognised the implications of the two catalyst quotations. Most chose to interpret them in terms of direct and indirect or objective/subjective experience, which worked well. A few candidates attributed this to Hobbes, which was not necessary but an impressive surprise. Other candidates who were less confident with the wording of the question wrote a broadly standard answer on religious experience and attempted to link it with the quotations with less success. Some candidates were so keen to use the wording of the question that they kept repeating the quotations without relating them to relevant material. However, the challenge of the question was recognised by the examiners who were able to credit a broad

range of material on religious experience.

For part two, candidates overwhelmingly either focussed on Swinburne as the theistic position, or thinkers such as Freud, Marx and Dawkins for the atheistic alternative. This, and use of thinkers from the implication paper at various points in the paper shows that the qualification dovetails well in these final exams and students rise to the challenge of making that link when encouraged to do so.

Some pupils gave a superb evaluation, for example, of a psychological critique of religious experience whilst other quality answers focused on Marx or Dawkins.

Other candidates took a more traditional route and concentrated on evaluating a pro-religious experience stance and were able to effectively cite the strengths and weaknesses of belief in the persuasiveness of the religious experience argument.

In the box, state whether you are answering part (a) or part (b).

b

If the argument from religious experience aims to prove the existence using a posteriori (after experience) evidence and ^{an} inductive argument. The argument can be presented as follows: the following; the existence of x so the experience of x ~~is~~ ~~the~~ signifies the existence of x, the experience of God signifies the existence of God, we can experience God, therefore we need to conclude with the notion that God exists. This argument is based on witnesses and testimony.

Richard Swinburne develops the argument, he claims that due to the omnipotent and omnibenevolent nature of God we should expect him to intervene in his creation, therefore we should expect religious experiences. Furthermore he comes up

with the principles of credulity and testimony, which state that we should believe our own, and other people's experiences, unless we have good reasons to doubt them. He also distinguishes between a private and public experience in attempt to

judge the value of such an experience; if the event took place in public and it broke the laws of nature (miracle) then it will be of more value as proof than a private experience which can't be described with words (mystical experience).

The statement that 'God spoke to me in a dream' is someone claiming they have had a religious experience, ~~whereas~~ whereas the statement that 'I dreamt that God spoke to me' is just a fact. Firstly we need to consider the fact that both of these statements are subjective; it is someone claiming that this happened, ~~however the statement where~~ ~~both~~ ~~someone~~ ~~dreamt~~ both of these statements may be different interpretations of one event.

As Swinburne suggest we ~~also~~ should expect a religious experience, therefore to a religious believer such an event could be explained as a religious experience, direct connection to God, rather than

a dream. This however should be compared to the second statement which was more likely to have been claimed by a non-religious believer.

However we cannot know this for sure due to the fact that both experiences were subjective and only the ~~those~~ people going through them know what actually happened, the fact that

religious experience is open to interpretation means that it loses on its value as proof for the existence of God. H. P. Owen however claims that we can call this knowledge due to the fact that we experience it ~~in~~ through our finite senses.

The transcendent and metaphysical nature of God means that we ~~are~~ can't ever find any empirical evidence for his existence, therefore ~~that~~ ~~can~~ we ~~of~~ religious experience is the only proof we've got. Neither 'God spoke to me in a dream' or 'I dreamt that God spoke to me' ~~is a statement~~ can't be verified with sense data, therefore for logical positivism the statements would be meaningless. However according to Swinburn we need to accept them as we have no reason to doubt them (principle of testimony). The second statement

holds no value as proof, it's a fact. The first statement, however, could provide some proof for the existence of God, however ~~that~~ we would need more information about the witness.

In conclusion the value of each of these views depend on many things, mainly who made them and what effects did they have on those people as well as the circumstances. But when it comes to the statements themselves we have no reason to doubt them and therefore we should accept them, according to Swinburne.

The two statements, although similar at first are very different; one is claiming a religious experience

The other one is stating a fact. Both events rely on someone's interpretation.

b) ii) Religious interpretation of religious experience can be seen as a strength, according to Swinburne we should expect God's interferences in the world due to his omnipotent and ~~omni~~ omnibenevolent nature. Therefore religious interpretation is needed in religious experience, without it we wouldn't be able to recognise religious experience. For example, in case of miracles many sceptics will claim that it's just an extraordinary event which we are yet to understand rather than the work of God. However according to the principle of Occam's razor the simplest explanation is the best one. Therefore religious interpretation of miracles is reasonable.

Furthermore Hume claims that in case of a religious experience we need to take into account the reliability of the witness of those events. He believes that ~~no one~~ ~~all~~ everyone who is; a woman, uneducated, a religious believer, a liar, a bad reputation and comes from a barbarous nation is not a good witness. ~~However~~ sounds reasonable, however if we think about his idea realistically then we come to the conclusion that there aren't many of those people around and Hume is likely for a sufficient amount of ~~people~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~found~~

Therefore we come to the conclusion that no religious experiences can be reliable. However if we consider Hume's argument, apart from the fact that it's unrealistic, we see another problem; a religious believer is considered not a reliable witness, surely according to Hume that was to avoid biased opinion, yet we know that one of the predicates of a miracle is the fact that it has to have a religious interpretation. Therefore Hume's argument in some sense is contradictory.

Furthermore the value of a religious experience should be judged according to the ~~a~~ ~~disrupt~~ it makes in someone's life, ~~not~~ according to William James, not whether it has a religious interpretation or not, if the experience changes someone's life completely then it must have been real, ~~just~~ for e.g. the example of St. Paul in the Bible, who became a Christian through such an experience despite his previous hate towards Christianity. Conversion experiences are the best evidence for the value and reality of religious experiences, ~~the~~ even though they often have a religious interpretation.

According to @ Donovan we should not

forget about the value of an individual / intuitive experience. Michael Bourke in his 'I-how? I-it?' argument suggests that we should remember that an i-it experience (indirect) would be cold and impersonal, we ~~we~~ need a intuitive experience to

create a connection to God. Both of these ~~the reason to suggest the~~ Both of these views seem to suggest that if ~~we are a~~ religious experience is concerned about our connection to God then surely we need to ~~take~~^{see} religious interpretation as a strength, even though it's subjective.

In conclusion all religious experiences are subjective and therefore open to interpretation, however that is not such a bad thing, it may hold little value as objective proof for the existence of God, yet holds a huge value as individual proof. We cannot disregard ~~subjective experience~~ non-empirical experiences just on the ground that they cannot be proven. Our emotions cannot be proven yet they still rest and influence our lives. This is a strong argument for a religious believer but holds no value for a non-religious believer.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

A strong response to both parts of the question.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

The candidate has been able to use their well learned material to respond to a slightly unexpected, but legitimate, question type.

In the box, state whether you are answering part (a) or part (b).

a

~~The ontological argument is a priori~~
A distinctive feature of the ontological argument is that it is a priori, meaning it doesn't need ~~an~~ evidence to validate its claim. Its ~~deductive~~ ^{analytic} analytic, meaning it is true by definition alone and it is deductive, meaning it points to one possible conclusion.

St. Anselm put forward the distinctive features of the ontological argument. He drew on Psalm 53:1 which said "the fool says in his heart that God does not exist." He said to say God doesn't exist is absurd, he called this 'reductio ad absurdum.' He argued

that God's existence was a logical necessity. He defined God as "that than which nothing greater can be thought." He said that when believers or non-believers speak of God they intuitively understand that he is greater than all human beings and is supremely perfect.

Gaunilo, a French monk, responded to Anselm in his writings 'The Defense of a Fool.' He said that Anselm's argument was not logical and needed to be rejected. He used the example of a perfect

island. We must picture the perfect island in our minds, for the island to exist it must be inferior to the same island existing in reality. If the island is truly the most excellent it must exist. We cannot bring something into existence by defining it as superlative.

Anselm responded to this by saying that although ~~the~~ Geonilo was right in the case of the island the same objections could not be applied

when the Ontological Argument was used of God because the island's existence is contingent, whereas God's existence was a necessity.

Descartes put forward another distinctive feature of the ontological argument. He wanted to prove God based on reason and logic to allow him to reject other people's reliance on experience, which he found unreliable. In his trademark Argument he realised that the very act of him doubting proved to him that he existed inspiring his famous saying "I think therefore I am." He also argued that existence was part of the essence of God just as three angles in a triangle add up to 360° , he called this the unchangeable

Essence. This did have its limitations as he felt God was different because God must possess all the perfections, existence is a perfection therefore God must exist and always have existed.

Leibniz came up with another ~~distinct~~ distinctive feature. He said that God must exist due to possessing "possible predicates" He argued that the perfect being must, by definition, be the one being who possessed all and only positive predicates. Existence is a predicate, therefore God must exist. It would be meaningless for God to possess all the predicates and not to exist.

Norman Malcolm was the person who modernized the argument. He agreed with Kant that existence was not a predicate, he also said God cannot ~~stop existing if he already exists and~~ come into existence if he did not already exist and he could not stop existing if he already exists. He felt that if God exists at all it's in an eternal, necessary way. He did concede that his argument would not convince and atheists but that

The believer would understand the necessity of God's existence, and

that he is not impossible, and therefore the truth God exists would make perfect sense.

Alvin Plantinga³ put forward another distinctive feature, he used the example of possible worlds to argue his case. He deduced we cannot say there is not a possible world in which God exists, therefore he must exist in all possible worlds, including our own. If he possesses all the attributes of God in all the possible worlds then he must be maximally excellent.

(ii) Although the ^{distinctive features} ontological Argument puts forward some interesting and exciting ideas about the existence of God, there are still ^{many} weaknesses levelled against it.

Aquinas said that God's existence is not self-evident because we need to have some prior experience of God to know that he is true. It is impossible

to have a mental concept of the non-existence of truth as it is a contradiction in terms. Aquinas also questioned whether anyone would accept Anselm's definition of God as "that than which nothing greater can be thought." He felt that although we can approach an understanding and awareness of God he will always remain unknowable to the finite human mind. He also felt that more than a definition needed to be provided.

Kent was known to have demolished the argument. He said existence was not a predicate because this does not tell us anything about the object that would help us to identify it. He argued that to say something exists is to say a concept has been actualized and that there is at least one example of it existing in reality.

He deemed the argument a failure as it made a false assumption about

existence. He said existence can only be contingent because we cannot "define something into existence." His character, nevertheless, said that something can only be proved a priori if its opposite implies a contradiction in terms. If it does it is inconceivable. Everything can be conceived not to exist therefore nothing exists a priori.

Bertrand Russell said "It is easier to feel convinced that the ontological argument must be fallacious than to find out precisely where the fallacy lies." What he meant was that although he couldn't pinpoint it exactly he knew the argument was weak. Denkinel deemed the argument infensible and said it sounded like children arguing in a playground. He said "It lacked any single piece of data from the real world."

Although there are many weaknesses I disagree with the claim. I feel that the ontological argument does

a valuable job in attempting to show the existence of God. I agree with Descartes that existence is part of what God is. I also agree with the 'positive predicates' argument put forward by Leibniz because God is ultimately perfect and must exist. Therefore I do not think that the argument is weak.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

A lovely, long and well understood exposition and evaluation of the argument.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Full and lengthy answers are essential to high grades on most occasions.

Question 01

1(b) Religious Experience

Many candidates rose to the challenge of this question very well and recognised the implications of the two catalyst quotations. Most chose to interpret them in terms of direct and indirect or objective/subjective experience which worked well. A few candidates attributed this to Hobbes which was not necessary but an impressive surprise. Other candidates who were less confident with the wording of the question wrote a broadly standard answer on religious experience and attempted to link it with the quotations with less success. Some candidates were so keen to use the wording of the question that they kept repeating the quotations without relating them to relevant material. However, the challenge of the question was recognised by the examiners who were able to credit a broad range of material on religious experience.

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Question 02

2a Life after death

Answers on life after death were much stronger this year, including many very good and scholarly answers than previously on reincarnation and rebirth although some suffered from repetition of documentary accounts of past lives and insufficient focus on philosophical themes such as evidence, identity and coherence. Resurrection was generally well used with reference to biblical teaching and Hick's replica theory. Candidates who chose immortality of the soul were able to use Plato, Descartes and Kant with confidence. Only a few candidates did not seem to have enough material to write substantially on one belief only. However, some candidates would definitely have gained from thinking more carefully about which topic they did in i) as they evidently could have written more on the topic they chose in ii) thereby accessing the greater number of marks available for this part of the question. Nevertheless, candidates clearly appreciated the need to evaluate in part (ii) and were able to draw on broad evaluations of belief in life after death as well as critiques of the chosen theories. Overall, a topic which is attracting a higher number of able candidates and for which all candidates appear to be much better prepared.

In the box, state whether you are answering part (a) or part (b).

i) Many scholars believe death is the end of physical life and is inevitable. Life after death comes from the beliefs in ancient cultures of China, India and the Middle East. The belief in life after death is desirable as death is unknown

and there is great scriptural support for it. In this essay, I will examine the

A first key feature of one belief about life after death: reincarnation.

A first key feature of one belief about life after death is its philosophical basis of dualism. Dualism is the belief that the soul and body are distinct, separate

entities however they can influence each other. There are three dualistic beliefs: the soul and body are the body; the soul and body influence

each other. There are three dualistic ^{views} beliefs; ~~the~~ ^{influences} the soul and body are the body; the soul and body influence each other equally and the soul and body are distinct. Plato uses dualism with his ^{two worlds} world of forms; the real physical world and the world of forms.

Another key feature of reincarnation is the transmigration of the soul. This is ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~reincarnation~~ the soul being ~~reincarnated~~ transferred to another body. The soul is in a cycle of ~~reincarnation~~ ^{samsara} being reincarnated. This is a Hindu belief and Hindu's ~~bel~~ aim is to reach moksha which is liberation from ~~samsara~~ ^{samsara} and reunion with Brahman; the ultimate reality. Karma is the sum of all actions and ~~it~~ decides the circumstances of the next life.

A third key feature of reincarnation is ~~the~~ Justice. Hindu's believe reincarnation is a ~~fair~~ ^{fair} natural law and a perfect justice.

Karma is the law of cause and effect and has a fair and just basis. If you ~~live~~ ^{do} a bad life ^{actions} then you will ~~go~~ ^{go} to have a bad life however if you

do good actions, you will have a good life. An example of this is that Mother Teresa was good throughout life so would be reincarnated as a rich man for example. However, someone like Hitler would be reincarnated as a plant or dung beetle.

A further key feature of reincarnation is its scriptural foundation in the Vedas. Brahman is pure, undifferentiated conscience and its power expresses itself through the universe which is maya, temporary and dependent. 'Just as one casts off worn out garments.' This is taken from the Bhagavad Gita and explains how reincarnation is as simple as changing clothes.

~~There are many key features of~~
A final key feature of reincarnation is Hick's logical model. He says that him at age two, TH2 had a different appearance, conscious-self, and thoughts as him at age 66, TH66. However, they have some memory so are same person. This supports remembered past lives such as

that of Imad Elwar who remembered a former life of a man who's life was nothing like his own.

There are many key features of ~~to~~ reincarnation however how does a different belief, resurrection ~~provide~~ ^{a basis for} a stronger belief in life after death?

i) A first reason to why ~~belief~~ resurrection provides a stronger basis for life after death is because of the greater ~~strong~~ evidence of Jesus' ~~prototype~~ resurrection which is wrote about in the Bible and ~~the~~ he was a physical being, and witnessed by Mary Magdalene. However, ~~Para T. Penelhum~~ believes

~~that there can only be automatic and unquestionable identity if bodily continuity has been maintained.~~
~~Resurrection does this as remembered past lives prove.~~ *

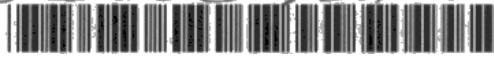
Another reason that resurrection provides a stronger basis for belief in life after death is because ~~that~~ of it's philosophical basis of ~~materialism~~ ^{monism}. J. A. T. Robinson ~~believes~~ ^{says} that 'man does not have a ~~soul~~ ^{body,}

he is a body, he is flesh animated by soul'. This means that the soul and body cannot be separate as they are one. However, another reason why resurrection doesn't
~~As a third reason the~~
present a stronger basis for belief in life after death is because ~~the~~ ~~body~~ ~~is~~ ~~not~~ ~~always~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~soul~~ ~~is~~ ~~not~~ ~~always~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~body~~ for example at death, the soul leaves or in a coma, the body is lifeless but the soul still exists therefore they must be

~~separate. I feel that J.A.T. Robinson is right because he believed that the soul is the life essence of the body therefore rejected Plato.~~

At first reason to why resurrection provides a stronger belief in life after death is because Perry believes that memories are misleading, false and cannot be relied upon. An example of this is alzheimers where people eventually forget their family. However, a first reason why resurrection does not provide a stronger basis is because ~~re~~ Plato uses dualism with his world of forms which helps to explain how the soul forgot the world of forms when it

was reborn into this body therefore
yes, therefore, ~~the~~ ^{the} soul is separate
from the body. I believe ~~that~~ ^{Plato's} Plato's
uses of dualism in his whole two forms
theory help to support ^{greatly} resurrection
~~Contrary,~~
* Another reason that resurrection
does not provide a stronger
basis is because there are
many more examples of remembered
past lives and near death experiences
where the soul leaves the body so
they must be separate
I agree with this because ~~the~~ ^{the} evidence
for remembered past lives is ^{greatly} ~~greatly~~ ^{researched} ~~researched~~.



Turn over ▶

In conclusion, though both beliefs
for life after death provide a
strong basis though I do believe
resurrection provides a better argument.
However, the question of life after
death is answered by the ~~scientific~~ ^{scientific}
verification therefore, we will know
when we die.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Another good example of how the candidate has ensured that they have a good deal of material to reproduce in the exam and the time to do it.

In the box, state whether you are answering part (a) or part (b).

(b)

(i) The view that 'a study of religious language shows that it is complex' may be presented within the analysis of analogy and myth and symbol as they aim to explore the possibility of God's existence through positive assertions, contrasting to the Via Negativa, as Divine existence is said to be in the realm of infinite existence. Although this enhances the complexity of religious language, as Braithwaite maintains that it is non-cognitive and can thus not be verified by sense experiments, such ways of explaining religious language (analogies, myths and symbols) bring such unempirical utterances back

into the realm of human understanding allowing theists as well as atheists and agnostics to gain a deeper insight into the possibility of God.

Aquinas developed the analogy of attribution (when two things are related) and the analogy of proportionality (when two things are related but differing in proportion) to enhance understanding and valuable knowledge of God whilst retaining the view that as God is beyond human comprehension and thus to mortal

being vague proves superior in its attempts to describe God; subsequently analogy allows one to make distinctions and comparisons without losing sight that God is proportionately more powerful than humans for example. A more modern interpretation of analogy was ~~was~~ created by B. Ian Ramsey who ~~is~~ defined the terms 'models' and 'qualifiers' to enhance meaning. For example, a model may be wisdom as we understand the term from human experience, but the qualifiers of 'infinitely' or 'perfectly'

denotes that God's wisdom is beyond human wisdom. Thus, although religious language is complex in that it can not be based on factual proof, it is rendered meaningful through analogy as one can make useful comparisons and consequently come closer to understanding God.

Moreover, myths and symbols show that religious language is not just a void of meaningless assertions as stated by Ayer and Freid, but that it is a complex form of expressing religious emotions and truth claims. Myths are present throughout Biblical scripture, such as the creation stories, often described as 'aetiological myths' which set out to explain the

myths' which set out to explain the origins and perplexing features of the world. Although some fundamentalist Christians argue their literal meaning, they attempt to portray moral codes and mythical teachings; essential for the believer in enabling them to 'de-code' their faith. However, the fact that myths are passed on through

generations, noting their memorable and vivid quality, and Plato set out to explain life after death through myth, such detailed teachings which are meaningful to the believer note religious language's complexity.

Symbols, described by Tillich as a means of allowing ones soul into the 'ultimate reality' as he used the ^{example of a} symbol of a National Flag, whilst differentiating between mere signs and complex, in-depth symbols, which allow the believer to understand religious language that would not normally be describable through simple language. Such in-depth study, denoting that religious language constitutes highly intellectual thoughts and concepts, shows that, compared to cognitive language, meanings for humanity and teachings for society are intrinsic throughout religion, whilst

explaining how one can draw conclusions from mortality and project them onto Divine existence; enhancing cultural development. Subsequently Tillich argues that symbols enhance understanding

for the uneducated to dilute religious complexity by bringing a moral awareness to religious assertions.

In conclusion, myth, symbol and analogies serve to enhance religious traditions, context and understanding whilst subsequently noting that the complexity of ^{the study} religious language aids to religious teachings

(ii) The Verification debate, outlined by the ~~top~~ Philosophers such as Moritz Schlick, Rudolf Carnap and Ayer, maintains the theory that all religious assertions (alongside art and metaphysics) are meaningless as they are not ~~likely~~ eligible for empirical verification. However it is logical to see that such a contradictory debate, as the Verification principle is claimingly unverifiable, has no logical sense due to the fact that emotions (unverifiable assertions) have meaning to the whole of creation.

The logical positivists, developed from the Vienna Circle in the 1920s arguing that "the meaning of a statement is the method of verification" (Schlick), though such claims do fail to take into account the meaning of religious language to theists; thus the view that religious language should be rejected is erroneous. Although Voltaire argues that if God does not exist then it is logical that humanity would make it up, subsequently supporting Ayer in that religious utterances are fallacious. Randell argues that religion serves a special purpose by binding communities together through common elements of faith. I believe Randell's view to hold more logic; religion provides comfort and hope to believers and the Verification principle fails to note this; arguably the principle is biased in that it is determined to overlook any possibility of God.

However, one may argue that the verification debate does show that religious language should be rejected

as there is a distinct lack of evidential proof in the existence of God. Religious language fails to fall into ^{the category of} analytic

propositions (a priori) by which knowledge is gained through logical reasoning, or synthetic propositions (a posteriori) by which knowledge is proved true or false by sense experiments. Arguably religious assertions hold no true meaning; for example religious experiences can not be proved and thus the lack of evidence refutes the argument. This view would be supported by Freud who notes that religion is the 'universal obsessional neurosis of mankind'; they hold no value as religion is simply a way for humanity to overcome inner psychological conflict, stress stemming from the structure of society and fears of the dangers of the natural world. Through the dissolution of religion ~~we~~ we would advantageously live according to the reality principle rather than the pleasure principle thus supporting the verification debate that religious language should

be rejected as it poses no meaning in mankind; simply giving false perceptions of a God that does not exist.

In conclusion, I remain adamant that religious language should not be abolished due to the advantages and logicity of

religion. Something, such as Christianity, which has established, archaic traditions provides a base for community life and the hope of a better future, ~~and~~ ^{and although} ~~Man would~~ contradict this through false hope of the proletariat, its importance in culture is evident. Thus the Logical Positivist doctrine is erroneous.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This candidate is confident with the full range of religious language issues which has enabled them to gain high marks on both parts of the question.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

With this topic, students cannot risk leaving out some areas of religious language in order to focus only on that which is their favourite.

Question 02

2b Religious language

Some candidates clearly wanted to be able to write about the Verification and/or Falsification principles in part (i) and so unfortunately skirted around the options outlined in the question before settling into part (ii) with more confidence. Candidates who attempted analogy and / or language games were the most successful, although those with a solid understanding of Myth and Symbol produced some impressive material including references to Paul Tillich, D F Strauss and Rudolph Bultmann. Most candidates who wrote about analogy were able to talk about attribution and proportionality but the strongest students were able to discuss remoteness and excellence and make reference to the work of Ian Ramsay.

In part (ii) most students chose verification and the majority were strong answers, although when a falsification response did appear it was usually of a very high quality. It was wonderful to see so many candidates writing confidently about Hick, Hare, Braithwaite, and Swinburne, along with Hare, Mitchell and Flew. The potential for overlap between this topic and the Ayer article studied in 6RSO4 was fully appreciated by many candidates and is doubtless one of the reasons why answers to this topic have consistently improved over the last few years.

Question 03

3(a) Critiques of religious morality

Fewer candidates answered this question than expected, particularly given that last year some candidates indicated that they were keen for a full question on this topic. The responses were wide ranging in quality. Most students covered Dawkins and the Euthyphro Dilemma and frequently conceptual issues were lost with content bulking out the body of the essay and veering off into general description. Those students who chose Marx or Freud often fared better in this aspect and were able to offer a more technical answer. The accessibility of Dawkins' critique makes it very useful material to offer in response to this question, and should not be discouraged from doing so, but often candidates failed to evaluate it effectively. The best answers made reference to scholarly refutation of Dawkins from McGrath and Tinker, and critiques such as the straw man or cherry picker fallacy. Answers to part (ii) tended to rely on personal opinion on the lower end of the scale.

In the box, state whether you are answering part (a) or part (b).

b

i) Natural moral law is a deontological approach to religion. It ~~was~~ was created by Anstottle, however developed by Thomas Aquinas, 13th century too who argued that humans have a purpose given to us by God and we must fulfil them. His argument is a priori as he believes the knowledge we ~~para~~ have is universal and we do not need external sources to tell us how to behave, only to reinforce what is innate within us.

Aquinas believed that natural law is evident in the world. In the bible, St Paul said that moral ~~law~~ law was evident all around us through Gods creations and nature. God created us and has a purpose for us all.

Aquinas developed 4 types of law, the first being eternal law, whereby Gods wisdom and knowledge is evident through divine law. This is where we get guidance through religious scriptures.

and the church to help us to fulfil God's purpose. Natural law shows us God's power through the environment and finally human law, we follow the governing body's manifesto and ideologies, whilst still being faithful to God and completing our purpose. Aquinas believed that all humans wish to worship and seek God, those who don't still act morally, therefore pleasing God in the process.

Further to this, Aquinas created the primary precepts, which tell us how to behave, and reinforce the a priori knowledge we have of how to fulfil God's purpose. The primary precepts are worship God, ordered society, reproduce, learn and the most important one Aquinas believed; live. He further went on to talk of secondary precepts which help us to complete the primary precepts. For example to worship God, we must go to church or pray from home. In order to reproduce we must have sex for no other reason, other than to reproduce, which

no contraception must be used. Finally to live, we must not kill, as we are all God's creation and only he has the right to give or take life, we must not murder or undergo abortions. If we stick to these Aquinas believed we would fulfil our purpose to God.

Real and apparent goods show us how we may think we are being morally good, but it is

not actually the case. An apparent good is something we think is good for us, e.g. watching TV instead of doing homework, however this is not the case as our education is important development in becoming a moral person and to uphold the precept of learn. A real good would therefore be to learn and not do what we enjoy - but what will make us a better person.

Furthermore, he talks of interior and exterior acts. An interior act is something that is just good, and exterior act is something we do because it makes us feel good. If we help a blind person cross the street, this is good as we are performing a moral act and bettering ourselves as humans.

Aquinas understood that some circumstances needed special consideration if it seemed to be complicated to uphold the precepts. He therefore created the doctrine of double effect which allows flexibility within NMC. If a woman wanted an abortion this is considered wrong, however if the woman had cervical cancer and needed to remove her cervix and in the process kill the baby, this is a double effect and therefore special circumstance would be deemed acceptable.

Bernard Hoose created proportionalism which he

believed created more flexibility for NML. He said that although we ~~do~~^{do} have a purpose, more flexibility needs to be taken in NML as Aquinas leaves little room for importance in relationships, such as family. He believed that we should focus more on personal relations and uphold precepts he thinks are important such as love, care, compassion to others, ~~the~~ ~~and these are the~~ ~~precepts~~ ~~for~~ allowing more flexibility to NML.

ii) Although it may be seen that NML cannot survive criticisms, other factors point out

that it can. for example Aquinas believed that you do not have to be religious to follow NML and fulfil the purpose in which God sets us. If atheists act according to the precepts they are becoming a more moral person and developing their morality - in the process pleasing God. However, Aquinas states that everyone wants to worship God, so although he says that all can follow NML, his previous statements suggest otherwise throughout his theory. Therefore this shows us how NML can fail to survive criticism.

Furthermore, Aquinas' theory is argued to be out of date, another reason why it fails to survive criticism. His teachings he suggests are out of date and the primary precepts cannot therefore be upheld in our society as

views on things such as sex have changed rapidly since he devised this idea. Although, in reply to this Aquinas believed that the primary precepts are eternal objective truths and can never go out of date, thus saving it from criticism roused against it.

Finally, it would seem once again that it

does fail to survive criticism as there is much confusion within NML, laying with the interior and exterior acts. What would happen if we did a good interior act, but it made us feel good and we gained pleasure from this as it benefitted ourselves? Would this then be seen as exterior? Perhaps more development is needed to improve the quality of the theory.*

To conclude, I believe that NML does fail to survive the criticisms against it - due to unclear standards it wants us to uphold, further, the inflexibility it provides humans with in situations such as abortion, rape etc.

*Thus showing, it fails again to survive criticism.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

A full and detailed response to this popular ethical theory.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Ensure a good balance between parts (i) and (ii)

In the box, state whether you are answering part (a) or part (b).

a

The relationship between religion and morality is often taken for granted. The question that Dawkins and Nietzsche ask is can you be moral and not religious or religious and not moral? And does the existence of a moral law presuppose a moral law giver. Dawkins and Nietzsche try to ~~show~~ ^{undermine religious morality and argue} in their critiques that you can be moral and not religious.

The anti-theist Nietzsche puts forward the view that 'God is dead' and he wants people to ~~change~~ ^{change} their attitudes to religious morality as he claims it is 'a suicide of reason' to obey a god who does not exist. Nietzsche also believed that religious morality is out of date, he agrees with Russell who stated "Ancient religious taboos such as those concerning sex should not govern in a contemporary world".

Dawkins also attempts to undermine the link between

religion and morality. He agrees with Nietzsche but is far more extreme because he agrees that "religion is a virus" and ^{believes like Nietzsche that it} is "injurious to society". He ~~states that~~ claims religion spreads from "I mind to the next" "infecting both young and old". ^{By using such} ~~harsh~~ language, ^{he} attempts to undermine the link between religion and morality.

"Slave morality" is the idea put forward by Nietzsche when he tries to ^{undermine the link between religion and morality and} show that morality should be independent ^{create} of religion. He believes we should ~~make~~ ^{create} our own morality and make up our own minds without the fear of punishment or the hope of reward. However, is it not

logical that we should expect good to be rewarded and bad punished? Kant, ^{who is the} ~~believer's~~ main proponent of deontology puts forward the idea that we should "do our duty though the heavens fall" because "ought implies can". Similarly, Atkins thought that we should not be persuaded by religion to do good, he said "It is a more noble occupation to be a good ~~be~~ atheist than a good believer" because atheists are ^{I think} not trying to earn "brownie points".

Dankins is very extreme when he makes the claim that "religion is dangerous". He cites the examples of 9/11 and 7/7 which I agree are relevant, however I think religion has done a lot of good for example all the work of Mother Teresa. He conveniently

doesn't mention the bad that atheism has done for example Hitler, Mussolini or Stalin. I would disagree with ~~him~~ ^{Dankins} who said "we thought religion was harmless nonsense, 9/11 changed all of that". I think Ward is right when he says "Religion does not cause intolerance, intolerance uses religion".

Nietzsche believes we should be "ubermensch" who fight injustice on earth, he believes that the hope of eternal justice takes away the impetus of restoring justice on earth. I disagree, although this view is comforting, there are many ~~exist~~ believers ~~the~~ who campaign to fight injustice like the International Justice Mission and thus I think this view is invalid.

Perhaps some people find Dankins idea that "morality evolves" the most convincing view because

"Morality evolves" the most convincing view because they believe the Bible is out of date. Dawkins states that the shifting moral zeitgeist is far better than religious morality and he seeks to undermine this link between them. This is the idea that we are moral, for example we don't kill each other, because we need each other to survive and reproduce to the next generation.

The two critiques definitely try to undermine the link between religion and morality, but in my opinion, they have failed because the link is as strong as ever.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Well learned material which shows a solid grasp of the topic.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Do not be discouraged from using Dawkins' critique. Some teachers are afraid this is not appropriate scholarship, but it is part of an important ongoing debate.

Question 03

3(b) Ethical theories

The majority of responses were to be found amongst answers to Deontology and Natural Moral Law, with Virtue Ethics continuing to be the least popular of the theories, although in the hands of an able candidate it fared well. Many weaker attempts to answer Virtue Ethics seemed to confuse the theory with Natural Moral Law, and Natural Moral Law with Kantian Deontology. As previously, stronger candidates were able to write at length on Deontology and Natural Moral Law employing a range of concepts with confidence. Ostensive examples are always more effectively used when they are based on real life issues rather than the typical hypothetical and rarely observed cases such as that of helping an old lady cross the road. The best answers were able to tackle concepts such as a priori synthetic in relation to Deontology and real and apparent goods in relation to Natural Moral Law.

Deontology – These answers were generally of a good standard although there was a tendency to launch straight into Kant’s views without establishing the concept of deontology first. In most cases details were well understood and carefully examined. In part ii) there was an interesting variety of critiques of the theory often bringing in aspects of meta-ethics to support their ideas.

Natural Moral law – Candidates often introduced their answer with useful reference to classical theorists which provided a good basis for development to Aquinas. There were some instances of list-like answers just going through the principles and their application. In part (ii) the candidates often based their critique on the issues of homosexuality, infertility and its masculine bias all of which is relevant but sometimes unbalanced the response.

Virtue Ethics - This gave an opportunity for candidates to explore the conceptual issues more clearly. The part (ii) responses were often better as they could offer contrast to deontological or teleological theories and were fairly sure of scholarly support.

There was more evidence of pre-prepared answers on ethical theory. One examiner reported eight answers consecutive answers on deontology which were almost identical, with the same examples, the same turn of phrase and the same structure. This ensured a good standard but did not allow the extra flair which would raise the answer to the highest level. Perhaps there is something to be said for giving candidates confidence to produce their own responses and developing their own voice in these familiar areas.

Question 04

4(a) Justice, law and punishment

Responses to this question are steadily improving in quality year on year. This was a very fair question as it gave candidates the opportunity to connect law and punishment before confusing the issue with justice, although weaker responses were still very descriptive of different types of punishment, particularly capital punishment and every day examples but stronger responses dealt well with Rawls, Mill and Hobbes. Part (ii) was on the whole a mixed response which delivered few surprises if part (i) was weak, but candidates who were confident in part (i) were able to extend their discussion effectively in part (ii). Some candidates included so much on justice in part (i) that they had little to add in part (ii) and either missed out law or punishment. The question provided the opportunity for and advanced consideration of justice but many candidates were running out of time and were not able to develop the ideas fully. However, those who had the time made some very interesting connections.

Q4b) Ethical Language

Some very good responses were found this exam series and once again, this is no longer

a last resort question. 'What is good' was discussed well, along with the Naturalistic fallacy and Intuitionism. There were however many candidates who filled up part (i) with emotivism and were left with little to add in part (ii) - a lesson to be learned here in reading the question properly in advance. Intuitionism was not in evidence as much as it could have been. In part (ii) other theories were not analysed enough by way of comparison, and emotivism was just outlined in the weaker responses. The best responses drew at length on Ayer's approach to emotivism and to critics such as Alastair McIntyre.

In the box, state whether you are answering part (a) or part (b).

b

Problems regarding the use of ethical language arise in the conflicting approaches of scholars in answering meta-ethical questions such as 'What is good?' 'Good' is a descriptive term used by most in practical statements, however ~~scholars~~ ^{non-naturalist scholars} have raised problems in the use of ethical language when ethical naturalists such as Bentham use the term prescriptively, owing to a value judgement, with no logical grounds with which to do so. J.A. Burns identifies 36 different meanings of the term 'good' showing how ultimately 'good' is subjective and open to a wide range of interpretations. Having such a ~~subject~~ subjectivity placed on such a weighty term as 'good' causes much problem in ethical language given the moral and cultural relativism that Vardy notes, "human behaviour, given its richness and diversity, arguably needs a moral

account that can cope with such depth and diversity".

G.E. Moore identifies the problems regarding the use of ethical language in his 'Principia Ethica' from 1903. Here Moore focuses on the problems scholars such as Bentham cause in attempting to define 'good' by reference to non-ethical ~~properties~~ properties such as 'pleasure' stating that it

doing so, ~~showing~~ not one is guilty of committing a naturalistic fallacy. Moore maintains that 'good' is a simple term that cannot be broken down, just as 'yellow' is yellow 'good is good and that is the end of the matter'. This demonstrates the problem Moore has raised regarding the ~~interest~~ 'unhelpful' use of the term 'good' in attempting to define the term.

Moore develops his non-naturalist stance in his 'Open Question Argument' which ~~states~~ follows that when 'good' is defined by relating by reference to non-ethical terms such as 'pleasure' we can pose the question: 'if pleasure is good, and x is pleasurable, is x good?' Since the answer to this is always open, Moore demonstrates that 'good' cannot be defined and our answer to meta-ethical questions such as 'what is good?' can never be settled as, 'good is one of those innumerable objects of thought that are themselves incapable of definition'. Many see

Moore's argument ^{from naturalistic fallacy and open question argument} ~~is~~ ~~alternately~~ ~~wrong~~ ~~that~~ ~~ethical~~ ~~language~~ ~~is~~ ~~meaningless~~ raising difficult issues for the use of ethical language, however Moore did believe in the existence of objective moral knowledge by way of intuitionism.

Thus, 19th century empiricist raised new problems regarding the use of ethical language in his 'Theoria of Human Nature' proving as he error of the is/ought gap, Moore saw that there is nothing in a descriptive sentence, such as, 'oranges are a good source of Vitamin C' describing

what 'is' but allowed us to logically move to the value judgement, (ought), "you ought to eat oranges". In the same way Macneil argues there is nothing in describing what 'is' 'good' & as Bentham does in his Act Utilitarianism, 'good is that which promotes ~~the~~ the greatest happiness for the greatest number' but ~~allowed~~ allows us to advocate we ought to behave in this way which brings about the greatest happiness. Furthermore, morality should be based on de facto values rather than ideal values of an unlikely ideal moral way of living, thus demonstrating the problem the is/ought gap brings regarding the use of ethical language. Hume's empiricism ^{popular way of thinking} during the enlightenment era led him to denounce Hume's Fork, summarising

his view and ~~come~~ with the use of ethical language. Hume has categorized all statements as either deductive, a priori, ~~synthetic~~ analytic or inductive, synthetic and a posteriori, forming the two prongs of the fork. Hume stated that since ~~some~~ ethical statements such as 'stealing is wrong' do not conform to either end of the fork and thus have no factual/cognitive meaning, and there can be no such thing as moral knowledge.

Therefore Hume and Moore both demonstrate the problems scholars have faced regarding the use of ethical language in attempting to define 'good' leading to an error in the is/ought gap and a complete naturalistic fallacy.

complete naturalistic fallacy.

i) Many scholars have attempted to solve these problems and demonstrate ethical language is still endowed with some propositional meaning.

Wittgenstein and the logical positivism of the 1920s Vienna Circle influenced A.J. Ayer's denial of the ~~ethical~~ non-cognitive theory 'Emotivism' introduced in 'Language, Truth and Logic'. There Ayer demanded that since no ethical language is verifiable in terms of empirical tests, there can be no cognitive meaning deduced from it and therefore he reduced all ethical language to merely ~~expressions~~

"moral sentiments", "exclamations of thought" or "expressions of preference" as MacIntyre states. He argued when people make statements such as 'murder is wrong' they are doing nothing but expressing their like or dislike towards the crime and is merely the equivalent of shouting "Boo! Murder!", hence the nickname "Boo/Hurray Theory". Therefore, Ayer's emotivism certainly is not in keeping with his claim to provide a solution to the problems as Ayer merely demonstrates a further subjectivity in ethics.

C.L. Stevenson's development, then perhaps offers a ~~better~~ solution to the problems of ethical language regarding Hume's statement that there can be no moral knowledge, as he shows the disjunction of ethical language, to express certain attitudes or preferences of the speaker, and to persuade the listener to share that belief. Whilst his development of emotivism is

belly. Whilst his development of emotivism is commendable in his deeper investigation into the meaning of ethical language, it still fails to provide any to his case but emotivism provides a solution to the problems, as it still regards ethics as subjective, and only endowed with meaning to the speaker.

Perhaps then, Moore's intuitionism may be able to provide a solution to the problems brought on by Moore and him. Here Moore answers that while 'good' cannot be defined independently, there can still be an

objective moral knowledge by way of our intuition, our "intuitive infallible knowledge". A view supported by Ross and Prichard, who sees intuitive knowledge as the duty form of 'genuine knowledge'.

Russell sees meaning in ethical language as expressing wishes or commands and Emmitwartz maintains ethics determines kind a community together. Therefore giving a solution to Moore's problem that there is a meaning in the use of ethical language.

However, whilst intuitionism is in keeping with our idea of a conscience, it is not until we see the flow from the moral and actual relationships that various people intuit to different things that we see the failure of intuitionism, along with emotivism. The 'ethical non-necessity' as put by Woddy is providing any solution to the problems of ethical language.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

An excellent example of a well sustained essay on ethical language, fully justifying full marks.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

This topic is complex and sophisticated and justifies an approach that reflects this. Don't attempt to oversimplify ethical language issues.

Question 05

5 (a) Ashoka

This was a popular question, but not answered as well as it has been in previous years. It seemed that some candidates were thrown by the focus of the question on the "contextual issues surrounding Ashoka and how they influenced his life and work". Some candidates ignored the question completely and simply wrote biographical detail from Ashoka's life, with little or no attempt to explain how these issues influenced him. The stronger responses considered the extent which particular events influenced his life, such as the various battles and meeting with Buddhist monks. Other candidates considered the influence of popular belief systems, particularly Brahmanism and specifically the notion of dharma; which they argued Asoka re-interpreted. Other candidates argued that Ashoka was influenced by the pluralistic environment, which made him open to new ideas.

On the whole scholarship in part (ii) was mixed. Some candidates explored with great effect the extent to which the edicts made no mention of specific Buddhist doctrine. They wanted to argue that Ashoka was using Buddhism as a form of social control, of which the edicts were part. Other candidates argued that the teachings on the edicts were appropriate for the laity and in keeping with the Buddha's Teachings to Sighala. It was unfortunate that some students ignored the question completely and wrote an answer they wished had been presented: examining Ashoka's contribution to the development to Buddhism, without any reference to the edicts themselves.

In the box, state whether you are answering part (a) or part (b).

a

(i) ~~Ashoka~~ was the 3rd member of the Mauryan dynasty, after taking over from his father Bindusara, and grandfather Chandragupta - the founder. He began his reign as a tyrant, but later became known for being one of the most influential ~~the~~ Emperors of India.

Ashoka's upbringing played a key role in his life and work he was later revered for. He was raised in accordance to the Kautilian statecraft theory, meaning 'science or material gain' as outlined in the Arthashastra by Kautilya. He was aided by Chanakya, Chandragupta's

Brahmin minister, where through the means it states that a king must use any means to achieve his goals, and require no moral sanction. King recognized that Ashoka was exposed 'within theory, and then in practice' to these values. It was these ideas which began Ashoka on his reign as a tyrant - making them very influential.

He was also exposed to many faiths throughout his life. His mother was thought to have connections with the Adiyakha, and his Grandfather is said to be a Jain. Additionally, his wife Devi was a Buddhist, a contributing to his tolerance of other religions. This was emphasized in his later work, where he is said to encourage diversity within beliefs.

Through legitimizing his reign as a tyrant, he brought the country into the Kalinga war. Casualties ran into the thousands, and such identities that this was a turning point for Ashoka. King declares this through

saying that 'afterwards he very earnestly practiced the dharma' which he understood as righteousness. Through this war he felt remorse, and began on the spiritual path,

a lot of his future work was based on this change of thought and attitude - highlighting its significance within Ashoka's life.

~~After~~ ^{Shortly after} this change of heart, Ashoka was distributing gold to various Brahmins when he became disgusted by their greedy manner. Ironically he claims that he then saw Nigrodha, a Buddhist monk and was impressed by his 'tranquil deportment', he was invited back to his palace, where it was agreed that he would relay the Dharma to return for good. Soon after, Ashoka converted to Buddhism.

Evidence for this can be found on the edicts he engraved saying 'I have been an Upasaka for more than three and a half years'. This is clearly influential on his later work,

which scholars recognise stemmed from Buddhism.

Through becoming a Buddhist he then set up social reforms such as banning animal sacrifice, and regulating the slaughter of animals to 2 deer and 2 peacocks a day.

This showed great ahimsa (non-violence) and correlates with the pre-Buddhist

precept 'To abstain from harming sentient beings.' This is evidence to show that Ashoka was largely influenced by his conversion. McCambrie emphasises this through 'he replaced violence with righteousness.'

Consequently, it is clear that there were many major influences in the Ashoka's background, which contributed to the work he is now known for.

Ashoka was born in 306 BCE, and came to throne in 268 BCE, as the

(ii) During his reign, Ashoka set up edicts with his life and work

which scholars recognise stemmed from Buddhism.

Through becoming a Buddhist he then set up social reforms such as banning animal sacrifice, and regulating the slaughter of animals to 1 deer and 2 peacocks a day.

This showed great ahimsa (non-violence) and correlates with the first Buddhist precept 'To abstain from harming sentient beings.' This is evidence to show that Ashoka was largely influenced by his conversion. McCambrie emphasises this through 'he replaced violence

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Ashoka was born in 306 BCE, and came to throne in 268 BCE, as the

(ii) During his reign, Ashoka set up edicts with his life and work

inscribed, and showing his interpretation and belief. However, scholars still question whether these edicts prove that Ashoka was a Buddhist, or even if he interpreted Buddhism correctly.

Firstly, the positioning of Ashoka's edicts show how he was a Buddhist and his interpretations of it. A key place the edicts are to be found in places which commemorate Buddhist history, such as that of Lumbini park where the Buddha was born. This provided the first recordable historical dates of Buddhism, and clearly exemplify that Ashoka interpreted this as a key Buddhist place, and therefore commemorated it.

Additionally, the edicts are

enriched with key Buddhist teachings! He talks about how we should all follow the 'middle way' which is considerably similar to the Buddhist Fourth Noble Truth - *Marga*. They also hold similarities with the laymen's code of ethics *Sigala Vada*

Sutta (laymen's code of ethics), as he promotes ideas such as being respectful to our elders - just as that is seen in their scripture. This clearly emphasises how Ashoka had an accurate interpretation of Buddhism and its teachings. We can be sure that these were done by Ashoka, as his decree, that the personal touches on them emphasise his faith.

However, Side claims that the ideas enshrined on the edicts were 'not unique to Buddhism'. Evidence to support this conclusion is that he frequently refers to a 'Heaven' but never the key Buddhist concept of Nirvana. Additionally, he promotes ideas such as *sila* (morality), but never progresses on this to further teachings of *prajna* (wisdom). This idea of key to seeing the way things really are, and making progress on the Buddhist spiritual path. This makes it arguable to see that Ashoka had

a naive understanding of the drama' as Basham claims.

Yet the Buddha could be using *Vajra-kavala* (skillful means) in order to encourage people to begin the spiritual path. The Buddha taught his idea through the parable of the burning house, to extend the goal in Buddhism as, followers were not ready to hear the finer teachings. Likewise, Ashoka has employed the same skills in encouraging those in interest to surrender into the spiritual path. Cash explains that the 'represent compassion informed by wisdom' - emphasizing the thorough understanding and interpretation of key Buddhist teachings.

Nevertheless, it is still claimed that these teachings were on the edicts were a way of controlling his empire. Through only emphasizing neutral concepts such as a 'heaven' and 'jita', the messages were applicable to all. This helped maintain power and cohesion within the empire, and clearly empowers

Now Ashoka did not understand the truth about Buddhism.

Consequently, it is clear from the evidence from the edicts Ashoka inscribed, ~~whether or~~ that Ashoka did not fully understand the key concepts of Buddhism. Those which were included are thought to be to ensure the survival of his empire. Kings argue this was, because 'Ashoka was first and foremost a king.'



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

A very strong example of an essay on Ashoka.

Question 06

6 (a) Dukkha

This was a more popular question than in recent years. Some scripts legitimately located dukkha within the 3 marks of existence and explored the relationship between the three. Most students were able to explore the different types of Dukkha and many explored the concept within the structure of the Four Truths of the Noble Ones (Four Noble Truths). This provided a context for the discussion about dukkha, such as its relationship with the other three truths. Centres are once again urged to remind candidates to use their study of the set texts to support candidates when answering both parts (i) and (ii) questions, as this can be extremely effective. Intriguingly, candidates took a variety of approaches when answering part (ii). Some wanted to argue that understanding anatta and anicca is essential; dukkha less so. Indeed they argued dukkha is an inevitable consequence of anatta and anicca. Others focused on Buddha's summary of his teaching "I teach dukkha and the cessation of dukkha". They wanted to argue that only when one truly understands dukkha, can one bring about its end. Its end is Nirvana. These candidates used the King Milinda text to support their argument, recounting the description given to the experiences of suffering of an Arhat. Weaker scripts failed to engage with the question and wrote ambiguously and hopefully about nirvana, with no reference to dukkha.

Question 06

6 (b) Bodhisattva Doctrine

The style of this question seemed to be problematic for some students. No one wrote about the transfer of merit; most candidates focused on skilful means and the Bodhisattva vow. Of these, the better scripts rooted their answers in the Lotus Sutra. They explored the notion that these themes are central messages of the Sutra, which also explains its popularity. They argued that while skilful means explained why the original goal was beingm, was not a goal at all; the vow explained the new and greater goal. Many candidates did not focus question, this time writing at length about the stages of the Boddhisattva with little or no focus. On the whole part (i) was answered well by many candidates. The quality of answers demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the role of the Bodhisattvas within the Mahayana tradition, though a surprising number of candidates presented the out of date and confused view that the Bodhisattvas 'put off enlightenment', which modern scholarship now completely rejects and views as a misunderstanding on the part of early Western scholars. The Trikaya was well explained in many scripts. Poor time management, and not a lack of understanding, led to the weaker scripts in this question.

In the box, state whether you are answering part (a) or part (b).

b

The term bodhisattva literally translates to 'being of enlightenment', 'bodhi' meaning 'enlightenment' and 'sattva' meaning 'being'. Williams describes a bodhisattva as "someone in their essential being that is motivated by the desire to achieve enlightenment". The Theravadin conception of bodhisattvas is that they are very rare, special beings, such as Shakyamuni Buddha. However, for Mahayana Buddhism all beings have tathagatagarbha (Buddha potential), and so the ability to become a bodhi bodhisattva is contained within all of us.

Prana (wisdom) is essential in the bodhisattva doctrine. When on the path to becoming a bodhisattva, an individual must develop the six paramitas (perfections). These are dana (giving), sila (morality), ksanti (patience), upaya (skill), dhyana (meditation) and prana. Prana is often described as the 'crowning perfection' as without

if the other ^{paramitas} ~~virtues~~ are not possible for example, without prajna we do not know how to give to the right people and so dana cannot be perfected, and prajna is necessary to learn meditative techniques effectively. For a person to be able to make progress along the ten-stage bodhisattva path it is necessary that they carry an awareness of the importance of prajna.

As well as being one of the six paramitas, prajna is also one of the two virtues that are characteristic of bodhisattvas - perfect prajna and infinite karuna (compassion). Prajna and karuna are both typical Buddhist virtues, but their significance in the bodhisattva path is that they are taken to the highest level possible. Perfect prajna is total insight into reality, with a deep understanding of complex concepts such as *shunyata* (emptiness). This virtue aims to see things for what they truly are, which is necessary if one is to become a bodhisattva.

Upaya kausala (skillful means) is the practice of teaching at ^{the student's} ~~one's~~ own level of understanding. To become a bodhisattva it is necessary to practice this effectively, which is the seventh step on the ten-stage bodhisattva path. However, in order to understand the bodhisattva doctrine an awareness of *upaya kausala* is needed. The original teachings of the Buddha were thought to be that we should aim

enlightenment, but the bodhisattva doctrine challenges this and says we should all aim to become Buddhas. This is explained through *upaya kausala* - the Buddha's message to aim for enlightenment is given to those working at that level, whereas the aim to become

a bodhisattva is given to those at a higher level.

The parable of the burning house given in the Lotus Sutra explains this notion - a grandfather's house is on fire with his grandchildren inside and they are refusing to come out. He offers them any toy of their choice in order to coax them out, but when they exit he only gives them all the best, shiniest toy imaginable. The grandfather is like the Buddha who has given his loved ones an ultimatum message as a way of helping them away from danger.

ii) The use of upaya kausala signifies a big difference between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhists. For Theravada, arhatship is the ultimate goal whereas for Mahayana it is to become a bodhisattva. Mahayana argue that the Buddha used upaya when giving the teachings of the Theravada school, and that their goal is the only true one. However, Theravada argue that the bodhisattva doctrine is pre-embellishment, and their goal is the true one. This signifies an irreconcilable difference between the schools as each

refuse to accept the teachings of the other. In the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha is reported to have said "my congregation is now free of chaff, freed from the rotten wood" when ~~the~~ Theravadins left after he revealed the Mahayana teachings, showing how significant this difference is.

However it can be argued that the Theravada goal is not necessarily different to the Mahayana one, it is just a step towards it. To become a bodhisattva one

must first become an arhat, suggesting that the Manayana teachings are simply a development of Theravada ones. This shows that the differences between the schools may not always be very significant.

To add to this, teachings on prana in the bodhisattva doctrine show similarity between the two schools. Whilst the goal of developing prana is different for both schools, it is very important for each of them. Prana is a significant section of the magga in Theravada Buddhism in the same way it is significant for the ten-stage bodhisattva path. The cultivation of prana is one of the most important aspects for both schools, the only difference lies in the fact that Manayanaists aim to deepen ~~the~~ their understanding further.

It seems to be that the differences between Theravada and Manayana Buddhism are shown in

prana and upaya kausala, but are perhaps not that important. The basis of the teachings of both schools remains the same, but the expression of the teachings differ which is where the main disagreements lie.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

A clear essay which remains consistent across both parts.

Question 07

Many responses for both Qs 7 and 8 made for somewhat mixed reading. Many had very valid points, and what was presented made for good reading, but the responses were certainly less detailed and thorough than those for other subject areas. A good example of this was found in 7(a) essays on Bonhoeffer. Reference was quite rightly made to Cheap and Costly Grace, and this was often a most successful part of an essay but few essays explored Bonhoeffer's views on Religionless Christianity or the idea of Man and World Come of Age.

In the same respect, good work was offered on Gutierrez, but it is surprising to note that so few candidates referred to Oscar Romero. That being said the relationship between Liberation Theology and the Roman Catholic Church was successfully discussed, with good factual content.

For 7 (b) virtually all the candidates who attempted this question discussed the Ecumenical Movement. Good understanding was shown of the work the WCC, but perhaps more comment could have been made on the links between the Missionary Movements of the 19th Century and the development of ecumenism in the 20th Century. The seeming isolation of the Roman Catholic Church from this practice of Christianity often made for interesting reading.

Question 08

Those answering either 8(a) or (b) were few in number. There were a handful of responses that barely started, but those that did explored the topic very carefully. It was good to note the way in which candidates could set the beliefs under discussion in an accurate context, and good reference was made to leading theologians who have written on these beliefs. A few candidates were also able to include some 'Implications' style arguments in part(ii) of their essay,

Question 09

9a and 9b Key figures in the development of Hinduism

9(a) Both questions were popular among candidates. For 9a most candidates succeeded in presenting a 'compare and contrast' answer to part (i). They selected key issues for comparison, with ample detail and well-selected examples.

In part (ii) there were some thoughtful discussions regarding the claim that the two selected figures were of limited significance for the development of Hinduism. A fruitful line of enquiry was to trace their respective influences among groups and movements. Some good answers argued that the issue of significance varied from one figure to another.

9(b) Candidates managed the biographical details about Gandhi in order to focus on the question. There was effective use of key events in Gandhi's life which were adapted to the view of Gandhi as an orthodox Hindu and as a reformer. The better answers presented a context for an understanding of the life and work of Gandhi.

Candidates used a good range of material in part (ii) showing the complexity of criticisms made against Gandhi.

In the box, state whether you are answering part (a) or part (b). b

<u>Or orthodox Hindu</u>	<u>reformer</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- caste- simple life- many of his ideas stemming from sanatana dharma e.g. asceticism, ahimsa, satyagraha.- though he calls himself an advaitin - Ishwara, prayer, grace.- doesn't want to completely overthrow caste.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- stop abuse of dharma- reinterpretation of Hindu concepts<ul style="list-style-type: none">↳ fasting↳ swamy↳ ahimsa + examples.- promoting ramraj + ahimsa against the Hindu-Muslim tensions
<u>criticisms as a Hindu:</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- radical interp - not following dharma, losing sight of what Hinduism is.- Encouraged equality e.g. equal to his wife + servants on Tolsty farm. - Against	

Hinduism embodied ideas of caste & shudra.
- could be said that a nehanavada lama
Jew etc. not really a Hindu anymore.

1) ~~monandav~~ Mahatma Mohandas K. Gandhi, a key
Hindu reformer and political campaigner
whose tactics and concepts still live today,
campaigning in an India under great
tension. The domination and occupation
by the British undermined his political
campaigning and it was a time when
Hinduism was subjected to great criticisms
over their lack of a central text and
supposed idol worship by the 'theologically
superior' Christians. Gandhi, during
that early 20th century, wanted to
unite India behind a common goal
at home and to achieve a self
governing India.

Despite his political
campaigning, Gandhi never lost sight
of his own religion and has been
called an "orthodox Hindu" due to
his hold on traditional Hindu values.

This is indeed true as Gandhi, although

describing himself as an Advaitin, held
a firm belief in bhava and in prayer
and grace like many theistic Hindus.
He took a vow of Brahmacharya,
demonstrating his awareness of ashrama

dharma and lived a chaste life, going so far as to live with beautiful women in order to prove his lack of desire. This demons' mate that he held a strong view about traditional Hindu beliefs and that he adhered to traditionally orthodox principles such as ashramadharma.

Indeed, many of Gandhi's tactics and concepts stemmed from traditional Hindu ethical beliefs. His adherence to ahimsa and satyagraha, or truth force, can be argued to have come from the sanatana dharma, the unchanging moral code which underpins the universe which does include non violence and truth. In this way, Gandhi was an orthodox Hindu as he kept traditional Hindu concepts at the heart of his campaign.

Furthermore, though it could be argued that his desire to

prevent the abuse of dharma within the caste system shows a blatant disregard for the entrenched, dharmic, traditional system. Gandhi's aim was not to completely overhaul varna shramadharma. He saw caste as an essentially good concept which had gone astray over time and wanted to protect the vulnerable. In this way, whilst not entirely an "orthodox

hindu", Gandhi respects and mostly adheres to traditional hindu ideas.

It is undeniable, however, that Gandhi was a reformer. He radically reinterpreted many of the traditional hindu ideas to mould them to his own political goal and use them to his advantage. He took ahimsa, a traditionally passive concept, and used it in a much more active form, turning it into a political doctrine, a force in which his followers could take the moral high ground and make the oppressors feel guilty. Fasting, traditionally concerned with self control, was transformed into a political sledgehammer for

the campaign and swaraj was hinged from passive self discipline into a fully fledged political goal and theme for india. Here, Gandhi reforms traditional concepts and adapts them to suit his campaigns.

Gandhi also reformulated the relationship between hinduism and other religions. By using Ramraj and ahimsa, each promoting tolerance and respect of other religions, Gandhi ^{aimed to} transform hindu tensions with muslims and christians by

showing that all are equal and
seeing the same truth. Then, he is
a reformer as he pushed for new, equal
ways of thinking and aims for
a tolerance which hadn't really been
seen before in India.

ii) Gandhi faced many criticisms
as a Hindu, which ultimately led to
his assassination. Firstly, his
radical reinterpretation of Hinduism
was considered to be turning
away from the true origins of the
religion and thus changing it into

something it was not. This criticism holds
some weight, as Gandhi did take significant
Hindu concepts and ~~attempted~~ adapt their
meaning. Ahimsa was transformed into
a political tactic, something it had not
originally been designed for, and
the transformation of Swaraj into Home Rule
does seem like an excessive jump. However,
this criticism seems to imply that Gandhi
was doing what he meant to be a Hindu
and this does not seem to be the case.

Gandhi fully adhered to the original
meanings of these concepts, as he
never promoted harm to another through
ahimsa and Swaraj was a version of
self-control but on a much larger scale as
self-control for the whole of India. In addition,
Gandhi never lost sight of the traditions

passive meaning a swaraj, practicing self-discipline through non-chastity and rejection of ~~western~~ materialism through swadeshi and so this criticism is debatable.

Another criticism has been that Gandhi as a Hindu lost sight of traditional concepts such as varashrama dharma. And that he wanted to radically

overhaul them. This can be seen through his life at Tolstoy farm as he encouraged a level of equality which seems to undermine dharma. He wanted even his farm to perform the same tasks and follow the same duties, insisting that both he and his wife do the housework that would be traditionally expected of a varas. This seems to undermine ^{the} dharma as Gandhi removed the traditional barriers of purity and pollution and insists that all do the same remedial work. This does indeed appear to be Gandhi moving away from Hinduism and becoming less orthodox Hindu.

However, it must be considered that Gandhi wanted equality for all and that this process on Tolstoy farm was a microcosm of his goal for India as a whole. Although he was moving away from Hinduism traditionally, his ultimate

aim was to transform a Hinduism
in a similar way and so his actions
were in the interests of the religion.

To conclude, ~~the~~ Gandhi

was indeed an orthodox Hindu to the
extent that he followed many key
concepts of the religion and ~~also~~ respected
and shared many traditional beliefs such
as Ishwara and personal swamy. However, he
did reform many concepts and aimed for
a greater equality and so these were
ultimately his criticisms of a Hindu
as it was viewed that he was
changing the religion into something it was not.
However, these criticisms seem to ignore
that Gandhi did adhere to his Hindu roots
and did not lose sight of the original meanings
of many concepts and so he cannot be
misjudged as a Hindu.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Thoroughly well planned and
constructed essay on the key beliefs.

Question 10

In the box, state whether you are answering part (a) or part (b).

a

(i) Brahman can be termed in a number of ways, often depending on how a Hindu views the relationship between Brahman and the atman.

Advocates of the Advaita Vedanta such as Shankara see atman and Brahman as ultimately united, and therefore would define Brahman as a universal reality. They see Brahman in terms of samkhya philosophy as everything that is not prakriti (or - matter), as this makes up the illusory reality that hides atman's true nature as Brahman. ✱

This can be seen in the Katha Upanishad, as it says that "from death to death he goes who sees here any diversity" ✱ Thus, Brahman can mean ~~be~~ a universal reality itself, indicating huge significance in Hinduism. ✱ showing him, therefore, as purusha, or spirit.

Advocates of the Dvaita Vedanta, however, such as Madhva, take a dualist perspective, and therefore

a dualist perspective, and therefore see Brahman as ishvara, a personal Lord. Such Hindu view of atman and Brahman, therefore, as separate, as Jamison identifies that Brahman is like the ocean, and the atman is like a drop, both salty water but ultimately distinct. Brahman can therefore be seen not as a reality, but a supreme God. The Bhagavad Gita is ultimately devotional, for example, as it says "through devotion... he enters me immediately". This would have significance for Hindus that practice bhakti, loving devotion, such as ISKCON, who venerate

Krishna

✚ This can also be seen in the Bhagavad Gita during the theophany, where Arjuna sees the universe within Krishna, showing him as a pervading universal spirit.

The term originally signified the power generated from sacrifice in the Vedas, and came to mean the power pervading the universe. Jamison compares Brahman to arctic ice^{and water} that pervades the physical universe, for example. This idea, however, can

for example. This idea, however, can also be seen in the Chandogya Upanishad, when Svetaketu's father and guru teach him that Brahman is like salt dissolved in water, as it pervades and 'flavours' the universe. This again can show Brahman as having significance as a universal reality.

Brahman, however, is still a term that remains largely apophatic. While some may attribute the qualities of

being, consciousness and bliss (sat, cit and ananda), showing him as Brahman saguna, he can also be described as having no qualities, becoming Brahman nirguna. As Jennifer Uzzell-Smith notes, it is interesting that in a culture so rich in visual imagery, there are none depicting Brahman.

Overall, Brahman is apophatic and therefore remains hugely difficult to define. He can, however, often be seen as a universal reality as shown by the Upanishads, although some still see Brahman as a

personal Lord or Ishvara.

His significance can be seen in terms of moksha, a universal and ultimate goal for Hindus that is the union of atman with Brahman, ~~but~~ although in modern Hinduism this has "little if any significance" (Jennifer Uzzell-Smith).

(ii) The debate of whether Hinduism is monotheistic, on the surface, seems easy to disprove.

In the West, Hinduism is often seen as polytheistic, owing to the diverse imagery of different gods and goddesses such as Lakshmi or Shiva. Furthermore, Hindu texts depicting avatars, which may seem to ~~at~~ ~~to~~ adhere to polytheism are ~~to~~ the most accessible to many Hindus, such as the Puranas and Epics, that depict stories involving ^{dharmaic} heroes such as Rama. ~~*~~ In this way, many may view Hinduism and simply assume that it is a polytheistic religion, ~~as m~~

~~*~~ Texts such as the Upanishads that discuss the idea of Brahman ^{as a universal} ^{reality} are only available to the top three castes, so many Hindus may even

practice polytheism, venerating the heroes of smriti texts.

Furthermore, the Hindu trimurti that can be believed to have ultimate control over the universe consists of three gods: Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu. Some may see that if this high and ultimate power is attributed to three gods, Hinduism may be polytheistic.

However, the Upanishads, as shruti texts, do have much authority, and appear to be very focused on the idea of Brahman as a universal reality that is everything, as it says: "from death to death he goes who sees here any diversity". This, however, may not be monotheism, but monism, as Brahman is not presented as a god to be worshipped, but as the reality that must be identified with.

In the Bhagavad Gita, however, there is an underlying significance of devotion. Uzzell-Smith claims that

the end of the Gita is "undeniably^{ambiguously} devotional" as Krishna advises Arjuna to "vow yourself to me". However, the Gita also sees Krishna as the "Great Self", demonstrating an aspect of monism once more as well as some ideas that may be seen as typical of monotheistic devotion.

Overall, it could be argued that, as different strands of Hinduism will worship different gods, Hinduism is polytheistic, not monotheistic. It can also be seen, however, that Hinduism can also demonstrate aspects of monism or monotheism. This signifies that no definitive claim can be made regarding the nature of Hinduism.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

A superb response.

Question 10

10a and 10b Key beliefs

10(a) Candidates were proficient in their use of terms and they made effective use of the set texts. There was a wide range of material with appropriate links made between various interpretations.

On the whole the quality of work in part (ii) was good. Most candidates focused on the issue of monotheism. A few presented work on Hinduism as 'monistic'. In principle this was credit worthy especially when candidates thought through the relationships between monotheism and monism in a Hindu context.

10(b) Candidates took advantage of the structure within the question and based their work on three key ideas. There was some excellent work with fine attention to detail concerning the Katha Upanishad.

In part (ii) candidates identified various ways in which the Katha Upanishad was significant for Hindus. In addition, there were interesting insights into the view that this had a more limited significance than other sources and there was good comparative work relating to the Bhagavad Gita.

In the box, state whether you are answering part (a) or part (b). a

meaning:
what is relationship to atman, shankara + Ramanya.

significance: both personal and impersonal, affects a belief in monsha - is people think there's a Brahmanism, to believe trisome xrt-d
heaven → Jnana (shankara) karma, bhakti (Ramanya + Bhg).

monotheistic:

<u>yes</u>	<u>no</u>
B pervades everything - much like shankara, he is the eternal Gpa. is the the	In reality, murks have become much more of a reality. There is a tendency

<p> a man to part a him, all a the various god's and goddesses are just a means a perceiving him due to his transcendent nature. </p>	<p> to view them as the goal to worship them rather than accepting B through them, even bookline Bhg uses Krishna as a god, saying release me mantra will be given by grace a Ohvara Krishna. </p>
---	---

i) ~~The~~ Brahman has long been considered a fundamental concept in Hinduism. Brahman is considered to be the global soul or macrocosmic spirit which underpins and ^{"flavors"} ~~permeates~~ the entire universe. ^{according to the cosmology of the Vedas} It is traditionally seen as a transcendent, omnipresent being, suggesting a nirguna impersonal view. However, in Hinduism it has become part a tradition to view Brahman as a personal, theistic god with qualities (saguna).

Brahman is expressed in an a number a different ways. As an indivisible being it is traditionally neither

and so cannot be given a gender in the traditional way that Christianity refers to God as He. Brahman is expressed as sat (being) cit (consciousness) ananda (bliss) in a nirguna manner and the

sacred syllable om is viewed as the
manifestation of Brahman in the
sensory world. Despite the perception that
Brahman is indivisible, it is seen as
underpinning and pervading the
empirical universe, for example the
aman is considered to be a part of the
divine, or part of Brahman.

In terms of Brahman's
significance, the way in which it
impacts on Hindu life depends on
a person's view of it. Advaita Vedanta
and Shankara, highlighting that the
samsara is not real, perceives Brahman
to be the traditional necessary being
which ~~is~~ exists as a brute fact and is
the ultimate reality. ~~In this way,~~
~~from the~~ This belief has a significant
impact on Hindu ethics as it shifts
away all purpose of life and the caring
devotion which a ~~traditional~~ view

a personal Brahman would suggest.
It lends itself towards jnana yoga, the
acquiring of self-knowledge, as a means
of shifting away from the sensory universe
and perceiving the ultimate Brahman.
However, Shankara's theory does somewhat
redeem itself by highlighting the role of
jnana yoga and so proposing that doing your
dharma and worship in order to gain a

good rebirth ^{so as} ~~to~~ to become someone
who can achieve jnana is the best
approach.

However, a more traditional
meaning of Brahman, as is highlighted
in Vishishtadvaita vedanta as the Brahman
is a personal God who manifests a loving
relationship, has a profound significance
in belief in life after death. A
belief in Brahman appears to
indicate a belief in some kind of
heaven or loving union which is
achieved after death. ~~But~~ Though
the 'loving' nature of mansha stems from
the theistic view of Brahman, it also
allows for an impersonal union too.
The significance of this is that

hence we must to attain this
or the more goal of union with Brahman
by performing karma yoga, the righteous
performance of actions in accordance
with dharma, in order to negate
the bad karma they have accrued in
Samsara and thus free their souls
into moksha. However, the Bhagavad
Gita highlights that this is very
attaching and that the best ~~of~~ yoga
is Bhakti yoga, the loving devotion
of worship and Brahman which will
bring about grace to free you from

samsara. The significance for
throws here is that concepts such
as puja and laung ^{are entrenched} ~~are~~ ^{as they}
help to bring about the laung relationship
with Brahman.

ii) Traditionally, Hinduism
is a monotheistic tradition. Brahman
is the ultimate and only being which
exists. It pervades the entire universe
and is the only creator, whether
this was done through maya or lila.
Much like Advaita Vedanta, Brahman
is considered to be the one ultimate

necessary being, however it does indeed
pervade the empirical universe which is
real. // The original purpose of the myths
and the creation of Brahman, such
various gods and goddesses and their
avatars, such as Vishnu and Krishna, was
to provide a means for humans to
access Brahman. As Brahman is
transcendent, it is considered impossible
to truly perceive and practice, and so
the gods and goddesses were designed
as a means of worshipping and
directing one's thoughts towards a
specific part of Brahman.

However in reality, the
gods and goddesses have become
much more prominent. Whilst
a belief in Brahman still exists,
the view that it is the only

deity, has become lost amongst the tales and worship of gods and avatars. Even texts such as the Bhagavad Gita appear to tend towards viewing the gods and goddesses as real and part of a polytheistic religion, for example

necessary beings, however it does indeed pervade the empirical universe which is real. // The original purpose of the gods and goddesses of Brahman, such as Vishnu and Krishna, was to provide a means for humans to access Brahman. As Brahman is transcendent, it is considered impossible to fully perceive and practice, and so the gods and goddesses were designed as a means of worshipping and directing one's thoughts towards a specific part of Brahman.

However in reality, the gods and goddesses have become much more prominent. Whilst a belief in Brahman still exists, the view that it is the only deity, has become lost amongst the tales and worship of gods and avatars. Even texts such as the Bhagavad Gita appear to tend towards viewing the gods and goddesses as real and part of a polytheistic religion, for example

It says that the aman will be released by the grace of Ishwara Krishna. The extent to which Hinduism has gradually adapted into a polytheistic religion is demonstrated in the nineteenth century when British Christians criticised Hinduism on its idol worship and polytheistic nature.

To conclude, the claim that Hinduism is monotheistic is true in a traditional sense. Brahman is originally the one true deity and creator of the universe, with all the other gods and goddesses designed to be means of perceiving an individual aspect of the transcendent. However, over time this view has been lost and so in reality, Hindus tend to favour the view of the gods and goddesses as of equal importance and as equal deities to Brahman, thus indicating a developed polytheism.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Another excellent answer from a candidate who has a firm grasp on the material.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Consistency across the whole paper is the route to high grades.

Question 11

It has been noticeable this year that a good number of candidates have had an extensive detailed knowledge of their material, the Qu'ran and scholars. This has resulted in candidates producing some noteworthy answers.

11(a)(i) This was a popular question and answers were mainly competent and pleasing to read. Items receiving marks in the lower levels often lacked specific detail or wrote all they knew of the Caliphs without focusing on the demands of the question. Those achieving marks in the higher levels focused closely on the question and used their material well, often supporting their points with references from scholars, Hadiths and Qu'ran. Candidates selected three features that they considered key and most were able to explain and justify their choice. For 11(a)(ii) Most candidates were usually able to describe why their chosen feature was influential on the development of Islam but the material of those receiving marks in the lower levels was quite descriptive rather than analytical, as in the case of the Shia/Sunni split, whereas others were able to discuss and justify their reasons for selecting their particular 'most influential feature'.

Question 11

11(b)(i) Most candidates answering this question selected one Islamic State and most chose to write about Iran and Saudi Arabia whereas a few selected Pakistan. The answers gaining marks in the higher levels demonstrated a sound and detailed knowledge and also a perceptive understanding of the situation in those particular countries. For 11(b)(ii) The candidates gaining marks in the higher levels focused their material on the question, discussing the tensions between the preservation and adaptation of Islam, giving a balanced argument whereas some candidates referred to problems or repeated material from part(i).

Question 12

12(a)(i) This was not such a popular question as 12b and the answers were variable. Most candidates were able to accurately repeat the content of the two shorter Surah's although those answers dealing with Surah 2 were weaker. The stronger answers were able to explain the key ideas whereas these gaining marks in the lower levels tended to repeat the Surah's in their own words. 12(a)(ii) This was least successful part of this question for most candidates. Some answers were mediocre though there were others that were able to explain the implications of the particular Surahs for Muslim belief and practice; how these affected what a Muslim believes and does; how the Muslim responds to Allah.

Question 12

12(b)(i) This was the most popular question of these two. Weaker answers described the general topic of Sufism rather than focusing on the question about promoting discipline and mysticism. Some were very detailed and descriptive whereas others were less detailed and generalised. Those candidates gaining marks in the higher level selected and used their material very carefully to answer the question; demonstrating a thorough knowledge and perceptive understanding. 12(b)(ii) Most answers reflected a knowledge of why Muslims might not approve of Sufism but some answers were brief whilst others recounted the things done by Sufis that caused offence. The stronger answers examined the causes of offence and reasons for it, drawing suggestions or balanced conclusions.

Question 13

There were insufficient responses to this question to justify comment

Question 13

There were insufficient responses to this question to justify comment

Question 14

There were insufficient responses to this question to justify comment

Question 15

There were insufficient responses to this question to justify comment

Question 15

There were insufficient responses to this question to justify comment

Question 16

There were insufficient responses to this question to justify comment

Question 16

There were insufficient responses to this question to justify comment

Question 17

Responses to 17(a) were often very successful. Luke's teaching on the Kingdom of God was carefully analysed. Some candidates focussed on the teaching found in the parables. Other candidates gave a detailed explanation of the eschatology in the Gospel, and the very best responses merged both approaches to score very high marks. One reference which hardly any candidate explored, however, was the teaching in Luke 17: 20ff.

Answers were broad rather than deep and generally covered all the key aspects. There was a marked improvement this year in terms of the candidates' knowledge and deployment of the biblical text. Scholarly contributions were used more reservedly but more appropriately than in previous years. The best candidates knew the textual sources well and deployed them appropriately. Answers based on Luke, however, were shallower than those for John.

Responses to teachings of the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel read well. Good understanding was shown of the meaning and significance of the term 'Logos'. Candidates also did well to explore the link between the Prologue and the Christological teaching that permeates the Gospel in part (ii)

Weaker candidates, however, couldn't make the connection between the key concepts they had outlined from the Prologue in part (i) to the rest of the Gospel. They began to introduce other themes from the rest of the Gospel not linked to the Prologue. Stronger candidates were able to draw connecting lines between the themes of the Prologue and the rest of the Gospel using evidence and examples. For Luke hardly any candidates made a connection between Jesus' teaching and its impact on the early church – a connection which would have helped them access level 4 AO2. The depth of Lucan answers was somewhat less than for John although an improvement on last year. Candidates were able to demonstrate greater knowledge and depth of ideas and technical vocabulary in relation to John than Luke but candidates using Lucan material were demonstrating more depth and clarity than in previous years.

Question 17

In 17(b) there was a good range of possible purposes of Luke/John explored. A good understanding was shown of Theophilus, and the links between the key themes of each Gospel and its purpose was covered, possible ambiguities in the term "believe" in John 20:30-1 were often discussed, but more could have been made of what "these things" might refer to, for example, does John 20:30-31 refer just to a Signs discourse within the Gospel? In part (ii)

quite a number of candidates lacked the skill of evaluation and weighing up one view over against another. They were too often content to list the options. Almost no candidate discussed whether the purpose of the Fourth Gospel was to replace the synoptics in any way. Such a discussion would have lifted many answers into level 4.

Question 17

In the box, state whether you are answering part (a) or part (b).

2

written with certainty and confidence, the Prologue is one of the most important exegetical cases for the existence of the incarnate Son of God. It is written in a different style to the rest of the Gospel, and in a way that makes the teachings of the Gospel accessible to everyone.

Hooker and Dally remain how the Prologue gives us the "relationship between time and eternity, apostles and prophets, salvation and creation, death and life, faith and unbelief."

Smalles claims, "it is the microcosm of the Fourth Gospel."

The message of the Gospel is clear within the Prologue right from the beginning; Jesus Christ is the incarnate Son of God. The term the

author uses to describe this is "Logos." The notion of the pre-existence of the Logos is clearly laid out from John 1:1, "in the beginning was the word, the word was with

God and the word was God." This echoes Genesis 1, "in the beginning," emphasizing that the Logos is like a rebirth of creation, and the salvation for humanity. Tasker maintains that the Logos was "duelling with the creator before creation began." The fact it existed with God before creation began gives the word great power and authority. Moreover, the Logos is used to illustrate that Jesus was "the light of mankind." The Jews thought that the word of God, Law of Moses, was their guide to salvation, Psalm 119, "your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." However, Jesus aimed to transcend all ~~new~~ Hellenistic, Stoic, and Jewish preconceptions, the strain that the prologue teaches that Jesus is a "completion of the Jewish Mosaic tradition" according to Kyzer. Moreover, the Logos symbolises God's creative breath, "all things were made through him," fulfilling Psalm 33, "By his word the heavens were

made. Finally, the Logos is called a "satisfying rational principle for understanding the universe," by Smalley. She says that the story of Jesus, embedded within the prologue, both helps us to understand salvation and preexistence, as well as dispensing and replacing old Jewish ideas.

Moreover the teaching of Christ the Word Incarnate, "Christ became flesh and made his dwelling among us." John, shows the physical identity which God assumed so that sins could be forgiven, and given relationship with the Father. This fulfilled Isaiah 64, "The Lord made his dwelling among us," and shows that not only does the word of God dwell in the heart of all who believe, but that God became real, tangible flesh so that he could reach himself to humanity. Moreover becoming the word incarnate, Jesus Christ, meant, according to Marshall, "God was no longer unknown." Additionally Jesus is likened to being "the true light which gives light to everyone," opening the eyes of the spirituals blind. The Prologue makes it clear however that there will be those who

"do not recognize the light", and subsequently live in darkness. Smalley describes this as, "the light and dark contrast between Jesus and his enemies is sustained throughout the gospel." However there will also be those who hear the word of God and believe, thus becoming "children of God" according to the Prologue, and reflecting Isaiah 9, "the people walking in darkness have seen a great light." Thus it is clear that by becoming real and tangible flesh, humanity could be exposed

to the true identity of Christ. The word dwelling among us further means that it can equip disciples today, since God has been physically revealed.

Another salient teaching of the Prologue is the concept of the Law already being given to Moses, yet is transcended by the arrival of Jesus who brings grace and truth in all its fullness. "Grace and truth has come through Jesus Christ," marking the abrogation of old Jewish Law and ritual, and arrival of a new message of love and salvation. "The Law had already been given" according to Podd, yet the Israelites failed to carry out God's mission

thus necessary for God to send his ~~son~~ Son as a redeemer.

Finally, the identity of John the Baptist is made clear through the Prologue. John the Baptist came as a "witness to the light", an enigmatic being to bring in the kingdom of God and welcome all the Messiah's followers. This was prophesied in Isaiah 40, "a voice crying out, prepare ye the way of the Lord." Stanton argues whether John, never a humble man born to Elizabeth and Zechariah is more accurately portrayed as "John the witness," since he clearly proclaims later on, "I am not the Messiah." Nonetheless, it is

clear from the prologue that he served as a witness. Drane, in 'The New Testament', remarks upon how he is ~~perhaps better known~~ perhaps did not fully understand the message he was bringing, focusing too much on judgement and condemnation, rather than love and forgiveness; the real reason God sent his son.

Overall, the important ideas of the Gospel are embedded within the prologue, making it's

most significant teaching accessible to all.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

A competent and well signalled part (i)

Question 18

With 18 (a) many candidates stuck closely to the word "inevitable" and that made for worthwhile reading. Plenty of material was found to support this view, and episodes of conflict throughout Jesus' life were explored. Some candidates who were preparing for 6RS041J brought in the "invisible taskmaster" idea which gave the response an extra dimension.

Most candidates scored well here whether using Lucan or Johannine material. They knew political aspects well especially details about Pilate's role in Jesus' death. Not many candidates discussed the theological implications of why Jesus died except for an odd reference to it being 'God's will'. Such a discussion would help to move answers into level 4.

Some candidates are still making basic errors of gospel attribution; for example, much was made, unhelpfully, of the dream Pilate's wife had as found in Matthew.

Surprisingly not many candidates made use of Rivkin as an example of scholarly research on this question and to do such would have enhance many answers.

Question 18

18 (b) made for most interesting reading. Nearly all responses analysed examples of symbolism, but some examples proved more lightweight than others. Good work was done on such symbols as "blood and water", "glorification and exaltation" and "Jesus being in control", but other examples of symbolism, although valid, are less weighty. With 18 (b)(ii), candidates would do well to go beyond the immediate events at the tomb. Valid material can be found in such stories as the meeting on the Emmaus Road, Doubting Thomas, the catch of fish etc. This material can then be used to explore links back to earlier teaching in the Gospel which would then shed more light on the understanding of Jesus' ministry.

Most candidates were able to explain the significance of the resurrection mostly in terms of how it was important to complement the death of Christ as the basis of salvation with some going on to explain how it vindicated Jesus' claims to be the Son of God. Many candidates were able to come to a definite conclusion and offer opinions of their own based on the evidence of the relevant gospel.

Question 18

^a
In the box, state whether you are answering part (a) or part (b). a

1) Throughout the Fourth Gospel, the author writes about the conflict Jesus had with the religious and political leaders and because of Jesus' intention and the position of the Jews, conflict was inevitable.

The religious leaders were afraid of Jesus, he threatened their position of authority, this made it easy for Jesus to be a target for the teachers. Jesus conducted what went against what the leaders believed in.

A major issue of conflict was when Jesus

healed the blind man. Tyler and Reil noted that the Pharisees were spiritually blind and left in darkness. The healing

burial proceedings. He subsequently raised Lazarus from the dead and by doing so, fulfilled his own prophecy 'I am the Resurrection and the Life'. This healing angered the authorities to an extent that they had to call a meeting about Jesus' behaviour where they committed to having him killed. They feared the popularity of Jesus as it was possible that he would cause civil unrest and have the city divided, forcing the Romans to intervene with the possibility that the religious practices would be abolished, because of Jesus. Norma Hooker commented that once Jesus raised a man from the dead, he sealed his own fate. This highlights that Jesus' healings on a small scale, such as the wedding at Cana, were very defied defied purification (as to the raising of Lazarus), conflict was inevitable and this conflict was a major factor in determining the fate of Jesus' life.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The candidate has a clear grasp of the issues relating to conflict in the gospel.

Paper Summary

A successful year with higher levels of student response across all the main options.

A greater range of scholarship used.

Traditionally weaker areas tackled with greater confidence.

Stronger evaluative skills evident.

Some areas still weaker although standards improving.

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



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