

Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Religious Studies

Unit D (RSS04) *Religion, Philosophy and Science*

June 2009 Examination Candidate Exemplar Work:

- Candidate D



2009 (June) Unit D Religion, Philosophy and Science

Example of Candidate's Work from the Examination

Candidate D

- 2 (a) Examine ways in which religious believers explain the origin of life on Earth. (30 marks) AO1

Candidate Response

2	
a.	<p>For religious believers the origin of life on earth is down to God's creation of it. God is the starting point for all life and this is detailed in the Bible in the book of Genesis. It describes how God created the Earth and animals and man in six days, starting with the heavens, moving onto land, then vegetation, animals and finally from nothing or ex nihilo.</p> <p>man which according to the bible was made in God's image. This is the basis for life but within this there are different takes on the subject of creation.</p> <p>Young earth creationists have a literal view of the bible and take every word of it to be true events. They have calculated through the genealogy back to Adam that the world is 6-10,000 years old and that it was exactly 6 days in which the earth was created. They say that ^{Noah's} flood was a real event and this is the reason we have fossils today. Young earth creationists wholly discount any scientific theory that says the earth is older, taking the word of God to be truth.</p>

Another take on the origin of life by religious believers is by the Old earth creationists. These people have a more liberal view of the bible and understand that the bible was not meant to be interpreted as a historic document but that it tells a story of creation. The six days are not physical days to O.E.C.'s but instead an undetermined period of time, possibly millions of years in each 'day'. This explains fossils but what both Young and old earth creationists do not accept is evolution as a way of getting man. Both believe that God made man in the image we are today on the sixth day

and that we have a purpose to look after the earth as told by God and that one day we will be accountable for our actions.

Life on earth therefore, is all down to God, a kind God who made the earth for us, no matter how we interpret his ways. This is the belief of religious believers.

Commentary

AO1 (30 marks)

The candidate has a confident grasp of the difference between creationists. The answer begins with promise by describing the account in Genesis and then moving on logically to the interpretation of the text. Whilst the material is largely accurate, the range of material expected at this level is not present. In addition, the answer might have been further enhanced by reference to scholarship.

Level 4 (19 marks)

(b) Assess the view that evolutionary theory conflicts with belief in a creator.

(15 marks)

AO2

Candidate Response

b. The Theory of evolution can be seen to be a direct contradiction with the idea of a creator. However, it can be shown that they do not have to conflict but can be accepted together.

The Theory of evolution basically states that all life began as a single-celled organism and that over time and through natural selection the organism evolved, keeping the best characteristics that helped it survive and discarding the redundant ones as it evolved. This was proposed by Charles Darwin.

This idea would therefore appear to conflict with a creator as this shows life grew over small steps. A religious believer would say that God as the creator made everything as it is today but evolution challenges that. Evolution also conflicts with the idea of a creator because according to the bible, God created the land and the perfect environment for animals to inhabit it. Evolution suggests that it is not the environment adapted for the animal but that it is the animal that adapts to the environment which challenges a creator.

Finally, religious believers see their God as a kind and loving God but evolution shows that animals are 'red in tooth and claw' meaning that they kill to survive whether for food or in cold

blood. This does not seem like the behaviour of an animal made by a caring creator suggesting there isn't one.

However, while it seems impossible for evolution and the belief in a creator to work together, they do not have to conflict.

One theory suggests that God created the earth and life on it but then left it to see how it would grow and how the people would grow and look after his planet. This would then leave space for evolution to help evolve the organisms on the planet. In essence, God created the world and then allowed

us to evolve.

Plus, if we take the Old earth creationist views then the bible is not meant to be interpreted literally. God could have said he created the animals - livestock, birds, fishes but this could mean he planted the 'seed' for the animals and then let evolution do the rest.

Therefore, although evolution and belief in a creator are two separate things, they can work together to get to the same outcome - life as we know it now.

Commentary

AO2 (15 marks)

Here, the candidate has understood the range of the debate which exists between religious believers and evolutionists. The mark awarded reflected the examiner's view that analysis of the debate was implied in the answer. Candidates should be aware of the need to comment directly on the strengths and weaknesses of a point of view and then to justify that comment in order to score at the higher levels at AS. Failure to do so will mean that an answer can only score a maximum of Level 4 (9).

Level 5 (10 marks)

- 3 (a) Examine the ways in which the design argument has been criticised by David Hume.

(30 marks)

AO1

Candidate Response

3		Leave blank
	<p>a. David Hume criticised the design argument through his three characters, Cleanthes, Philo and Democritus in his book 'Dialogues concerning natural religion'. The criticism came from Philo who argued against design by saying how do we know if this universe has been designed if we have no concept of other universes? He assumes that our universe is perfect because we see order but how can we know that what we see is perfection? For all we know our universe is deeply flawed and full of errors but because we have no knowledge of the design of other universes we are incapable of knowing and so incapable of seeing design.</p> <p>Philo also argued that religious believers such as Christians assume that the designer is God and he was designed the everything we see. However, we as humans do not have the ability to know this and so for all we know, the universe could have been designed by a pantheon of Gods either with or without intelligence.</p> <p>The basic idea of design is that an intelligent being designed the universe so that conditions were perfect to sustain life. For religious believers the designer is God.</p>	

But Hume went on to argue a number of flaws in this theory. He attacked Paley's idea of a watch analogy by pointing out that there are many flaws in the universe. If the ~~universe~~ ^{universe} is like a watch it must be perfect otherwise it wouldn't function so it is not designed.

Hume also argued that the design theory shows everything needs to be designed. If this is true then who designed the designer? One would presume a designer but who designed him? The cycle is endless - ad infinitum. Believers argue ~~this is not hypocritical and bad~~ that God the designer doesn't need a designer but this hypocritical thereby destroying their argument.

Finally, Hume pointed out that design can ~~also~~ be seen in things that have no clear maker. A snowflake ~~is~~ or crystal has no design but it has order.

Therefore, Hume points out that the design argument is flawed and that we only see design because we want to.

Commentary

AO1 (30 marks)

The range of criticisms described by the candidate is well presented. There is good knowledge of Hume and, although some of the points could have been developed further, much of the material offered here is accurate. The candidate was on the borderline of a Level 6 and would perhaps have gained extra credit for giving more detail for each of the criticisms. This is a popular and well-rehearsed question and many answers in this area would have given more detail.

Level 5 (23 marks)

- (b) 'Hume's criticisms do not destroy the design argument.' Assess this view.
(15 marks)

AO2

Candidate Response

3	
	<p>b. Hume's criticisms do damage the design argument to a large extent but in agreement with the view, the design argument still stands because people still believe in it.</p>
	<p>Hume may have criticised design but for many people it is clear that there is design everywhere you look. The argument of intelligent design points out that life had to have been created by an intelligent agent to give it both</p>
	<p>✓ direction and the ability to function. For example, the bacteria flagellum has a motor-style tail of which to propel it forward. If this ever one part of it was missing then the tail wouldn't function.</p>
	<p>• This points to only one answer - a designer who created the flagellum the way it is so that it could function. The fact that the universe would appear to have order in its nature - rotations, seasons show</p>
	<p>✓ a designing element that is hard to argue against. The universe shows both design qua purpose and design qua regularity.</p>
	<p>And overall, Hume could never destroy</p>
	<p>!! the design argument because millions of people still believe in it.</p>
	<p>However, some people would argue that Hume has destroyed the Design argument because he has exposed its fatal flaws.</p>

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Who designed the designer leads to an infinite line of designers. Hume also pointed out the pain and suffering and evil in the world so how can there be a designer/God who would allow this to happen? Hume attacks both Paley and Aquinas - major design supporters and shows the simplicity of the design argument by how easily it is debunked and how it has so many flaws that it cannot show support for a designer.

Nevertheless, despite Humes criticisms of the design argument and his view that there is no designer, he has not destroyed it because the argument still has many strong points ~~at~~ and at its heart, people all over the world still believe in a designer and God.

Commentary

AO2 (15 marks)

The candidate understands the debate raised by the thesis and presents both sides of that debate competently. It is, however, clear that whilst the candidate has understood the debate, there is no real attempt to comment on the various arguments – a necessity for AO2. There is, also, a rather curious assertion that the design argument has not been destroyed because millions of people believe in it. There is no support for the assertion and no analysis of it. The examiner felt that the candidate had limited the mark range to a maximum Level 4 (9).

Level 4 (8 marks)