

Examiners' Report
June 2016

GCE Religious Studies 6RS02 1B

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Introduction

The 2016 examination season is a testimony to the high level of engagement with selected studies drawn from a very wide range of academic fields. Over the life of this specification, there has been consistent evidence of superb research on topics that are clearly of great interest to candidates. This legacy of academic achievement has been inspirational for examiners whose privilege it is to see what can be achieved by our candidates. The new specification will provide a different assessment experience and centres will find that their excellent resources can be integrated into future schemes of work.

The high standard of work evidenced in June 2016 was no exception to historical high standards as candidates demonstrated a very high level of independent enquiry which clearly demonstrated what their chosen area of investigation had meant to them as a learning experience. Candidates showcased their knowledge of a particular academic field in the way they identified a line of enquiry, clearly expressed their view, analysed key concepts and deployed evidence with coherent understanding of their task whilst fluently evaluating a wide range of source material that they had at their disposal. The enthusiasm for and knowledge of the chosen topic was clearly conveyed in many answers that were truly academic in their approach. A few centres continue to focus on the same or similar topics for all their candidates, whereas other centres permitted considerable choice for individual candidates. Candidates were mostly very well prepared for the examination and it was evident that centres used their specialist resources and interests to encourage candidates to research in depth a particular area of study. The 'Investigations' unit has a definite academic purpose and aims to involve students as active participants pursuing open-ended enquiries with an emphasis on independent learning. Questions were designed to be inclusive of all possible approaches to various topics and all valid answers were considered. At this stage in the life of the specification it is difficult to find new things to report because, in the main, centres possess a very high degree of expertise and this is clearly evidenced in the work that is produced on the day of the examination.

There are still a few areas for development that are reported similarly each year and once again 2016 showed evidence of a small minority of centres that need to take this on board. Centres are encouraged to review their performance in 2016 against all or some of the following points:

- Whilst most centres had entered their candidates for the correct option, there were still a few entries for particular Areas of Study where consideration regarding entry for a different Area of Study may have been beneficial to the candidate. It is important to ensure candidates know which area of their investigation is the best fit for the question they answer on the paper.
- A small number of candidates were not entered by the centre for the correct paper.
- There was evidence of candidates choosing a different question on the paper to the question they had clearly prepared for before the examination. In some of these cases the candidate was using material suitable for Question 1 to answer Question 3 (or vice versa) and not really grappling fully with the demands of the question.
- This practice does not always work to the best effect as the candidate might end up answering neither question as fully as possible. It must be noted that each question was written for ONE of three topics within each particular Area of Study.
- Candidates were not penalised if correct entries were not made or a cross was put in a box that did not match the answer or if no box was ticked at all. However, evidence shows that candidates have decided that the question for a topic that they clearly had not prepared for looked more inviting and selected that question but that did not necessarily mean they were best prepared to answer that question. Whilst it is good to note that fewer candidates than 2015 attempted this approach there were still some candidates in this session who answered a question they had not prepared for and may need to be reminded which question their material is best directed at and be advised to answer that question.

- Candidates using a pre-prepared essay inclusive of centre selected quotes often ignored the question.

Examiners were encouraged to mark positively and to credit all valid material according to the mark scheme and question paper.

Centres should ensure that candidates are entered for the option that matches their Area of Study and that candidates are clear about which question they have been prepared for on the paper. There is still evidence of Centres studying Papers 1B and 1F being entered for 1A. This might be an oversight regarding filling out the form – Centres must choose 6RS02 and then identify which of the seven papers from 1A to 1G is the specific entry.

Variation in achievement was related to the two assessment objectives. These objectives should receive prominent attention in the process of the investigation. Importantly there must be explicit attention to both objectives in the examination answer and also to the question that is intended to focus the answer. Each question consistently referred to the assessment objectives with the trigger word 'Examine' for AO1 and 'Comment on' for AO2. These dictated the structure of the question and helped candidates to plan their answers. It would be advisable for candidates to pay regular attention to the level descriptors for these assessment objectives as a way of monitoring their development and progress during their investigations. The phrase 'with reference to the topic you have investigated' will always appear in the question to ensure that the generic question can be answered with material from any appropriate investigation. The mark scheme itself is generic to all questions but the answer itself is not necessarily generic as candidates are *expected* to use their material to *answer the question*. The purpose of the question is to challenge candidates to adapt their material so that at the highest levels they may demonstrate a coherent understanding of the task based on the selection of their material. Widely deployed evidence/arguments/sources were evident in well structured responses to the task whereby a clearly expressed viewpoint was supported by well-deployed evidence and reasoned argument. There was skilful deployment of religious language in many answers and the fluency of good essays showed command over the material; such command makes for high outcomes and rewards the amount of hard work done by the candidate. Many candidates had clearly learned much in the process and their overall grasp of the issues involved and command over their material was highly commendable.

Candidates at the lower end of achievement struggled with the demands of the question.

These candidates were insecure with their management of material and did not know how to best structure their content to answer the specific question. Success can be undermined by writing up a rote-learned answer which was not adapted to the question set or by answering a question that has been written for a topic they have not studied. In 2016 there was still far too much evidence of rote learned answers using the same structure and material inclusive of quotes; whilst much information was relevant to the topic and consequently was awarded in terms of AO1, there was a significant lack of engagement with the specific demands of the question and consequently marks for AO2 were low, with only generic evaluation provided. This approach is contrasted with excellent praxis whereby candidates were trained to answer the question; arguably, this is evidence of good practice but at the lower end some candidates thought it was sufficient to simply use the question stimulus at the end of each paragraph. The best answers were those which were guided by the statement as opposed to simply '*tagging it on*' to anticipated content. A balanced approach to the question that meets the highest levels of achievement according to both assessment objectives is obviously desirable and the generic question accommodates many possible routes to success whereby any valid approach to the question was credited.

Finally, there is increasing evidence of poorly written scripts that are almost illegible – scripts are scanned onto software for marking and even though the examiner can enlarge the screen many scripts were still very difficult to read. Candidates are strongly advised to develop their practical handwriting skills and then practice writing under timed conditions. Examiners understand the time constraints that candidates are writing under, but this problem regarding illegible handwriting seems to be on the increase. Centres need to

address this issue because the current format for examinations requires candidates' ability to sustain handwriting and academic standards under examination pressure.

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

Question 1

There has been a consistent improvement in the quality of answers to this question over the years and 2016 has to be a vintage year for excellence. The majority of candidates produced thoughtful and authoritative essays which demonstrated comprehensive understanding of key ideas that were discussed critically with confidence and authority. Such essays were well structured, relevant and well written – these candidates gave comprehensive and detailed responses to the question. There was clear evidence of learning of subject knowledge and many candidates were able to use this knowledge to discuss the question in relation to their area of study. This question gave candidates the opportunity to really demonstrate the breadth and depth of their knowledge and understanding of the Philosophy of Religion in the context of the question (i.e. religious experience and claims about God and/or human nature. Most candidates grouped philosophers together in terms of their particular perspective/time period/field (e.g existentialist, Greek, Scientific). Other candidates began with one or two core philosophers from a particular perspective and then made reference to other philosophers whose understanding of the topic supported this particular perspective thus presenting a broad spectrum of opinion on understanding God and/or the holy. This latter approach allowed candidates more scope to explore the issue from different perspectives. Candidates who presented the work of Otto on 'the idea of the holy' were able to better understand the nature and debate of the emotional and intuitive experience of God and/or the holy. This made for an interesting essay which allowed scope for the candidates to engage with the 'ideas' in order to develop and present 'their own opinion' on the matter at an emotional and intuitive or applicable and experiential level in addition to presenting an intellectual analysis.

Evaluation was evident through direct exposition of, and critically appraising, particular philosophical standpoints, mostly through the citing of a number of philosophers and their relevant ideas. This was good to see as it demonstrated a sound understanding of how a number of ideas and perspectives intersect around a particular philosophical issue.

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

Material from a wide range of scholarship was integrated into a coherent response rather than just re-telling a range of views/theories/life/work within the chosen investigation.

There were some outstanding essays where the candidates had a coherent understanding of the task, and responded skilfully to the question with a clearly expressed viewpoint supported by well-deployed evidence and reasoned argument.

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

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

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

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

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

However, it was disappointing that some candidates reproduced learned material with only limited reference to the question and depressed achievement simply through failure to address the question.

The structure of candidate responses in the lower range of achievement were evidently framed by reliance on a model answer which fitted a range of likely questions that might come up. Although such reliance does not negatively impact on examiner marking, it is important to note that such modelling may lead to constraining the natural and nurtured ability of candidates to produce something original and compelling to read. As such, many candidates missed out on a higher level of achievement despite their ability. It is clear that the constraints of this form of rote learning results in weaker candidates finding it difficult to be certain, and indeed confident, about taking a position on the issues being discussed thus depressing A02 achievement.

Most candidates had very good subject knowledge but a significant number did not select the information as readily as one might have hoped and tended to be less analytical. These essays were also the more likely to not refer/answer the question save for the very end of the essay, if at all. An emerging issue this year is the quality of spelling regarding technical terms and scholars and since last year a persistent problem with legibility.

Some candidates had more difficulty with manipulating their material.

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

Whilst they still produced essays of merit, there was evidence of a formulaic style of answers by some candidates who apparently relied on the same source(s) and quotes; A02 achievement was undermined when weaker responses became overly descriptive of religious experiences at the expense of at least some essential philosophical analysis of their meaning and significance.

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

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

Plato states this... From which we can learn... this is interesting when compared with Darwin whose understanding differs from that of Plato in that he... etc.'. Evaluation is more clearly obvious in the latter example.

Nonetheless, the point remains that the most able candidates produced original arguments and wrote in a fluent and interesting way with consistent reference to the question. In some cases analysis and evaluation of ideas was exceptional or very good (as in the majority of cases), whereas some merely listed the opposing/numerous views. There were still a very high number of responses that made a serious attempt to answer the question. The best answers considered the question against the background of the scholarship they had engaged with. These candidates assessed the persuasiveness of their argument in relation to the range of scholarship deployed and many answers were very well done. Exceptional responses tended to respond to the question more directly, thus recognising the opportunity offered by a deconstruction/discussion of the question.

This is an example of a very good essay. The candidate opens the essay with a strong statement of their opinion that is coupled with the difficulties of working through a vast range of material to reach a conclusion. This opening sentence captured interest and indicated the possibility of high calibre work to follow. The candidate in a relatively short tightly written 7 page essay presented widely deployed evidence that formed a structured response to the task. This essay is representative of the quality of work produced by able candidates who skilfully adapt their material to the demands of the question. The candidate explored religious experience through a wide range of scholarship and sustained a consistent line of argument throughout the entire essay. This was a substantial piece of work.

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

Remember answer ONLY ONE question.

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

NOMA - Dawkins
- Gould

Vardy - moral reasons, Ethiopia
Wiles - Hiroshima

Bultmann - Bible

Athens - science

Holland - Conscience

Locke - 'forming' question in eligibility

confusing claims

- other faiths, Hume, D. Sumner

Vardy + Wiles

- nature of religious experience, Aquinas

unreliable

- NOMA, Gould, Dawkins, Bible - Bultmann

- Athens, science

In my opinion, 'the confusing claims from religious experience' do indeed 'make it an unreliable basis' for understanding God / the holy. This is primarily due to the robust arguments against religious experience and the incredibly confusing nature of the experiences themselves.

At the forefront of the issue over 'the confusing claims' of religious experience is the concept of false-positives and false-negatives.

Richard Swinburne writes at length over this issue in his book 'Is there a God?'. He states that religious experiences are often 'not recognised as divinely inspired', yet he also supports the opposite view that 'indeed, sometimes experiences are recognised as divinely inspired, when they are, in fact, not.' In my view, Swinburne's point that it is often difficult to decipher whether an experience is religious or not lends credence to the view that religious experiences present far too 'confusing claims' to be used as a 'basis for ~~the belief in~~ understanding God / the holy'. This is further supported by the vast array of purported religious experience we are expected to deal with. St Thomas Aquinas developed a thesis that there are three main types of religious experience, those which are done by God and could not be done by nature, those done by God that could be done by nature and finally those done by God that are quite often done by nature. Aquinas' view that God operates both ~~is~~ inside and out of ~~religious law~~ natural law is supported by Swinburne's view that God 'can lay aside natural law', yet, for the most part 'chooses not to do so... when performing miracles'. Many in the opposing camp to Swinburne, such as Holland, would write off all religious experiences as 'Coincidence... fakes religiosity'.

Some would go as far to say that the experience itself is manufactured by a mind which seeks religious experience to confirm their own beliefs and will imagine themselves to have had a religious experience when in reality they did not, relating back to Swinburne's view that false-positives are all too prevalent in the realm of religious experience. Hume is a large supporter of this hypothesis, he wrote that 'a religiousist' will interpret an event to have religious significance, despite the religious nature of the event being imaginary. In my mind, this is yet another example of how religious experiences are too 'confusing' to be used as a reliable basis of faith.

Another key issue regarding the 'confusing claims' of religious experience is the variety of religions who all purport to have miracles performed by their deity. Swinburne discusses how the entire Christian faith is based on the purported resurrection of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, he tries to write off the argument of evil and suffering by stating that it 'makes sense' how a God who does not act to stop evil would become incarnate, presumably to experience our sufferings as well. Hume 'flatters' himself by stating an argument which, in essence, concludes that all the purported miracles described by several faiths cancel each other out, in Hume's words 'nullify the other' reports of miracles, thereby concluding that as so many religions claim miracles by their gods, none can be true. Hume's ~~argument~~ argument takes the concept of religious experience having 'confusing claims' to the extreme, arguing that, as so many religions and religious believers

have 'confusing claims', it is ridiculous to assume that all of these are true, as everyone is aware of a person's ability to lie, it is also ridiculous that a select group of these are true, as the Catholic Church does by checking miracles against the Bible and doctrine, indeed, we must conclude that everyone's claims have been prescribed to divine inspiration, when, even according to Swinburne, 'they are, in fact, not'.

The final reason, and I believe, the final nail in the coffin, for religious experience being nullified as a result of 'confusing claims' is the ridiculous nature of these experiences, in particular miracles, in relation to the events of the real world. Peter Vardy discusses how a 'God that intervenes at Lourdes to cure an old man of cancer, but does not act to save millions dying of starvation in Ethiopia... requires severe moral questioning', in fact, I would go so far to state that, as a result of God's purported omnibenevolent nature, a God which allows such things to happen does not exist. This view is supported by Dawkins who writes that all miracles are 'unlikely natural events' and God indeed cannot have a part in them, as Nietzsche claimed, 'God is dead'. Wiles also delivers a damning criticism of God's inability to act during 'tragedies such as Auschwitz or Hiroshima', God's failure to act in these events shows that either he does not exist, or, according to them, he is 'some inferior deity... not worthy of praise or that, according to Mill, 'If God can do everything that he wills... then he

wills evil and there's no escaping that conclusion. Indeed, for Turing, the only ~~evidence that~~ way to prove religious experience to be false is to provide strong, irrefutable evidence that God does not exist. In my eyes, the 'claims from religious experience' are hugely confusing and cannot be used as a 'basis for understanding God/the Holy'.

The second part of the claim which needs to be examined is the 'unreliable' nature of religious experience. I believe Dawkins does an excellent job of displaying the 'unreliable' nature of religious experience when discussing Gould's 'non-overlapping magisterium' hypothesis, which is frequently shortened to NOMA. Gould presents NOMA in his book 'Rock of Ages', he believes that 'science inhabits the realm of empiricism' whereas 'religion examines the study of theology and moral values', Gould concludes that 'these two magisteria do not overlap' and 'to use a clichéd term, science examines the age of rock, whereas religion examines the rock of ages'. Dawkins proceeds to illustrate the 'unreliable' nature of this hypothesis according to the claims of religious experience, in particular, the miracle purported by the Christian faith of the 'immaculate conception'. Dawkins writes how 'suppose a team of forensic archaeologists were to discover DNA evidence that Jesus did not have a father... the religious apologist would hardly state... 'Wrong Magisterium!... you can bet your boots... that such

scientific evidence' would be trumped to heaven'. Dawkins should display that religious experience is unreliable as it attempts to have its 'cake and eat it too' by rejecting all the scientific evidence that exists to dispel the existence of religious experience, yet should any arise to support it it would never be left unheard again and a religious believer ~~could not~~ would not use NOMA to protect his beliefs from the scientific method. Indeed, Gould appears, as Sumner so deftly, to be 'merely postulating a God of the gaps'.

Other philosophers such as Bultmann concentrate their focus on the unreliable nature of religious experience caused by scripture and text, laying aside the issues of translation and our ~~comprehension~~ comprehension of events described in scripture, Bultmann states that it is 'impossible' to 'use electric lights and the wireless' as well as to 'believe in the New Testament world of spirits and demons'. This connects with the 'unreliable' nature of religious experience as the Catholic Church uses the Bible and Church doctrine to ascertain the legitimacy of religious experiences, Bultmann rejects this in a similar way to those who argues that tales of religious experiences ~~about~~ abound in 'barbarous and uncivilised societies' a clear sign of their unreliable nature, yet they have 'permeably ~~over~~ woven' themselves into today's society by the means of ~~what~~ archaic culturally relative and era-dependent scriptures. In This is, in my mind, a clear cut example of the unreliable nature of religious experience.

Further philosophers such as Atkins would firmly support the view that modern day scientific practise dispels the 'unreliable' religious experiences for ~~fact~~ indisputable facts, he writes how 'garbled theological prose' ~~cannot~~ cannot stand up against 'clear, limpid examples of science', that ~~indeed~~ indeed, we cannot 'listen and believe' to miracles or religious experience when so much evidence exists to refute them. Swinburne's principles of testimony and credulity are condemned as 'pedestals' which religious believers attempt to 'shoop their beliefs on... yet are all too easily toppled'. The argument from Atkins and his camp is that Swinburne's principles further increase the unreliability of religious experience as they lead to uncritical analysis of purported religious experience,

degrading the value of experiences for which we still need to examine before we can conclusively decide their cause. This again in my mind details the huge extent to which religious experiences are unreliable when it comes to belief in God.

In conclusion, I believe religious experiences are far too 'conspicuous' to act as a 'basis' for understanding God / the holy. The varied arguments of those such as Swinburne who stand up for them are all too easily dispelled by the sheer range of religious experience as described by Aquinas, they cannot stand up to Hume's criticisms relating to other faiths nor can they withstand Vardy and Wiles criticisms of the 'conspicuous' nature of some miracles, when others would

have produced a much happier outcome. Religious experiences are shown to be 'unreliable' by the thinking of Gould, which is easily enticed by Dawkins, it cannot withstand Atkins' precise views on science and empiricism neither Hultman's assessment of scripture, in particular the Bible. Therefore I have to agree that 'The confusing claims of from religious experience make an unreliable basis for understanding God/the holy' and considering the strong evidence and research on offer, have little problem with myself with Nietzsche.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate opens the essay by precisely outlining the task in hand. Readers are promised a piece of work that clearly sustains a line of argument to support 'my opinion'.



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Examiner Tip

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

This is an example of a very good essay albeit slightly different to the last exemplar in its literary style. The candidate presented a structured response to the task that deployed a wide range of scholarship and produced an essay that is very representative of the quality of work that can achieve high level 5 A01 and Level 4 A02. The candidate addressed the question thoroughly by a detailed exposition of the various philosophical positions and offered a consistent line of argument throughout the entire essay. The candidate is comfortable with the material and presents each section with clarity.

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

Remember answer ONLY ONE question.

Chosen question number: Question 1 Question 2 Question 3

There is no set definition for religious experiences. Richard Swinburne depicted them as follows: "For our present purposes, it will be useful to define them as an experience which seems... to the subject to be an experience of God... or of some other supernatural thing." They could also be defined as inductive (probable premises lead to a probable conclusion) and a posteriori (the empirical nature of them mean we can use our 5 senses to validate them) incidences, which might be perceived as supernatural on the basis that they they feature higher beings. These can include the likes of God, an angel, or even a religious figure such as the virgin Mary for example. They can be caused by music, dance, religious or church architecture, prayer and meditation, and conversely also by pain and intense suffering. While religious experiences can be beneficial to some, they can also be both destructive and disturbing.

Religious experiences have been, and very much still are a prominent matter in modern society. Their effects can have massive implications on the

subjects, which can in turn have expansive repercussions. It is because of this significance that the problems associated with religious experiences are in such need of answers. It has also been questioned as to whether they provide a reliable basis for understanding God / the Holy, in light of their confusing and subjective nature. - the focus of this essay.

There are many different types of religious experience, but they can be split into 2 slightly broader categories: personal, only occurring to one person (such as the appearance of St. Bernadette of Lourdes in the 19th century), and shared, occurring to more than one individual (the Toronto Blessing of 1994 for example). Regardless, there are 4 different types of religious experience: visions ~~and auditory~~ (where one believes they have seen or heard something of a religious nature), numinosity (where one feels in the presence of an almighty being), conversion (where a religious experience provokes the implementation of a new religious way of life), and lastly, mystical experiences (where one feels a sense of union with the divine).

This last type is considered the closest one can come to actually encountering the divine, and an

example of it is the way in which Buddhists come to realise their achievement of enlightenment through meditation. Mystical experiences will be the specific focus of my essay.

William James, a first scholarly supporter of religious experiences, wrote a book in 1902 called 'The Varieties of Religious Experience'. It has since become ~~regarded~~ one of the best known books on the subject, and is regarded a 'classic', due to the way it looks at religious experiences in an objective, yet sympathetic way. James was a pragmatist; he was neither trying to prove nor disprove religious experiences, although acknowledged the probability / possibility that they are legitimate. James also came up with 4 qualities of religious experiences, which if possessed, would validate such an experience. These were: ineffability (they cannot be verbally described), noetic (they teach universal eternal truths about the world through intuition), transient (they last for a limited time but cause the subject to acknowledge the significance of God) and passivity (all control is left to God, exemplified through the phenomenon of speaking through tongues). James' defining criteria / qualities of religious

experiences clearly suggest that conjuring claims do not make religious experiences an unreliable basis for understanding God, since they can be both defined and assessed by the qualities they possess.

St Teresa of Avila is one example of a recipient of religious experiences. On St. Peter's day in 1559, she had a vision of Jesus despite his apparent invisibility. She also had a second experience in which a cherub drove a golden point repeatedly through her heart, causing an unregainable spiritual - bodily pain. Teresa's experiences clearly possess the qualities outlined by William James, again suggesting that religious experiences are a useful and reliable basis for understanding God, which is not hindered by 'conjuring claims'.

Conversely however, a just argument that rejects religious experiences is that of Sigmund Freud. Freud argued that religion is an illusion derived from human desire, and instead advocated an approach to life which eradicated the soul - he suggested that since humans are entirely material, if we knew everything there was to

knew about the physical / biological side of life, then we would fully understand humans, and would consequently realise that religious experiences do not exist. He argued that religious experiences are merely illusion; a "reaction to a hostile world" in which insecure people seek love and comfort from God. Freud also described religion as a collective illness that revolved around mental health, suggesting that religious experiences are self-induced to fulfil such needs. While Freud's argument would suggest that confusing claims do indeed make religious experience an unreliable basis for understanding God, I would reason that his argument is weak, since not everyone is insecure and/or in desperate need of affection from God. Also, despite Freud's beliefs, his argument still advocates an omnibenevolent and welcoming God, ~~to~~ since he seems content in being onwecable to religious experiences.

Despite Freud, a second supporter of religious experience is Rudolf Otto, who advocated in his book 'The idea of the Holy' (1917) an alternative method of analysing religious experiences, with reference to the numinous. Otto both believed and highlighted that encounters with natural forces

is fundamental to religion, because it created a sense of awe and mystery - what he described as the 'numinous'. Otto also developed 3 of his own qualities which if possessed by a religious experience, would authenticate them: a quality that proved God to be of ultimate importance, a sense of mystery since neither God nor religious experiences can be fully understood or described, and a quality that started was both attractive and dangerous, suggesting that even though God cannot be controlled, one still feels a sense of privilege to be involved with a religious experience. Otto's argument also opposes the idea that confusing claims make religious experiences an unreliable basis for understanding God. In fact, I'd argue that Otto's 3 qualities indicate that religious claims aren't confusing in any respect.

Conversely, V. S. Ramachandran provides further reasoning which argue against the legitimacy of religious experiences. Ramachandran was a neurologist best known for his work in the field of behavioural neurology, who found evidence linking religious experiences to Temporal lobe epilepsy. His experiment showed that upon

exposure to religious imagery, individuals suffering with epilepsy experienced a much more dramatic change in skin resistance. Ramachandran went on to argue that religious figures such as St Paul may well have suffered from epilepsy themselves, making them "more conducive to religious beliefs and mystical belief." Ramachandran also observed a tendency towards religious and philosophical matters after the start of temporal lobe epilepsy, suggesting that our brain has developed a specific structure to help us believe in God. Should he be correct, religious experiences are merely the result of a flaw with the brain, which in turn, would make them an unreliable ~~base~~ basis for understanding God. However, it could be argued that Ramachandran's argument is weak, since not everyone suffers from epilepsy (although we might all suffer from an undiagnosed mild form of it).

Richard Swinburne gives further reason to believe that confusing claims from religious experiences do not make them an unreliable basis for understanding God. In his book 'Is there a God?' (1986), he argues that it is plausible to believe that a loving God would want to

reveal himself to us: "an omnipotent and perfectly created God will seek to interact with his created and in particular, with human persons capable of knowing him." Swinburne also advocated the idea of a 'sixth' or 'religious sense' through which we can appreciate God and God can know us. His two principles would suggest both that claims are not confusing, and that religious experiences do provide a reliable basis for understanding God. His principle of credulity argues that we should believe an event has occurred unless there is strong contrary reasoning, for example if drugs were involved at any stage. His principle of testimony argues that we should always believe someone unless there is good reason not to, as O'connor's Razor would indicate that people will usually tell the truth, since it is the simplest and least ambiguous thing to do. Swinburne's argument therefore clearly highlights the idea that confusing claims don't hinder religious experiences' ~~being~~ ^{reliability} as a basis for the understanding of God.

In conclusion, I do not believe that confusing claims ~~or~~ from religious experiences do make it an unreliable basis for understanding

God / the Holy. From the arguments outlined, we can clearly see that religious experiences are likely to be legitimate, and that they teach about the nature of God. For example, Paley's God hypothesis argument which suggests that if God exists, then it is probable that religious experiences exist (when God breaks a natural law temporarily), tell us that God is immanent and interventionist, and that he both exists, and is most likely the God of all classical theism. This is a strong argument in itself, because it is simple, coherent and logical. For these reasons, I firmly believe that concluding claims from religious experiences do not make them an unreliable basis for understanding God.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The essay is clear throughout and the conclusion follows on with some personal conviction.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Examining and commenting on a good range of appropriate scholarship often results in a well written, balanced study.

Question 2

MIND AND BODY

This question continues to attract outstanding scholarly responses and was very well done by able candidates who were effective at analysing the question and discussing the relevance of their research in this context.

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

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

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

This candidate begins with a highly competent assessment of why there is a mind body problem and attributes this to 'humanity's inherent metaphysical curiosity and the linguistic separation of the mind and body which is also supported by the religious theory of a soul'.

The reader is captured by obvious linguistic competence and are not disappointed as the candidate sustains a line of argument that is clearly supported through well deployed evidence.

The candidate clearly understands the topic and has studied a useful range of material and despite the length of the essay manages to achieve effective use of their material and sufficient evaluation of the issues at stake to merit the highest levels of achievement.

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

Remember answer ONLY ONE question.

Chosen question number: Question 1 Question 2 Question 3

The Mind-Body problem ~~that~~ arises as the result of humanity's inherent metaphysical curiosity and the linguistic separation of the mind and the body which is also supported by the religious theory of a soul. Many solutions such as Substance Dualism and Physicalism have been posited in order to explain the relationship between the two substances or entirely explain away one of them by taking a monist approach. In order for a solution to truly be valid and solve this problem, it must be compatible with science while simultaneously appealing to the human sense of self.

Substance Dualism is a theory that ^{identifies} ~~explains~~ the mind and the body as two independent substances that have a causal interaction relationship. The basis of this argument comes from Plato's musings about the soul. He believed the soul was eternal and came from the Realm of the Forms. This was due to his belief in the arguments from opposites and recollection. He argued that if a person is currently alive, then there was a time when they were ~~dead~~ ^{dead} and before that a time when they were alive, he believed existence was a cycle of lives. ^{Furthermore} ~~similarly~~ ^{argued} he ~~continued~~ in his argument from

recollection that knowledge of abstract concepts like beauty and equality is all recollection. There is no empirical evidence for these and so ~~we~~^{humans} must have learnt about them while their souls were in the Realm of the Forms. Plato illustrates the relationship between the mind and the body in his ^{description of the} "charioteer"; this charioteer is being pulled in different directions by a large black and ugly horse; representing our earthly desires and a large white, winged horse flying towards the sky, representing our spirit. This ~~the~~^{also} idea complements his theory of the 3-part soul. He believed it was made up of spirit, reason and appetite and as a result of our existence in the shadows ^{misleadingly distorted mirrors} (as illustrated by his allegory of the cave), the true road of enlightenment is that of philosophy and of questioning existence. Plato believed that this is what would allow humans to free themselves of their earthly desires. Augustine used this theory as a basis for his own. He believed that the soul and body were independent but the soul was more important as it was made in God's image. Similarly Aquinas posits in Thomistic Dualism that in order to create a person, a soul and a body must be combined so therefore they are inter dependent. Descartes however argues for ^{complete} separation of the two as a result of their entirely different properties. The mind is immaterial, indivisible and possesses intentionality whereas the body is corporeal, divisible and extended ~~to~~ spatio-temporally.

Descartes' belief of independence between the two is supported by the existence of brain-dead people and people with locked-in syndrome. Furthermore Descartes proves the existence of the mind in his statement "Dubito ergo cogito ergo sum", this echoes the theory that Kant espouses ~~that supports~~ ⁱⁿ Idealism. He believes (and Descartes too) that you can never be sure of the world, you can only be sure of the fact that you are perceiving it. A large issue brought up by the Princess of Bohemia is that Descartes never truly explains the interaction relationship between the two. He offered up the "Pineal gland" as a solution but this has recently been disproven by modern science. Swinburne also ventures a more scientifically compatible theory where he posits that the soul and the body are very important, however the soul relies on the body in order to experience. The differentiation of soul and mind does not ~~seem~~ really exist within religious circles as it is believed that they are the same thing ~~that~~ ~~unfortunately~~ Unfortunately, there are many fallacies within this argument, the complexity of it according to Occam's razor means that it is less likely to be correct. Damasio's ^{in his} somatic marker hypothesis also argues that the separation of the two substances is wholly unnecessary as they are both reliant on each other and so therefore are more similar than not. Another issue is that we seem to be able to judge other

people's mental states, however according to Cartesian dualism and substance dualism in general, we should not be able to do so.* Substance dualists reply to this by arguing that this notion is a "pre-theoretical world view" and so therefore be discarded but it provides no real explanation for this event. Ultimately, although substance dualism is particularly appealing to religious believers, there is no scientific explanation for the interaction relationship between the two substances. This renders it unfit to be classified as a solution for this dilemma.

An alternative theory is that of Physicalism, wherein philosophers posit that everything exists within the physical realm and can therefore be explained in physical terms. The foundations of this argument came from Democritus and Thomas Hobbes. ^{Democritus, Democritus}
The first physicalist, ^{arguably} posited that everything is made up of atoms. Hobbes ^{a realist} furthered this notion in his book Leviathan by proposing the identity thesis wherein he argues that all thought is physical. Hume, ~~at~~ a skeptic, offered up the explanation that as there is no empirical evidence for the non-corporeal entity ^{described} ~~offered up~~ by both substance dualism and religion, then there is no ~~way~~ ^{need} to believe in them. This is the reason many modern day scientists classify themselves as physicalists as well. Cot ~~and~~, Hanks and Dawkins all believe in physicalism.

with Dawkins going as far as to offer up an explanation for the existence of religion and consciousness. He believes that these concepts are evolutionary advantages, they allow us to empathise and predict the behaviour of others which serves to ensure the success and complexity of society. An off-shoot of physicalism that further explains human behaviour is Behaviourism, the belief that human behaviour is a complex reaction to external, environmental stimuli. Psychological behaviourism proposed by B.F. Skinner states that free will is an illusion. He explains human behaviour as a result of being conditioned (just as a lab rat) by positive and negative reinforcement methods through ~~our~~ life experiences. This could arguably be extended to the existence of consciousness, it is not real, it is merely a response to stimuli.

Alternatively, philosophical behaviourism created by ^{empiricist philosopher,} Gilbert Ryle ~~was~~ argue that there is no difference between mental states and physical behaviour and in fact this ~~diff~~ dichotomy comes as a result of a "category mistake". Just as it is the buildings of a university that make it a university, it is ^{the} externally observable physical behaviours that are labelled as mental states. An example of this would be the state of excitement, this consists of an elevated heart beat, perspiration and a large amount of ^{adrenaline} ~~endorphins~~ released which create the ~~same~~ effect of nervousness as well.

For many, these theories are reductive and dismissive of human complexity and emotions. Physicalism entirely dismisses the existence of Qualia, which are the subjectivity of human experience. As Donald Davidson argues in his Swamp Man analogy, that although ~~there~~ an exact physical copy might be created of you, there is no continuation of consciousness and the memories it has do not contain qualia. The ~~memory~~ ^{mind/brain} of the new being simply contains a memory of the experience not the personal impact it had. Furthermore, it is Daniel Dennett who argues that even though ~~it is~~ consciousness and emotions may all be scientifically-explainable theories, they should be acknowledged because they feel real to us. Overall, physicalism is a reductive argument that is cold and skeptical, it dismisses the complex emotional capabilities and the knowledge humanity has within itself. It leaves the solution unresolved because it is unsatisfactory for religious believers and everyone who believes in the subjectivity and individuality of their existence.

Unfortunately neither of these solutions provide explanation for the mind-body problem, the lack of empirical evidence for the mind and ^{for the} explanation of ~~the~~ ^{the} relationship that exists between it and the body means it is a difficult substance to prove. Similarly the dismissive and reductive nature of physicalism means it

is a theory that is not widely accepted outside the scientific community. It is true that it will remain unresolved because this issue is a clash between scientific and philosophical approaches ~~to~~ ^{to} existence. No ^{pre-existing} theory will entirely apply to either field of thought.

Please read!!!

(Thank you!)

ADDITIONS

* - pg 6 (top) → This also brings up the issue of knowledge of other minds as we are unable to determine whether everyone experiences qualia or in fact consciousness.

o - pg 4 (near the top) → This highlights his prioritization of the soul.

Evidence for

♥ - pg 7 (top) → ~~Proof~~ of the lack of existence of mental states is presented in the fact that people with mental disorders are "cured" by taking medicine that has an impact on ~~the~~ ^{the} chemical levels in their brain and body. However, on the other hand, many people suffer from psycho-somatic disorders which are ^{when} "disorders like epilepsy and from issues of mental trauma which perhaps hints at the existence of mental states

(middle) (and the impact they have on physical behaviors.)

x - pg 5 → This is similar to Bishop George Berkeley's theory that existence is being perceived and we are always being perceived by God



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The skilful use of vocabulary enriches the candidate's opening exposition of the topic. Expectations for a quality piece of work are fulfilled in a fairly short essay.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Answer the question. Know your argument and then you will have no trouble establishing your view. It also helps to write legibly.

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

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

Remember answer ONLY ONE question.

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

The mind-body problem is the name given to the problem that arises in trying to answer how the mind ~~with~~ and body (which seem to be two different entities) interact with each other. It ~~also~~ attempts to answer how an immaterial mind can interact with a material body. From this question arises other questions such as how our physical bodies can all feel something objectively whilst our mental mind all feel different things objectively, why a banana a physical object such as a banana which ~~are~~ ^{is} made up of the same atoms and elements as our body does not have a mind. There have been many attempts to solve this problem and there exist many answers. Substance Dualism suggests that we are made up of two substances and that these substances have a causal relationship, regularly interacting with one another. In contrast, Physicalism states that there is only one substance and that every feeling, ~~process, thing, and~~ and process can be reduced down to an explanation from the Physical. Another answer is Property Dualism. My criterion

for choosing the best theory which contradicts this claim is the theory which best describes the relationship between the mind and the body and how they supposedly interact.

Dualism derives from the word 'duo' meaning two, as there are two forms of Dualism which is Substance and Property. Substance Dualism was created by Plato* who suggested that the mind and body are separate. (Plato thought that the mind was the ~~one~~ soul). In 'the Phaedo', Plato stated that there ~~is~~ is another world separate to ours called the realm of the forms which contains every the perfect version of every object on this earth. He claimed that the objects on our earth were imperfect copies of the objects present in the realm of the Forms. Plato stated that our souls originated from the realm of the forms, meaning that our soul existed before it was united with our ~~body~~ physical body. Following this idea, Plato also stated that the soul travels back to the realm of the forms once our physical body dies and is destroyed. This idea suggests that the mind and body are

separate things and that the mind can exist without the body. Plato believed that the soul was made up of three parts, the appetitive which ~~focused~~ focuses on bodily desires such as sex and food, the spirited which focuses on emotion, anger, competitiveness and the reason / rational which ~~focuses on~~ possesses the love for knowledge. Plato thought that the latter should have more power ~~of~~ over the other two parts of the soul. Plato ~~is~~ stated that it was the soul which connected with the realm of the forms, allowing us to try and interact with the shadows created from the perfect forms. Plato had ~~four~~ four main reasons for the existence of the soul, the knowledge argument, the argument from recollection, the cycle of opposites argument, and the linguistic argument which is the most popular. The linguistic argument makes us acknowledge the fact that when we refer to ourselves or our bodies, we use words such as 'I', 'mine', 'my' or 'me', suggesting that we have control and power over our bodies, and that this sense of control comes from our ~~self~~ mind. Plato continuously suggests that the

mental soul and the physical body are separate as the soul is indestructible whilst the body is, as proven when they separate at death and the body eventually ceases to exist. Plato thought that the soul and body were separate and that they did interact with each other when necessary, but that the soul was more rational than the body.

⊗ - a classical Greek philosopher.

This theory was developed by the French 17th century French philosopher René Descartes. Like Plato, Descartes suggested that the mental mind and physical body are completely separate and can exist without each other. This can be seen through the example of someone becoming paralysed, as although their body is dead and unreactive, this does not cause the mind to cease to exist. Descartes also thought that the mind and body held a causal relationship and interacted with each other. When questioned by Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia as to how the mind and body interacted with each other, Descartes suggested the pineal gland

which ~~has now~~ (although true for a lot of other organisms and animals) has now been disproven by modern science. Descartes thought that the mind and body were completely separate and he distinguishes the two by using the argument from extendability, proposing ~~that~~ that the body is a 'certain figure' which takes up space, breath, depth and width, and which can also be acknowledged through touch, taste, vision, scent and other senses whilst the mind does is not extendable. He suggests that the mind is immaterial whilst the body is material. As the mind is invisible, he proves to the reader that the mind does exist by using the argument 'cogito ergo sum' which means 'I think, therefore I am'. (~~is~~ in his second and sixth meditation)

~~A criticism of Substance Dualism is proposed by Bernard Plotin and Descartes stated that it was the soul which made us individual and independent~~

A criticism of both Plotin and Descartes is proposed by Bernard Williams who

suggested that whilst the mental mind does ~~not~~ give us individuality, so do our physical bodies. He asks how we are supposed to recognize ourselves and ~~our~~ ^{our} personal features without our physical bodies, proving that the body gives us just as much of an identity as the soul does. He also argued that the body can effect the mind through the use of things such as drugs and alcohol, altering the way our mind works. This suggests that the body is in fact in control of the mind.

A criticism to Plato is that his whole idea rests ^{upon} ~~on~~ the metaphysics that the realm of the forms exist, which (although has not been disproven) has not been proven yet. What has been disproven is the pineal gland, defeating Cartesian Dualism's answer as to how the mind and body interact with each other. ~~This theory~~ Therefore this theory fails to reach my criterion as it does not have an answer as to how the mind and body interact, meaning that the problem does remain unresolved.

The absence of an explanation of the interaction between the mind and body leads to many assumptions which makes Okham's razor relevant. Okham suggests that the theory with the least assumptions is more reliable, making this theory quite unreliable.

In contrast, a theory which is reliable and backed up by modern science is Physicalism. Physicalism states that there is only one substance in this world which is the physical and that everything can be reduced to a physical explanation. This is called reductive physicalism and an example of this would be Behaviourism, suggested by Gilbert Ryle. Behaviourism is the idea that everything a person is feeling can be explained through their behaviour (in physical terms). It suggests that supposed 'phenomenal' subjective experiences of 'phenomena' can all be explained in physical terms. For example, the feeling of lust may be subjective to everyone, however Ryle and behaviourism suggests that lust is also

to hormones such as testosterone, estrogen and endorphins being released upon seeing someone that you are attracted to. This theory eradicates subjective experiences and explains everything through objective terms. ~~The~~ This theory ~~also~~ consequently suggests that the mind does not exist ~~to~~ and only the brain does and that everything which goes on in the brain can be explained by neuroscience or biology (physical terms).

The biggest criticism of Physicalism is that it is too simple and does not explain advanced subjective things such as Consciousness. (Nagel suggests this in his bat essay). Another criticism of Physicalism is the thought experiment called 'what Mary knew', ~~proposed~~ ~~done~~ invented by Frank Jackson. Jackson asks us to imagine a girl who has lived in a black and white room her whole life ~~at~~ without colour. ~~to~~ He states that Mary knows absolutely everything there is to

know about colour and the colour spectrum. There is nothing ~~at~~ about colour which Mary does not have knowledge about.

Jackson says that Mary then leaves the room and sees a bright red tomato, ~~but~~ thus encountering colour for the first time. It is said that Mary learns something new and experiences something for the first time, a certain subjective sensation known as qualia. Physicalism would suggest that Mary does not learn anything new.

This thought experiment highlights Physicalism's failure to explain qualia and the more advanced processes of the brain. Another criticism is made by Otto who was the first person who used the word Physicalism as opposed to dualism. He suggested that as science has proved gravity and gravity is immaterial and invisible (yet we know it exists), then surely the mind may be like this too. This theory may also be upsetting for people as it ~~makes~~ reduces humans ~~the~~ to mere physical explanations and

also suggests that we have no soul, consequentially meaning that we may not enter heaven, also upsetting religious believers (particularly Christians). Another criticism of this theory is the idea of out of body experiences. People have claimed to die and witness their soul leave their body, yet by physicalist's standards, this is impossible as the mental substance does not exist. This theory does not solve the problem or meet my criterion, as it's initial answer about there not being a mental substance for the physical to be able to react with was disproven by the idea of out of body experiences. The idea of everything being explained reduced and explained through physical terms is also inadequate as it fails to explain qualia or consciousness through physical terms.

The last theory is Property Dualism which proposes that there is only one substance in this world: the physical, but

that this substance ~~is~~ has two different properties: the physical and the mental. As there is only one substance, this indicates the problem of explaining how the mind interacts with the body. Nagel asks us to imagine what it is like to be a bat and shows us that consciousness ~~can~~ exists within us ~~and~~ as well as other organisms. Physicalism fails to explain consciousness in physical terms but Property Dualism claims it is due to the mental properties that we possess.

Leade criticises ~~the~~ Property Dualism by using the example of consciousness and stating that ~~the~~ consciousness is merely created by physical brain processes, definable by neurobiology. He states that the 'mind' is ~~not~~ created by the brain and so is consciousness. He also claims that it is almost impossible to believe in ~~mental~~ a physical world with some mental properties without lapsing into Substance Dualism. This theory is the best suited to my

criticism as it does not need an explanation as to how the mental and physical substances interact (as there is only one substance), however it is not as simple as Physicalism and explains the idea of Consciousness and qualia through ~~the~~ our possession of mental properties.

To conclude, Substance Dualism is not a suitable theory as the pineal gland has been disproven to be the supposed method in which the mind and body interact, leaving the ~~good~~ problem unanswered. Physicalism is also inadequate as whilst it solves the problem of explaining the interaction between the physical and mental (by saying that there is ~~an~~ none as there is only one substance), it is too simple and fails to explain physical mental ideas such as consciousness and qualia. ~~Prope~~ This leaves property dualism as the best theory as it explains the relationship between the mind and body, disproving the

little statement.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The introduction sets out the structure of the essay and promises a more substantive coverage of the topic. The main concepts within the mind-body debate are rehearsed in sufficient detail to merit the highest achievement.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

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

Question 3

A STUDY OF ONE/MORE PHILOSOPHERS OF RELIGION

As always, this question attracted a large variety of answers, including some truly outstanding responses to the question. Candidates routinely demonstrated a very accurate, comprehensive and often sophisticated understanding of the key ideas of a scholar with really good accounts of the works of Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes, Hume, Kierkegaard, Nagel, Nietzsche, Leibniz, Kierkegaard, Bonhoeffer, Marx and Sartre.

One of the most popular combinations was Kierkegaard and Sartre.

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

This question asks candidates to respond using one or more philosophers they have investigated. Although positive marking was employed in all cases, candidates who were able to introduce more than one philosopher into their answer warranted a higher mark

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

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

The followers of Dawkins increase year on year and are often hallmarked by one-sided analysis and discussion that is coupled with a certain enthusiasm for Dawkinian rhetoric. These interesting essays can be improved by connecting the ideas under discussion to a wider range of philosophers in the field. It is a fact that candidates who are able to discuss more than one philosopher generally produced better quality essays – this is because they compared and contrasted the ideas better and carried their overall response to the question more successfully.

There is continued evidence of whole centres following the same structure for a pre-prepared answer that was not subsequently manipulated by candidates to answer the question. Some candidates tended to argue from the outset for the existence of God rather than answering the question; this was especially apparent in responses that focussed on Aquinas or Paley. A few problems persist with candidates answering an apparently different question without paying due attention to the question on the paper. It is expected that pre-prepared material addresses the question on the paper. Some candidates who had clearly

studied material directly related to Question 1 on Religious Experience attempted this question. Whilst there is nothing to prohibit this, candidates might limit achievement if they attempt a question for a different topic to the topic they had been prepared for; especially if they are not explicitly answering the task set by the question. Centres are reminded that the three questions on the paper are written for three different topics.

This essay is another example of a well-executed piece of work showing clear command of the topic. The candidate answers the question fluently. The candidate understands Wittgenstein's early and late work on the theory of language and his ultimate contribution to religious language. The candidate's knowledge of logical positivism and fluent control over complex material establishes a competent analysis of Wittgenstein which is very creditworthy. The candidate clearly conveys essential elements of Wittgenstein's thought with insightful reflection on the question.

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

Remember answer ONLY ONE question.

Chosen question number: Question 1 Question 2 Question 3

For unit 2 I have studied the work of the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951). This essay will be separated into three sections. In the first section I will summarise Wittgenstein's early work, in the second I will summarise his later work, and finally I will examine ~~and~~ the claim that philosophers of religion address important questions about God ~~and/or existence with~~ and conclude.

In his ~~ear~~ ~~to~~ early work (Early Wittgenstein), Wittgenstein devised the picture theory of language. This means to say that ~~any utterance~~ for any utterance to be ^{meaningful} meaningful it should ~~be~~ be able to ~~portray~~ ^{portray} a possible state of affairs. For a statement to adhere to the picture theory of language it

must have: a name (labels given to all natural objects), structure (~~the~~ ^{in which} ~~objects~~ the objects are in relation to one another), and logical form (the way in which the ~~objected~~ objects are related should make sense).

So, a meaningful sentence would be "the cat sat on the mat", as this fulfils all three criteria. However, a sentence such as: "the music smelt of fish" would not make sense or be meaningful because it is not possible for music to smell of anything.

This means to say that the basic unit of language is a sentence, and for an utterance to make sense it must be empirically verifiable. Anything that cannot be scientifically proven is nonsense. Wittgenstein stated that "that which we cannot explain we must pass over in silence".

According to his views on language, Wittgenstein believed that religion was nonsense. This is because religion deals with the metaphysical (in classical theism God is transcendent and imminent) and by definition this cannot be empirically verified. The Logical Positivists and some of the Vienna Circle, such as A. J. Ayer, admired Wittgenstein's thoughts on religion because they believed that we ~~could~~ could only gain knowledge of the

world through science. However, unlike the Logical Positivists, Wittgenstein admired religion and thought of it as being 'meaningful nonsense'. Wittgenstein ~~believed~~ thought that when people talk about religion they are trying, and failing, to talk about that which is incomprehensible but fundamental to how we live ~~and~~ our lives. He alluded to a

higher being beyond our understanding: mysticism.

Although Wittgenstein thought that religion was beyond human understanding, he believed that religion ~~and~~ the 'mystic' could be made manifest through the following: ~~and~~ talking nonsense, art and living an ethical life.

Wittgenstein disagreed with the view that philosophy was a subject grounded in thought, in which we gain knowledge of the world. He thought that it was a philosopher's role to analyse ~~that~~ uses of language, and if a use of language is non-empirically verifiable (or false) he must consign the author to silence. This would mean that the ~~philosophy~~ philosophy of religion and ethics would be rendered obsolete and classed as nonsense because ~~they~~ they cannot be proven using science.

A strength of Early Wittgenstein, as stated by Clack & Clack is that it brings a scientific rigor to the use of language. This is a strength because it removes any vagueness ~~from~~ from the language, so all statements are clear and easy to comprehend.

Another strength of Early Wittgenstein is that there is a rich tradition of religious believers who think that mysticism is true, ~~for example~~ Pseudo-Denys, for example. They believe that language is a barrier for religion because it is a human construct, and God is higher. As Wittgenstein stated: "propositions cannot ~~not~~ express that which is higher".

Another strength of Early Wittgenstein is that, if accepted, it promotes religious tolerance. This is because, according to Early Wittgenstein, all talk of religion is nonsensical (A. J. Ayer: "God talk is nonsense"). Early Wittgenstein dismisses all doctrine, so no religion can be classed above another. Rather than debating the existence of God, Wittgenstein thought that religious believers should join together in a silent mysticism.

A weakness of Early Wittgenstein is that it ~~expects~~ ^{takes} ~~people to use~~ an unrealistic and dogmatic view on the use of language. Not everything meaningful can be empirically verified. For example, people use commands, tell jokes and express emotions, however they would not believe these uses of language to be meaningless.

Another weakness of Early Wittgenstein is that most religious ~~believers~~ believers do not think that mysticism is true, rather they think that God can be spoken about with understanding. For example, Fundamentalist Christians believe that they can understand God's word by reading the Bible, because they believe that everything in the Bible is literally true. In addition, Muslims believe that the Qu'aran ~~is~~ contains the revealed word of Allah.

One last weakness of Early Wittgenstein is that it is a self-defeating theory. ~~The~~ The Tractatus itself cannot be ~~empirically~~ empirically verified, and therefore it is nonsense. It is for this reason that later in his life, A. J. Ayer abandoned logical positivism - because it cannot live up to its ~~own~~ own standards of truth.

In his later years, Wittgenstein abandoned Early Wittgenstein and formed a radical new theory: Later Wittgenstein. He abandoned ~~Early Wittgenstein~~ his earlier work because it became apparent that he had only outlined one use of language, the language of science. This meant that Early Wittgenstein was too dogmatic, and could not be used in everyday life. After abandoning his older theory, Wittgenstein devised the theory of language games — a public activity that has its own standards of truth, meaning and falsity (this is called internalism and supports the coherence theory of truth). ~~Wittgenstein th.~~ In Later Wittgenstein, there are an indefinite number of uses of language, and an indefinite number of language games. Each language game is judged by its own societal rules (grammar). Later Wittgenstein is more sensitive to context, Wittgenstein stated that if you are "puzzled by something ... you should seek to see how it is used".

In Later Wittgenstein, his views on religion also changed. Wittgenstein thought that religion did not seek to describe, but to express. Therefore, when people talk about religion, they are not talking about God, the soul, heaven and hell.

as individual objects, but as an expression of what they are feeling.

In addition, Wittgenstein thought that religion could only be judged by the rules of its own language game, and therefore it could not have a rational basis. This seemed deeply ~~and~~ Kai Nielson was deeply critical of this because it

promotes fideism — the view that religion must be taken on faith alone.

In his later work, Wittgenstein thought that philosophy was a form of linguistic therapy. He believed it was not a philosopher's role to ~~consign~~ consign people to silence, but to help them see the heterogeneity (diversity) of the uses of language. It is a philosopher's role to make people more aware of context.

A strength of Later Wittgenstein is that it promotes the tolerance of world views. This is because in Later Wittgenstein there are many different language games, and you cannot judge one by the standards and truths of another. This leads to a non-judgemental view.

Another strength of Later Wittgenstein is that there is a rich tradition of religious believers who think that religion ~~is~~ does not have a rational basis, but must be taken on faith alone. ~~As~~ ~~started~~ Joseph Fletcher and Pascal supported this view, they thought that religion was a "leap of faith" (Kierkegaard).

Another strength of Later Wittgenstein is that it diffuses any of the ~~the~~ tension ~~between~~ between religion and science. This is because the two cannot be judged using the same rules, ~~because~~ as they are two different language ~~of~~ games. This makes it so that creationism and evolution can both be plausible.

A weakness of Later Wittgenstein, as noted by Kai Nielson is that it promotes fideism. ~~There~~ This is the view that religion can only be judged by its own rules. According to this view, many ~~deeply~~ ~~scope~~ morally suspect acts can be deemed 'good' as long as they follow the rules of their own ~~language~~ language game. For example, the actions of the Westboro Baptist church or religious terrorists could not be questioned as long as they adhered to their own language ~~of~~ games.

Another weakness of later ~~the~~ Wittgenstein is that most religious believers are realists and don't think that religion is an expression but a way of life. They believe that God is an ~~actually an~~ actual independent object and religion seeks to tell truth claims about life.

One last weakness of later Wittgenstein is that because each language game is judged by its own standards of truth and meaning, there can be no set laws. This loss of absolute ~~laws~~ laws could lead to chaos.

In the following section I will summarise ~~to~~ my opinions on two things ~~;~~: religion and language. On the topic of language I think that later Wittgenstein is more successful because early Wittgenstein requires a dogmatic use of scientific language. In addition, there are many different ways of using language (e.g: expressing emotions, ~~;~~ telling jokes, etc.) and language games allow for all of these uses to be meaningful, whilst the picture theory of language does not.

On the ~~topic~~ topic of religion, I think that Early Wittgenstein is more successful. This is because Later Wittgenstein promote fideism, which is suspect because it allows for religious believers to do and say anything as long as it adheres to their language game. In addition, Early Wittgenstein alludes to mysticism. This seems plausible, because ~~in~~ in most religions God has traits that seem contradictory. However, if religion is ~~far~~ beyond human understanding then God can exist and maintain his ~~various~~ traits because it may only seem contradictory in our minds.

Overall, Wittgenstein brought about a linguistic turn for Western Philosophy. As Peter Vardy noted, it is now ~~overturned~~ a question of "what do we mean by God?" rather than "does God exist?". This change ~~is~~ can be partly credited to Wittgenstein's ~~contribut~~ contributions and his input on the uses of language.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The candidate's clear style of writing helps the reader to follow the argument. The juxtaposition of ideas shows a clear and thorough understanding of the task in hand as the essay progresses.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

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

This essay, like many other essays at this level, answers the question and shows a clear command of the topic. The candidate understands existentialism very well and clearly conveys essential elements of the thought of Kierkegaard and Sartre. This candidate clearly understood the ideas and deployed material coherently. The standard of exposition was sustained throughout the essay and the candidate arrived at an acceptable conclusion that merited the highest level even though arguably more detail might have enriched the conclusion. That said, candidates who achieve more arguably deserve more than the fifty marks available and this essay is therefore representative of what can be expected to earn full marks. The overall essay is balanced and the nature of the subject under discussion is already complex and the candidate appears to understand this very well.

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

Remember answer ONLY ONE question.

Chosen question number: Question 1 Question 2 Question 3

Existentialism is a branch of philosophy concerned with the problems of human existence, it focuses on the individual and each person's freedom. The peculiarity of the philosophy is what led to a movement in literature and art.

Søren Kierkegaard was a Danish philosopher who is said to be the "Father of existentialism". Kierkegaard lived from 1813-1855 and was surrounded by death from an early age following the death of most of his family in his early life. Kierkegaard was a theist, but criticised ~~the~~ mainstream ~~the~~ Hegelian ideas as well as the established Danish church. The church was an issue for Kierkegaard because they create 'factory projects' by handing faith out premade and not allowing each believer to find their own faith, which is what ~~the~~ he believed it should be. Kierkegaard was a fideist, meaning he put faith ~~the~~ over reason, this contrasts beliefs such as Aquinas' where knowledge is more important than faith. This focus of faith is also tied with his focus on

subjectivity, Kierkegaard believed we should all be allowed to find our own faith.

Not only did Kierkegaard despise the church, he systematically attacked the pillars of modern life. He thought it was ridiculous the way we value getting married, having children, having a job, having a house, in such a regimented and structured manner. Kierkegaard thought this way of life was laughable, humour plays a key role in his philosophy - he believed the only way to deal with the absurdity of the world was to laugh.

For Kierkegaard the answer was Jesus Christ, he had loved the simplicity of the Gospels taught to him by his father, but did not want to associate with the church. Here, he created his spheres of existence to explain the issues of human existence. The first sphere is the aesthetic where one lives only to please themselves, through a positive leap you get to the ethical sphere where you live to serve others in a role, for example a doctor. The final sphere can be reached only through the infamous "leap of faith", it is the religious sphere, it is here where you truly know God.

To explain this leap of faith, Kierkegaard told the story of Abraham. Here, Abraham was told he must sacrifice his only son, but not told why. Abraham took his son up to sacrifice him, but just before God intervened and stopped him as he had proved he was willing to leap into the absurd and reach the religious sphere. Kierkegaard also used the story of Agamemnon where he had to choose between his child and his army to illustrate the difference between a tragic hero and a knight of faith.

The story of Abraham has been met with much criticism over the years, for example Kant believed Abraham was wrong to not listen to reason, and thought any murderous rampage could be justified through the use of this story. However, for Kierkegaard we must turn off any logical faculties and take a leap to fideism if we are to truly know God. God intervened with Abraham, but sceptics say this was just a lucky experience.

Kierkegaard's philosophy has also been criticised for its focus on the individual. Kierkegaard values the individual over society which is an attack on Heidegger, he went even as far as to say

"wherever the crowd there is untruth". Kierkegaard's philosophy is based on the individual as existentialism deals with each person's issues of existence.

As well as this, Kierkegaard uses a transcendent God to explain existential anxiety, but this idea may now be outdated. Philosophers such as Tillich have disagreed with the existence of the God of classical theism. Tillich believed there was no being of God as Kierkegaard suggests as then we wouldn't have free will. Kierkegaard believed in having ~~faith~~ blind faith and would argue that God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent as theological theism suggests.

Kierkegaard's address of important questions about God and existence is a little view that would perhaps ~~have~~ ^{have} been more successful in his time of writing when religion was much more widespread.

Jean Paul Sartre has also developed existentialist theories. Sartre was a French philosopher who lived from 1905 - 1980 and developed an atheist's view of existentialism. Sartre popularised existentialism in

The 1960s and was a household name in both Europe and America due to the public not quite understanding his ideas. Sartre was politically active throughout his life and the FBI kept a file on him due to his confusing and obscure belief system.

Sartre's existentialism is based on the idea that we are free, entirely, completely, frighteningly free. We are not, however, free to reject our freedom, something he called the paradox of freedom. Sartre did not believe in God, he did not believe there is a creator that gives us meaning or purpose or justification, but rather we define ourselves. He believed that mankind lives and does and "only afterwards, defines himself", even though these ideas agree with the views of Tullych and Nietzsche who both share incompatibilist views of God. Incompatibilist views are those that reject God as a transcendent being as it is incompatible with the world we have and what we know, like Descartes believed knowledge came through reason, not faith, but completely opposite to Kierkegaard's fideism.

Sartre developed two ways of life - being in-itself and being for-itself. We, as humans,

are being for itself as our essence does not precede our existence as it does with created objects. Sartre was very concerned with utilising freedom and not allowing yourself to believe you are confined to a certain role - something he called living in bad faith. Sartre used an example of a waiter to illustrate this - the waiter was so committed to his job it was as if he believed his purpose was to be a waiter, as if he thought he was being in itself and his essence was to wait. To avoid living in bad faith we must live authentically, and not waste our freedom.

Like Kierkegaard, Sartre was concerned with subjectivity. He developed the idea of abandonment, this illustrates the individuality we all suffer. The student example was used to ~~the~~ convey this - a student had to make a decision between going to war and staying with his mother, he asked lots of different people, but in the end he was only ever going to do what he chose, he was completely alone. When you realise how alone you are in the world is when you begin to suffer things like anguish and despair - fear that everything is possible as you are so free. It was important, for Sartre that we accept our freedom, and do not

reject it out of fear.

Sartre's existentialism was developed by French feminist Simone de Beauvoir, with whom he enjoyed an open relationship for many years. Beauvoir took Sartre's being in itself and being for itself and created en soi and pour soi, meaning almost the same thing, just renamed. Where Beauvoir's ideas diverge from Sartre's is when she fuses the mind and the body and says we are both en soi and pour soi. Beauvoir's existential ontology was very focussed on feminism, she said women suffer *mauvaise foi* (bad faith) much more than men due to the social roles. Beauvoir said ~~"one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman"~~ "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman", this is a reference to how girls are made through societal roles that ~~push~~ push them into bad faith and not living authentically.

Sartre's existentialism was hugely popular and successful and has been used, and developed since then. Even though he was successful, the theory has still been met with criticism, many of which he addressed himself in his lecture "Existentialism as a Humanism".

The first critique is the idea that due to the focus

on freedom, existentialism is amoral. It differs from theories such as Aquinas' natural law as it does not supply blanket rules to follow, but this does not make it amoral. Sartre believed you couldn't judge someone ethically as your ethics may differ from theirs, but you may judge them logically. If their behaviour does not tie in with their predetermined ethics they've set you may judge them for that - giving existentialists a way of checking each others choices. As well as this Sartre said "in fashioning myself, I fashion mankind" as he believed the choices you make set an example of what you think is acceptable, so you should be responsible. Simone de Beauvoir shared a similar view as she believed each one of us is responsible for mankind.

Another criticism is that existentialism is ugly and pessimistic. This is due to its focus on the uglier side of life like anguish, despair and abandonment. Sartre argued that existentialism's main focus is freedom, and allowing humans to utilise their freedom is not ugly or pessimistic, it is positive.

Existentialism has also been criticized for being too individualistic. This would be ~~agreed~~ agreed with

by philosophers such as Kant who value society over the individual. Existentialism does focus on the individual but it does not necessarily isolate the individual, Sartre argued it unites mankind over the shared issues of existence.

Sartre was popular in the 1960s due to the ~~strong~~ nihilistic view people were starting to take on God, more people were agreeing with Nietzsche's 'God is dead' and less on classical fiction. Sartre also provided answers to important issues of existence without involving God, this adds to his success in the modern world.

Where Kierkegaard offers a theistic view that would've been hugely successful in the 1800s, Sartre offers an atheistic view that's more successful in widespread society today. The philosophers who have addressed important issues of God and existence have been met with varied success relative to the year and society.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The essay clearly shows the grasp the candidate has over their material and this control is sustained throughout the essay.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

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

Paper Summary

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

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

Grade Boundaries

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