

Examiners' Report
June 2016

GCE Religious Studies 6RS04 1D

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Introduction

At Standardisation meetings examiners considered three important documents for assessment and marking. First, the General Marking Guidance document sets out the policy of positive marking. Secondly, The Generic Mark Scheme divides each level across both AO1 and AO2 into 3 sublevels and this is helpful to achieve precise marking. Finally, the Indicative Mark Scheme is not intended to be prescriptive but to indicate possible legitimate ways of answering a question. The teams of examiners, by adopting these policies, have a broad and detailed understanding of the assessment process.

There are two fundamental principles for examining this paper based on the assessment objectives:

- One is that in AO1 it is essential to examine the text, noting there are various ways of achieving this.
- Two is that in AO2 it is essential to answer the full demands of this evaluative objective. This includes: 'Do you agree with the idea(s); justify your point of view and discuss its implications for understanding religion and human experience'.

Most of the religions in this unit used Ninian Smart's source on the dimensions of religion, including the ritual dimension. This source in the unit 6RS04 anthologies provides a context to the study of religion and illustrates a method used within religious studies.

Question 1

Good practice regarding AO1:

- Candidates showed evidence of a systematic focus on the passage, noting that this may be achieved via a variety of methods.
- Candidates subtly drew out issues raised in the passage and linked them to other aspects of their study, sometimes by reference to other aspects of Smart's work and relating them carefully to ideas in the extract.
- In addition, candidates presented synoptic links to related anthologies and to links in other units such as 6RS03.

Good practice in AO2:

- The best answers in part (b) struck a balance between insightful personal engagement with a critical analysis of the implications for understanding religion and human experience.
- There were some excellent answers with sound arguments and thoughtful discussions based on a range of scholarship.
- There was thoughtful and reflective consideration of the impact of Smart's views on religious practice and on general human experience.

Areas for improvement for AO1:

- A comparatively small number paid scant attention to the passage. An examination of the passage is essential, noting there are various different methods of achieving this. However, to evade the passage is very poor practice.
- Some presented a mere comprehension of the passage with little analysis or comments on significant points.
- The method of paraphrasing merely outlined the extract rather than engaging with the issues the article raised.
- Some mentioned a few scholars but at this level there was limited understanding of their contributions.

Areas for improvements for AO2:

- Some answers did little more than express an opinion, making sweeping claims, without supporting justifications with the ideas of scholars.
- More attention could have been given to alternative views of a topic and this is one of the criteria of Level 4.
- There was a limited ability to comprehend the implications for religion and human experience.

The two scripts below illustrate answers at the highest level although not gaining full marks:

- the first one presented a good analysis of ritual with a focus on Christianity with reasonable use of scholars;
- the second presented a well-structured exposition of Smart with a level of analysis showing an understanding of his ideas. The AO2 material was focused on the question with skills of arguing a case.

Plan

Point 1 Religion is Expressed through ritual

→ Tertullian's higher universe

◦ Types of invisible world (God) - Christianity

Point 2 Inner & outer aspect

→ William James & Wainwright

Point 3 Presuppositions. (Ramon Maeder)

- legends used (discusses further in mytheological)

Implications

P1

Augustine's fall hyp. Requires pre-belief.

imp of P & w. P2

- We need faith to understand Religion
Wainwright.

- Christmas & Easter (implications)

B3

bad thing? Jay

Man's doubt seek a invisible

(a) Professor Ninian Smart was a large
massive pioneer of Religious Studies, he opened
the first department of religion at the
University of Lancaster in 1967. In Smart's
'The Religious Experience of Mankind' he
~~attempts to find what~~ outlines the [↑]six
'dimensions of Religion' in an attempt to
understand what makes a theory or
philosophy qualify as a religion. Smart
, alongside other scholars, changed the
methodology of Religion, alongside Edmund
Husserl who outlined the need for
eidetic vision and epoché. However it was
Smart who changed the phenomenological
approach. Fitzgerald comments that Smart
intended to "Free comparative religion
from its theological associations" and to
and to "achieve scientific objectivity" in
his attempt to define religion using
his ~~the~~ six dimensions, Smart uses
Marxism as his example. In this
extract, he looks at the Ritual
Dimension ~~and what a ritual involves~~.
He provides us with an in-depth
discussion of the qualities that make up
the ritual dimension, and ~~how~~ ~~that~~ ~~works~~

is to consider if Marxism fits this mold.

In the first section of this extract, Smart offers the idea that "religion tends to express itself through rituals" using worship, and prayer as his example. He comments that our initial connotations with Ritual includes formal and elaborate types of rituals. Our impression of 'ritual' is largely informed by mass occasions, such as events within the Church of England, such as Royal Events, or even ~~day to day~~ rituals were simplistic rituals such as Christenings or Baptisms.

However, he goes on to note that even Religion on a personal level is ritualistic, such as worship or prayer, in an attempt to contact the invisible world. This is a key concept in Religion, and arguably the most fundamental aspect of Religious Belief. This is seen in William James's 'higher universe' hypothesis, in which he argues that we should be in constant attempt to communicate with and please God in order to reach the

higher universe. In Christianity, this is seen as 'Heaven' or in other words the Throne of God in which Christians can be 'rewarded' with eternal life. In Islam, the higher universe is known as 'Jannah' or paradise. and in the invisible world represents different things for different religions. In Shikishō represents reincarnation in order to eventually become a 'Shikō Gun', who are in constant communication ~~through~~ with God - also a form of ritual. Smart contends then, that he is not concerned with the point of view of those who participate in religion, however, as we can see through example, and through Smart's ideology - even the simplest service involves ritual.

Smart then goes on to talk about both 'inner' and 'outer' aspects of religion, and how it is always possible that the outer aspect could dominate the inner. He rightly suggests that if people continue to practice ritual without the intentions and sentiments that

give them meaning, then rituals are essentially meaningless. This is a concept that many religious people may feel incredibly strongly about. If rituals are not ~~in~~ preformed with the intention of connecting with the ~~total~~ 'invisible' world, and are merely for our enjoyment or pride, surely there is no point to them? This is however, this is seen throughout modern society and ~~the~~ throughout history, brought to England through American traditions. Christmas is an important example here. It is often that the religious sentiment of the birth of Jesus is almost completely overlooked, or used as a form of marketing. Celebrators seldom consider the 'inner' aspects and it is often overlooked. The same can be said for other ^{Christian} religious 'festivals' such as Easter, where the message has been completely warped by society. Religious onlookers would potentially disagree with this. A Tertullian, for example, believes

whole-heartedly that we should not need ~~any~~ anything but faith. He even suggests - alongside Puritan belief - that we should ignore reason when looking at religion. Therefore Tertullian would argue that this focus on the 'outer' aspect of religion was preposterous.

Smart agrees that because some religious activities are condemned as 'irrationalistic' does not mean we can conclude that religion + ritual is unimportant. As we see in William James' hypothesis, ritual such as prayer can be ~~it~~ fundamental to religion. This is summarised by John Hick in saying any work towards the grace of God and the higher universe is worth in the 'right direction', and this 'work' is achieved predominantly through prayer and worship, therefore Smart is right in this belief.

Finally Smart comments that the meaning of ritual cannot be fully understood without reference to

the environment in which it is performed. This is a crucial part of the ritual dimension and one that should be strongly considered. It is crucial that we consider the presuppositions of someone and their belief before we consider the meaning of ritual. Ramen Moody suggests that "one's faith is, I suppose, going to depend largely on one's presuppositions" and I would agree wholeheartedly. This is prominent to Smart's ritual dimension as we must understand a person's belief before examining his 'inner' motives. Smart himself comments that it is not until you walk a mile in the shoes of the other that you can truly understand him. He then suggests that ledgers are often expertly used to explain ceremony and important events, which are invested with sacred significance. This relates to his "mythological" dimension, in which he examines

the use of 'story' to tell show significant events. Many modern rituals are rooted in legend and myth, most importantly the Resurrection of Jesus, which is fundamental to all Christian belief and ritual. St Paul, in 1 Corinthians commented that "If Christ has not been raised our preaching is useless and so is our faith", an idea supported by N.T. Wright who suggested without resurrection, Christianity is pointless. This is an important aspect of Smart's ritual dimension as it is a critical aspect of the 'inner' truth to Christians, and the meaning behind why they perform rituals.

(b) To an extent, I do agree with some of the ideas expressed in this passage, however I believe that there are fundamental flaws in Smart's approach. Smart, when discussing the ritual dimension, says "I am not concerned with those who deny the existence of an invisible world." However, I would be

inclined to argue that without faith, how can we possibly understand religion. Surely, faith is a crucial presupposition to understanding the meaning behind religions. We see faith as a presupposition of many arguments for religious belief, without which, would not work. An important example of this is Augustine's Salvation Theodicy. Augustine maintains that the problem of evil in the world is a result of the fall of Adam and Eve, as all humans were "seminally present in the loins of Adam" however, we are saved through Jesus. In his sacrifice, we are atoned - shown in 1 Corinthians 15. Without faith, however, Augustine's theodicy fails - it cannot work. The same can be said about Smart's approach to religion. Without basic understanding of faith - religion or aspects of it surely cannot be understood. This fits with Anselm's idea of 'faith seeking understanding'. Wainwright would agree, he approaches

Christianity's relationship with Philosophy from a position of understood faith, making his argument more credible. I agree with what Smart is fundamentally saying - but think ~~his approach is entirely flawed~~ the basis of his approach is entirely flawed; the implications being he cannot fully understand religion.

~~While Smart comments~~ In this extract Smart considers how the outer aspects of religion often dominate the inner, where I considered the example of Christmas, however I must consider whether or not this is truly a bad thing. The implications of this to Christianity are obviously negative. To Evangelical Christians, or to Mormons, ~~this~~ this has incredibly negative implications. The pure word of Christ is being distorted by mainstream media and often ignored. However, I would be inclined to take a more positive approach. Even St Paul himself, commented that he did not have an issue with people

self-consciously preaching Jesus and God as long as the message of Christ is being conveyed. While the message of Christmas is sometimes lost, it does bring about many Nativity plays, wherein children are taught of the Birth of Jesus, and parents are reminded. This may spark interest into God's world. Therefore while the outer aspect of God is most certainly not the most important thing, it is by no means solely negative, and can have positive implications, as this idea is summarised by ~~the~~ when Karl Jung, who maintains that the message of ~~Christ~~ Christ and experience of religion has so much positive impact, that it cannot be denied. The Christian celebrations have so many positive impacts of society: community cohesion, giving, charity, happiness and joy, that should it matter if the outer aspects denigrate?

Finally, we must consider the

ritual dimension in regard to
Marxism. Marxism as a social
ideology does not fit the idea
of the 'ritual dimension' in a
any sort of relation to an
'invisible world' and does not
attempt to connect with a higher
universe. While it may have some
forms of ritual, it does not have
ritual with an inner purpose which
is so fundamental in the make-up
of a religion. Ultimately, I agree
with aspects of Smart's theory of
~~ultimately~~ religion, but believe it
is flawed.

1a)

Ninian Smart was a pioneer for religious education in schools, with him first establishing the course ~~mainly~~. In this passage Smart is writing about one of the six dimensions of religion: doctrinal, mythological, ethical, ritual, social and experiential. He ~~believes~~ ^{states} that these are ^{all} required for something to be classed as a religion, which is why it is impossible for Marxism to be classed as a religion. In this extract from the book 'The Religious Experience of Mankind' Smart is referring to the ritual dimension, which is the first dimension he discusses.

Smart's first argument is that "religion tends in part to express itself through such rituals", in which he gives the examples of prayer and offerings. Rituals are present within every worldwide religion including Christianity, Judaism, Islam and ~~Hinduism~~ Hinduism. Within Christianity many rituals focus around Jesus, for example in the Catholic Church during Easter there will be a ~~small~~ 'pilgrimage' around the 14 stations of the cross to remember ~~to~~ the pain and suffering that Jesus went through to save humanity from sin. Within Judaism they celebrate many serious/important

days such as Passover, ~~Shabbat~~ Yom Kippur, and Rosh Hashanah. One important ritual is the Seder meal in which each ^{item} food represents something significant such as the boiled egg referencing new life, or the salt water referencing the sweat and tears shed by the Israelites during their time in Egypt. Within ~~the~~ Islam the main rituals for Sunni and Shia Muslims occur in the five pillars: Hajj, Salat, Zakat, Sawm and Shahadah. These rituals mentioned highlight the importance of rituals within religion, as it is what divides it from Marxism or football.

The second argument given by Smart is that "even ~~at~~ the simplest form of religious service involves ritual." Smart is making this argument here as often it is only believed that rituals are "very formal and elaborate" but in Smart's opinion this isn't the case. Any form of ritual is aimed at gaining experience or knowledge of the "invisible world." Smart uses the example of the Eucharist service as a "formal and elaborate" ritual as it often involves many aspects. Within the Orthodox Church

The ~~the~~ Eucharist service occurs weekly. The blessing upon the bread and wine which made it become the body and blood of ~~the~~ Christ is performed behind the iconostasis as it is believed to be to ~~seen~~ sacred for the congregation to see. However Smart then goes on to give the example of closing your eyes in prayer as part of a ritual in its simplest form. Smart's ~~an~~ final statement in this paragraph is that "even the simplest service involves ritual", which is again affirming his original argument at the start of the paragraph.

Smart's third argument is that ritual of any kind needs "inward intention". He argues that without the inward intention from the individual believer the ~~ritual~~ individual is an "empty shell". Within Islam it is very important that all ^{ritual} acts are performed with the correct intention, otherwise they are just meaningless. An ~~an~~ example of this is Salat (prayer) whilst there is the importance of performing the five daily

prayers for Muslims, performing it in the correct manner with the Rakahs (movement) it is additionally important that the individual truly is focused upon Allah and nothing else. If there is a distraction such as a mother needing to feed her young baby then that must be carried out first, as the prayers can later be caught up when the individual can perform it with the correct ^{inner} intention without being distracted. This is also seen in the Orthodox Church with the iconostasis and various other icons being displayed around the church building, these are here to help the individual/congregation be focused during church service or prayer, rather than having them distracted by the outside world. The "inward attention" of any believer/worshipper is important for every religion and religious ritual, because without the "inward intention" the rituals become "ritualistic".

Smart's fourth argument is that rituals are not only contained to one religious believer, as ~~they~~ ^{there} are in fact "secular rituals that we all use".

Here he gives the examples of greetings and saluting the flag. Smart states here that religious rituals have been intergrated within society, for example "God bless you", ^{or even just "bless you"} when ~~someone sneezes~~ this is used by many even though they may not identify themselves as being religious. Showing that many religious rituals have intergrated into society.

Smart's final argument is that "the meaning of ritual cannot be understood without reference to the environment of the belief." Many religious rituals are performed around the word, and it is important that when trying to understand or look into a certain ritual that the environment in which it was established and performed is considered. Within Judaism they eat matzot which is bread without yeast. This signifies the Exodus that the Israelites went on from Egypt to Israel, as they had to prepare food and didn't have time to wait for the bread to rise with yeast so they left it out, which is why Jews now eat matzot. This aspect

of Smart's argument strongly links to the mythological dimension that he later discusses, as certain rituals are based upon the stories within the religions that give its contexts and meaning, such as the Matzot.

B) Smart ~~states~~ ~~argues~~ argument throughout this extract is that all religions must contain rituals, whether its in its simplest form or very formal and elaborate, as it is ~~only~~ through ritual that one believer will experience the "invisible world".

I agree with Smart's first argument of religions expressing ~~themselves~~ "itself through rituals", as rituals often form a central part of the ~~religions~~ religion and with many religions being able to be identified by such rituals. ~~For~~ The impact of rituals upon the individual believer is that there may not be time within ^{our} modern ^{busy} lives to set aside time to perform religious rituals and attend church. This will link later to Smart's

argument about inward intention, but for the individual believer it is important for them to take time for worship, through rituals especially through rituals, because it's important for them to gain this knowledge of the "invisible world" and participate within their religion. The impact upon the church is that there needs to be clear times set for believers to ~~part~~ come in and worship, especially because believers may find it difficult to attend church service with work and possibly children making them busy. It would be important for the church to have longer opening times, starting earlier in the morning, so that individuals could come before work or school, but also later times that would allow people to come after a busy day of work. By catering to as many individuals as possible it would allow more believers to practice rituals. The implication for wider humanity is that there needs to be a greater acceptance of rituals for all religions. Whilst it may not be directly linked to a ritual act, wearing one

hijab for Muslim women causes many issues especially in the workplace, with it being banned within many companies particularly airlines. It is hugely important for an individual to be able to practice their religion in whatever format without facing judgement from wider society.

I also agree with Smart's second and third argument with ~~ea~~ even the simple rituals with inward intention are performed by religious believers. Bonhoeffer talks about cheap and costly grace, and these can be directly linked to Smart's second and third argument. Bonhoeffer states that "cheap grace is the deadly enemy of the church" as it is similar to Smart's statement of the individual being an "empty shell". Bonhoeffer is here arguing that going to church and carrying out rituals of any kind must be performed with this 'inner intention' because without it you are performing cheap grace and not truly understanding your religion. It is only through costly grace that religion is truly understood.

The impact upon the one individual believer is that any ritualistic act or attending church must be done with ~~an~~ inward intention, because without it they are not truly understanding or practicing their religion. Ronald Preston in his book about Christian ethics states that Jesus ~~was~~ gave the ethic of non-reciprocity, going above the minimum that is required, and he states that individual believers must line up to this example set by Jesus ~~as~~ as he was the "archetype for his followers." This links to SMARTS concept of "inner intention" as the individual believer ~~must~~ ^{must} not just go to church as that is the bare minimum, but they must live in the example of Jesus by doing the maximum of having this inner intention. The impact this has upon the church is that it can be argued with the increase in secularisation the church has fallen into what Bonhoeffer termed cheap grace. This is highlighted through anybody being allowed to baptise their children within a church without going to that church or even being a Christian. For one church its

important for them to go back to their roots set by Jesus and to not continue to practice cheap grace as they set the standards for the rest of their worshippers. By the church showing that they are being radical in the ways in which Jesus stated, believers will be encouraged to do the same.

Smart's arguments around the ritual dimension are all accurate, into the ways in which it should be understood and worshipped.

Paper Summary

This paper was first examined in 2010. It has been a significant and worthwhile feature of the current Specification, enabling candidates to study, in detail, sources and to develop synoptic links.

In 2018 the new A level Specification will be first examined (with AS in 2017). The new A level develops the opportunity to study sources in detail. All A level components have anthologies, normally with four sources and these will have a compulsory question on all A level papers. The Christianity anthology includes Moltmann on the Suffering of God; McGrath on Dawkins; Hick and atonement compared to Barth on the doctrine of reconciliation. These extracts are printed in full for the required extracts in the Anthology.

It can be noted that the ideas in the current anthologies can continue to be used in various ways across the new Specification.

Grade Boundaries

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

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