

Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Religious Studies

Unit C (RSS03) *Philosophy of Religion*

June 2009 Examination Candidate Exemplar Work:

- Candidate B



2009 (June) Unit C *Philosophy of Religion*

Example of Candidate's Work from the Examination

Candidate B

- 3 (a) Explain how psychology may challenge religious belief.

(30 marks)

AO1

Candidate Response

3a) Psychology can challenge religious belief. Psychology may say that religious belief is the result of Psychological pressure. If when a child ~~is a baby and~~ ~~is~~ thinks about God he will have many different images as to what God looks like. According to Sigmund Freud he ~~says~~ says that religion stems from the unconscious mind. He also famously said that "at the bottom of every case of hysteria there are repressed feelings of premature sexual experiences." Freud also thought that the libido had a role to play in the development in belief of religion. The libido is the body's biggest urge which includes the sexual drive. However Freud's theory was objected to by Carl Gustav Jung. He said that the mind was made up of archetypes and the libido was a source of psychic energy. Some of the archetypes Jung put forward are shadow, animus and anima. The shadow is the side of our mind which tries to conceal our darker side or our negative side. The animus is the image in a male's mind of the female sex this could be a beautiful young dancer or a weathered old hag. The anima is the opposite of the animus and is the image in a female's mind of the opposite sex. This could be a handsome young gentleman or a miserable old codger. Jung concluded that religion comes from these archetypes. Psychology has challenged religious belief immensely.

Commentary

AO1 (30 marks)

The question required candidates to explain how the various theories by Freud and/or Jung offer naturalistic explanations for religious beliefs. The candidate clearly has some understanding of some of the theories and has often used the appropriate technical words.

However, there is a major weakness with the answer. The candidate has made very little reference to religious beliefs and, as a result, the focus on psychology challenging religious beliefs is not addressed. There are brief hints such as a “religious belief is the result of psychological pressure”, “religion stems from the unconscious mind”, libido had a role to play in the development in belief of religion, and “Jung concluded that religion comes from these archetypes”.

There is no clear attempt to show how the theories of Freud and Jung explain religious belief. Some of the theories are mentioned but no explanation is given as to how they relate to religious beliefs. Apart from the first and last sentence of the answer, it would be difficult to work out what question this answer was addressing.

It cannot be regarded as a generally satisfactory treatment of the topic (level 4 descriptor). However, it is above isolated elements of partly accurate information (level 1 descriptor). Although it does not have a summary of key points it does show limited understanding (level 3 descriptor). Hence it was awarded 10 marks (just into a level 3).

Interestingly, it is an answer that would have taken very little to significantly improve it. The weakness may well be in exam skills rather than knowledge of the topic.

Level 3 (10 marks)

- (b) **‘Religion has been successful in responding to the challenges of psychology.’
To what extent do you agree?**

(15 marks)

AO2

Candidate Response

3b) The response religion has given to the challenges of Psychology have been content. Religion can put forward the teleological Argument by William Paley and say that if there was a Creator then he must've put forward some kind of belief that would honour him as the creator of the universe, i.e religion. Religion may be the cause of belief in a creator and psychology hasn't been able to conquer this theory. Overall, I do agree that religion has been successful in responding to the challenges of Psychology but religion has to ensure that it does not die away whilst responding to the numerous challenges psychology presents it with.

Commentary

AO2 (15 marks)

The candidate's lack of clarity in part (a) in addressing how psychology has challenged religious beliefs indicates that this part (b) may also be a weak response.

There seems confusion in the statement that "religion may be the cause of belief in a creator". No attempt is made to address the weaknesses of the particular theories of Freud and Jung. The conclusion "Overall, I do agree that religion has been successful in responding to the challenges of psychology..." is more of an opinion than a reasoned conclusion. Certainly there seems no clear justification offered. It seems difficult to justify level 1 (a few basic points) and so a level 0 was awarded.

Level 0 (0 marks)

- 4 (a) Explain each of the following terms: positive atheism, negative atheism, agnosticism.

(30 marks)

AO1

Candidate Response

4d) There are three types of Atheism, Positive atheism, Negative atheism and Agnosticism. Each of these have a slightly different belief. Positive Atheism is when you've accepted that there is no God. Reasons for this may arise from the quantity of suffering currently in the world. Negative Atheism is when you don't know whether there is a God but have already accepted that there is no God. This may result from being brought up in a family where the existence of God never really was brought up or it never existed inside the household. Agnosticism is when there is no possible way for a person to find out whether God exists or not. This may be the result of no interest in God's existence whatsoever. L3

Commentary

AO1 (30 marks)

This question required candidates to explain three terms that are listed in the Specification. The candidate does show some understanding but the material is more a summary and addresses all three terms in just over 100 words (if you discount the first two sentences of introduction).

The trigger word “explain” indicates some development and illustrations are required. However, each term has been “explained” in just two sentences. Again, the candidate seems to lack exam skills rather than knowledge of the topic.

It is not a generally satisfactory treatment of the topic within the time available (level descriptor 4) and so was awarded a level 3 (a summary of key points) and 12 marks.

Level 3 (12 marks)

(b) To what extent is religion in retreat in the modern world?

(15 marks)

AO2

Candidate Response

4.0) Technology has taken over the modern world quite effectively and comprehensively. However, religion is retreating quite rapidly in the modern world. There can be many reasons for this such as evolution and the big bang theory. There are also rapidly increasing atheists around the world. Religion can be found quite rare in many parts of the world today. However, there are a lot of religious believers in the world today but just not as much as previous years. However, if the modern world continues to persist on denial of religion then there will a very small amount of religious believers in the world.

Commentary

AO2 (15 marks)

The answer begins with a reference to technology, but it is not made clear what relevance this has to the argument. A view is then briefly supported but no attempt is made to explain how evolution and the Big Bang cause religion to retreat. Further evidence is given by a reference to numbers of atheists, which is then countered by the claim that there are also a lot of religious believers.

Given that this issue is clearly stated for study in the Specification, it shows little evidence of such study. It is superficial with a basic attempt at reasoning.

Hence it was awarded a lower level 2 (a superficial response).

Level 2 (3 marks)