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Examiners' Report June 2010

GCE Religious Studies 6RS04 1B

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Introduction

This was the first year of this examination 6RS04 1B. The Legacy Spec paper 6584 1B had the same content as 6RS04 1B but this new exam has a different mark allocation between the two assessment objectives. Legacy had 25/15 whereas 6RS04 has 30/20 for AO1 and AO2 respectively. There are differences in the level descriptors, for example AO1 having 5 levels in this new paper compared to 4 in the Legacy Spec.

It is of paramount importance for candidates to examine the passage on the exam paper. Candidates must relate what they have learned and apply it to the extract and not treat it in a cursory fashion nor ignore the selected text. Examiners are fully aware that there are very many ways of examining a passage and there is no preferred method. What is essential is an explicit focus on the text, whatever method is used to examine it. There was evidence of some candidates inserting several paragraphs of material that were not linked to the question. This is not a recommended strategy.

Assessment Objectives: the examination is divided into two parts. AO1 is part (a) worth 30 marks and AO2 in part (b) is worth 20 marks. This division is on the paper to assist candidates to structure their answers and to enable them to make sensible use of their time in the allocation of material. In most cases candidates had the required examination technique to make effective use of their material. A few however, spent a disproportionate amount of time on AO1 at the expense of AO2 and vice versa. There is no necessary requirement to follow the structured division as seen in the question. However, for candidates who create a holistic answer there is a tendency to pay inadequate attention to AO2 especially in relation to the implications aspect of part (b). Candidates who adopt this holistic technique take a risk. In no way whatsoever do examiners penalise candidates who run together AO1 and AO2 though candidates may penalise themselves with partial answers.

AO1:

There was evidence of sound subject knowledge with a thorough exposition of the passage. A minority illustrated key ideas by the way they navigated their way through the whole passage of the anthology. This enabled candidates to incorporate various ideas in the whole article as a means of a more detailed analysis of the passage itself and to show an understanding of the context of the passage in relation to Lafollette's leading themes. Provided it was kept under control, more candidates could have made selective use of the Lafollette anthology as a whole. Some candidates had a reasonable knowledge of the other two anthologies and were able to link these into their answers especially Jamieson.

At the lower levels candidates presented a more descriptive and basic account of the passage akin to a simple comprehension test. These answers contained little analysis of key terms such as 'moral knowledge', 'empathy' and 'impartial morality'.

AO2:

The better quality answers were those that expressed view points with confidence and authority supported by reason and evidence. Some candidates outlined their own views and were able to ally or contrast them with various theories and scholars they had examined in their other units. Good quality work in the implications in part (b) consisted of academically rigorous approaches with pertinent examples. In particular, candidates made effective use of their other units in the implications sections. A range of ethical theories were used by candidates including Utilitarianism, Situation Ethics from 6RS01. Many made effective use of theories in

6RS03 such as Deontology, Natural Moral Law, Virtue Ethics and Emotivism. Links were made with a commendable range of scholars such as Aquinas, Aristotle, Kant, MacIntyre and Ross. This was effective in the sense that candidates based their material on the Lafollette passage and illustrated this by reference to these linked topics. In addition, some candidates placed this passage in a broader perspective so as to debate implications from history, politics, contemporary issues and pertinent issues.

At the lower levels for AO2:

Some candidates presented partial answers in relation to AO2. For example they expressed opinions giving their views on the extract but did not write about possible implications. Work at the lower levels tended to present basic accounts of Utilitarianism and Situation Ethics without clear links with the passage on the paper.

Question 1

This begins with the second paragraph of the candidate's answer to part (a).



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Examiner Comments

The candidate selects a key theme in Lafollette's first paragraph which is the significance of a child's early years in the development of empathy. The reference to Freud is pertinent and used in an effective manner. Similarly the material on Aristotle and Virtue Ethics helps to analyse this passage with regard to empathy.

Firstly, Lafollette is arguing that to be caring and have empathy, which he presents as intrinsic moral goods, one must have experienced intimate relationships and been raised by loving and caring parents. Essentially it is being argued that one's personality* is influenced and even determined by childhood experiences and the relationship between parent and child, thus Lafollette is presenting * and behaviour in adult life. a psychological approach to understanding and explaining human behaviour.

The influential psychologists, Sigmund Freud and Karl Jung, would both agree with the idea that the relationship between parent and child, and childhood experiences are crucial in determining a person's personality and behaviour in adult life. Freud writing in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* 1905 and *Interpretation of Dreams* stresses the importance of childhood experiences in relation to personal development. Jung, Freud's student, similarly argued that an individual you had unloving parents is likely to become a dysfunctional adult. Therefore, it can be

seen that LaFollette's idea on the development of empathy and morality, echoes the ~~the~~ traditional psychological argument of both Freud and Jung.

The second key ^{idea} found within LaFollette's argument is the concept that an individual must learn to moral, as it is stated that ~~no~~ how one knows how to be empathetic or consider the interests of others unless they have been in an intimate relationship. Since, LaFollette appears to link being caring and empathetic to be morally, it can be seen that he is conveying the idea that morality is a learnt behaviour. The idea echoes the beliefs of Aristotle, who writing in his book *Nicomachean Ethics* 350 BC developed his theory of virtue ethics. Virtue ethics ^{states} that one should seek ~~the~~ to achieve the ~~a~~ virtuous argument, which LaFollette would argue is achieved through being caring and possessing empathy. Aristotle, similarly to LaFollette argued that morality is a learnt behaviour, which is only achieved through practice and habit. This view is conveyed through Aristotle's

statement, we are what we repeatedly do.

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Examiner Tip

The candidate shows that one can relate this type of material to scholars and theories and maintain a clear focus on the passage itself.

This is the candidate's conclusion to part (a).

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Examiner Comments

This represents a concise conclusion that relates the selected passage to some of the key terms and ideas in the whole Lafollette source.

In Conclusion, the argument given by Lafollette in the passage succeeds in differentiating personal relationships from morality whilst maintaining they are 'mutually exclusive'. He appeals to dominant views that in order for us to engage with strangers we must have 'acquaintance with the discipline' and simultaneously argues a certain level of 'natural good' in humanity. Overall, Lafollette manages to not only modernise Aristotelian beliefs on the derivation of morality but to combine it with its impacts ~~and~~ ^{on} the society today.

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Examiner Tip

This type of conclusion helps to give shape to a candidate's work. It shows that it is well-managed and coherent.

This is the beginning of the candidate's answer to part (b).



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Examiner Comments

The candidate states that they are going to debate the strengths and weaknesses of Lafollette's claims. The candidate considers Freud's ideas and compares these to Popper.

b) In order to justify ^{and present} my opinion on the extract of the article 'Personal Relationships' by H Lafollette, I must first assess the strengths and weaknesses of his argument before coming to a conclusion about its implications on religion and the human experience.

The first idea establishes that morality is the result of teachings from our parents, that is representative of the work of Freud. On the one hand, this would show that Freud's case studies have some truth to

them, that those who are moral likely have caring and loving parents. There is evidence of this also in criminal case studies, a child-abuser and murderer is found to have been heavily abused as a child themselves. However, the ideas of Freud are criticised by Karl Popper, who suggests that Freud's case studies are based off of "nothing but stories and dreams, and are therefore devalued. Nietzsche criticises this view for being too deterministic, nobody can experience a good morality without a loving parental relationship, leaving morality to a matter of luck. The implication is that the human experience is devalued.



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Examiner Tip

One effective way of starting part (b) is to debate the strengths and weaknesses as this may help to answer the question of whether or not one agrees with the views in the passage.

This is the candidate's conclusion to part(b).



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Examiner Comments

The candidate repeats some of Lafollete's language but at a basic level and in a generalised form.

I believe that most people have such strong feelings towards the people they care about that they would be willing to risk their own lives to help them. This is also passed on to strangers, if you can understand what its like to care for someone this much then you will understand what its like for complete strangers and you

will sympathise with them.

In this passage by Lafollete he does make a lot of sense and I agree with almost everything said here. We both believe we are born with some morals, however, there we have more than he believes. We also agree that if we care for our intimates then we will sympathise with the feelings of others and will help them too.



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Examiner Tip

In this type of academic work it may not help the candidate to write, 'I believe that most people have such strong feelings..' Candidate's views should be supported by evidence and reason with reference to scholarship. These important characteristics are missing from this conclusion.

Congratulations should be given to a significant number of candidates who presented good quality work. They displayed the results of thorough study coupled with efficient examination techniques. They presented a scholarly understanding of the passage and related themes and managed the material in order to answer the whole question in a well-structured manner. Some candidates could improve their standards by providing an explicit examination of the passage in part (a) and present evaluative material that addresses the full demands in part (b).

Grade boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	N	U
Raw boundary mark	50	43	38	33	28	24	20	16	0
Uniform mark scale boundary	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	0

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