

Examiners' Report
June 2014

GCE Religious Studies 6RS04 1C

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Introduction

1. The question in AO1 says, 'Examine the argument and/or interpretation in the passage.'

All the level descriptors in the mark scheme for AO1 and AO2 begin with reference to the passage. There are many techniques which candidates used to demonstrate their understanding of the passage and examiners were alerted to this range in order to credit various methodologies. The essential point is that whatever approach was adopted the passage must be central and pivotal.

Some candidates presented a basic summary of the whole article, in this case Griffiths, with only passing reference to the passage in the question. Where material was applicable, candidates were credited but in some cases the passage received only scant attention. In many other cases candidates used the passage as the focal point, analysing it further with reference to the overall article and this method, used correctly, may be seen as an example of good practice.

2. Candidates have improved in answering all the range of demands within AO2:

- Do you agree with the idea(s) expressed?
- Justify your point of view
- Discuss its implications for understanding religion and human experience.

In some cases candidates failed to address one or more of these requirements and presented partial answers and this was reflected on their level of achievement.

3. A feature of good practice was that most candidates made effective use of the synoptic requirements of this paper. In AO1 levels 3, 4 & 5 of the Mark Scheme there is reference to crediting answers that demonstrate the application of different elements of their course of study in this paper.

4. The question was divided into parts (a) and (b): AO1 and AO2 respectively. This was done to help candidates answer the whole question rather than bypassing elements within an assessment objective. Over the years most candidates have followed through the structure of the question but some have conflated these two parts and this has often affected the standard of the work where relevant material in AO2 has been omitted. Exceptionally, a few using this holistic approach have succeeded and produced good quality answers. There was some evidence that the quality of work was higher in AO1 compared to AO2.

5. A number of candidates developed commendable styles of writing including a commanding and confident tone with ownership of the text.

Question 1

Good practice and areas for improvement

AO1 characteristics of good quality:

- well-informed answers focused on the passage
- comprehensive understanding of the passage
- reference to the article as a whole or to related ideas and managed effectively in order to demonstrate an understanding of the passage
- structured answers in a coherent manner.
- effective use of scholarship.

AO2 characteristics of good quality:

- effective use of argument and sustained debate
- material related to other anthology sources and to relevant material in the other three units
- explicit attention to the implications for an understanding religion and human experience.

AO1 work that requires improvement:

- not focused on the passage in an explicit and systematic manner
- basic and too short in the analysis of key points and ideas
- a generic account of the whole article or a general account of related teachings at the expense of a focus on the passage in the question
- scattered references to the names of scholars but without further analysis of their work.

AO2 work that requires improvement:

- largely unsupported by evidence or argument
- limited explicit focus on the implications demands of the question.
- poor paragraphing techniques that restricted the quality of evaluation.

Observations from the content of the scripts

Good quality answers displayed some of the following features:

AO1:

- an ability to set the passage in the context of Griffiths' article such as the debate between eternalism and nihilism
- an understanding of the key themes in Griffiths' article, including language and God related to the passage
- clear analysis of key terms such as anicca and anatta
- analysis of related key teachings such as the five skandas
- thoughtful exposition of nirvana as mentioned in the passage
- the significance of these ideas on subsequent movements such as Nagarjuna and sunyata

AO2:

- there was some consideration of beliefs about anicca and anatta for the development of Pure Land and Zen Buddhism
- there were critical debates about anatta with implications for beliefs about life after death
- there was interesting material on the implications of relating anicca to belief in God and views about people and their relationships
- candidates debated these ideas and their implications for topics such as pacifism and inter-faith dialogue
- synoptic material included a careful selection of relevant ideas such as the Questions of King Milinda from 6RS03

To note:

Some candidates wrote in considerable detail on topics such as meditation. This would have been creditworthy if used to target material in the passage. However, in some cases the candidate's examination of some topics was not related to the passage.

The candidate focuses on the key ideas in the passage from Griffiths. There is a detailed analysis of anicca, together with its significance across various Buddhist movements. There is a very clear exposition of some Buddhist philosophical schools.

AO2 contains evidence of critical debate about anatta and a critical appraisal of Griffiths' work.

1 a) The notion of Anicca which is impermanence is applied to all aspects of life in Buddhism. Buddhist philosophy it can be argued is much more complex than any other religious philosophy. The claim that 'there are no enduring selves' is essentially centred on the fact that 'anatta' or no soul applies to all humans. Buddhists view the self as ~~anatta~~ as an expression of the ego and one that can only hinder ones chances of attaining nirvana. Believing in a soul 'atman' - as often used in Hinduism is also not excusing the three vices but the three fires: greed, ignorance and hatred. By having the view that there is a self, we are jeopardising chances of showing compassion to others which essentially is what is largely looked to be attained ~~then~~ as a means of gaining wholesome karma. A persons karma (the natural law of cause and

effect) is transmigratory and effects a person's rebirth in their next life. Buddhists refer to a person as being reborn rather than reincarnated as they do not believe in a permanent soul (atman). Buddhism is non-dualistic. Karma is gained through wholesome or unwholesome actions which go on to effect your next life.

Buddhist philosophy views us as merely small, changing, ever-changing parts in the grand scheme of impermanence. Griffiths brings this to light in his essay. Buddhists view us as being made up of the five skhandas: form, perception, formation, perception, ~~vibrant~~ consciousness, volition and

We are merely made up of constituent, ever-changing parts that will constantly be subject to the concept of impermanence. The analogy of the chariot explains this and also the two levels of reality that Buddhists view us through. So on a conventional reality, we can label the parts of a chariot, just as we can label people but this would only be showing an expression of the ego. On an ultimate level of reality we cannot be labelled as we are beyond language but also beyond labelling. What we view on the ultimate conventional level of reality (in the eyes of Buddhists) doesn't always reflect the reality of things. Griffiths' section on persons can be linked to epistemology and philosophy of language. In this section Griffiths sets out the Buddhist ideas of how a person is in fact beyond

labels that we are so often given. Language can be mistaken very often and we may gain knowledge through the misinterpretation of symbols or tools supposed to guide us to ~~the~~ Nirvana. ~~But~~ ~~off~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ This can be applied to the celestial Buddhist devas which are very often ~~mistaken~~ mistaken as literally existing when they are a means of enriching ones life and opportunity to reach Nirvana.

The Dharma is the universal truth in Buddhism and it is a realisation of the Dharma along with many other things that ~~allow~~ enables a person to reach Nirvana. Many sects of Buddhism approach the enlightenment or Nirvana differently. Whilst Pure Land can be seen as a much more relaxed type of Buddhism that uses ~~the~~ the worship of Amitayus to reach enlightenment. ~~But~~ Zen Buddhism is often viewed as the strictest form of Buddhism. Their view towards persons may be misinterpreted as being unnecessarily violent - especially in Rinzai 'the violent way'. The one thing all Buddhism ~~the~~ has in common is that it aims to use meditation as a tool and aid to reach Nirvana. Zazen is known as 'sitting in meditation' and uses complex meditational positions such as the lotus flower to try to have an insight into Nirvana.

For Buddhists, to mistake a persons entity is a terrible thing to do. Much as they view worship as something

that will foster unnecessary emotional states in a person. No person should be worshipped or looked up to as a bodily figure (as Griffiths points out in his 6th dimension) as this leads to undesirable states in a person that will not lead to nirvana. By worshipping a god, or being focused on yourself rather than having compassionate actions to others, you are focusing too much on your future and your past. In fact this will only lead to unwholesome karma,

hindering any chances of reaching Nirvana. The Buddhist philosophy towards persons is complex and means that Buddhism must also have an ontology that ~~is~~ coheres with it.

The Uposatha round is seen as a compassionate event which brings the community together. This is important in Buddhism as the laypersons and the Sangha are largely reliant on each other. This can be seen in Smart's ritual and social dimension. Rituals, as Smart expresses, very often bring people together in a social way. Religion has a real social aspect to it in which people can connect together with a shared belief system.

A person should not aim for Nirvana in Buddhism, much like they should not ask if one has reached Nirvana. This is seen as inappropriate. Rather one should live their life by the eightfold path and aim to cease all suffering (Dukkha). It is actions in the present that will effect

one's future. To dwell on the past and future is of little significance or point to a Buddhist.

It was during the Deer Park Sermon of the Buddha's very first teachings when he was teaching the Dharma after having realised the four sights ~~of the human condition~~, that one of the five ascetics with the Buddha reacted enlightenment himself as the Buddha's teachings provided such clarity. This demonstrates the strength of the Dharma to a person and the influence it has.

There are three philosophical schools of Mahayana Buddhism; Madhyamaka, Tathagatagarbha and Yogacara. They all have a very much differing view on persons. Whilst they all recognise impermanence, they do not all agree. Madhyamaka is often seen as 'realistic'. It views the world as in relative existence and applies the same belief to persons, that we exist relatively. They believe we cannot say we definitely exist or that we definitely do not exist as either would be too definite.

Yogacara is the philosophical school known as 'mind only'. Yogacaras view the powers of the mind as in determining of how we view the world. Their view of persons is that our mental constructions demonstrate how we view the universe. Tathagatagarbha is known as inner Buddha nature. Inner Buddha nature means that we all have an embryo of the Buddha within us but it only becomes fully fledged

once we achieve Buddhahood.

Or It is clear that Gifford's recognises that there are philosophical views with persons that are problematic and perhaps incoherent with other sections such as Buddhist ontology however this is ~~interesting~~ interesting and provides nihilism.

much scope for debate amongst Buddhist philosophers.

b) I believe that there are many problems with the Buddhist view on persons, that the view is at times incoherent and perhaps too 'otherworldly' to fully understand for many.

As Buddhists essentially deny 'personhood' I wonder if this means that Buddhists cannot be in love. As love is an expression of desire, perhaps not, but I believe that love is part of what it means to be a person.

The Buddhist concept of 'sunyata' or emptiness is problematic to me, as is the concept of Anatta. I believe there lies a contradiction here. Fundamentally, if we are ~~just~~ all empty of inherent existence then I do not understand how our karma effects our next life.

The Questions of King Milinda however does explain this.

King Milinda was puzzled as to how our karmic fruits are transmigratory if they have nothing to attach themselves

to as there is no soul. ~~There~~ Usually, in Hinduism our Karma attaches to our soul, which makes more sense. But Nagarjuna replied by saying that all things are psycho-physically interlinked, allowing our Karma to be transitory.

Many have dismissed Buddhism as nihilism, claiming that its concept of impermanence on the view of persons and of the universe means that nothing can really exist. To an extent I agree with this as sunyata also implies a similar idea.

I believe that Buddhists severely limit themselves ~~then~~ by the way that they view ~~pers~~ people. Their language as Griffiths points out in epistemology and philosophy of language is what is the main limiting factor. Buddhists appear to really restrict themselves through their conquest to understanding the Dharma and wanting to achieve Nirvana. They almost undervalue life by viewing it as so ~~perishable~~ impermanent, ~~to~~ many may perceive this as devaluing life itself. I believe Griffiths may miss out the actual reasons for why Buddhists believe in such an impermanent version of the self. For many other traditions it may have been due to social surroundings or the historical background of a tradition. For example, Sikhism ~~often~~ throughout history has ~~often~~ often been in areas of war or conflict. This is what influenced them into adopting such an otherworldly approach. ~~and~~ It is reflected now in the way that Sikh's have such a spiritual ~~escape~~ day-to-day life,

it is really integrated.

I do understand where Buddhists are coming from however. I do believe that in the grand scheme of existence we are not very significant, however I don't believe that's should then lead us to devalue our lives. I do believe it makes sense that any desires Buddhists believe in are also subject to compassion and desire. This is because, if they weren't the Buddhist view of persons would be adopted just because they were seen to be higher beings. However this should never be the case as that would amount to people also desiring to be higher beings.

I think that the belief in Atman would make more sense although as there would be no problem of karma and where it attaches itself to. Plato and Aristotle's views of the soul can be seen as very different and a contrast between the ideas on the existence of persons between western and eastern traditions. However the Abrahamic traditions generally view the self as much more permanent which comes from the west. However Pythagoras actually claimed to have memories of past lives which is a demonstration of very much eastern views in western culture. He believed that as a person passed through a life they gathered wisdom or virtue. The Abrahamic view of resurrection also challenges the Buddhist view on persons as they believe we will be

resurrected as ourselves, maybe not identically, but
nevertheless it is a much more permanent
view of persons than the Indian traditions have ever

knowledge ^{limited}.

had. I see Buddhism as a tradition that has been
influenced by many other world religions and that they have
had a significant impact on Buddhism. Buddhism as
an Indian tradition reflects the religious pluralism of India
now making it a very difficult tradition to distinguish
between. A Buddhist view on 4 persons may not strictly be
Buddhist as they could be a Hindu and Buddhist -
therefore mixing the ideas of persons.

As Giffiths points out in his tradition and sources
section, we know in the west have only had a tiny
fraction of scriptures and teachings translated which
creates problems. We may in fact not ~~know~~ know
all we think we do about persons therefore meaning that
we cannot make responsible generalisations about
the Buddhist view on 4 persons. If we do we risk
really misconstruing that view which would have an
impact on Buddhism as a worldwide tradition.

As there are so many different sects of Buddhism and
differing beliefs, it is very difficult ~~to~~ to classify
Buddhism which limits our knowledge and clarity of

understanding of it as a world tradition.

I think with Buddhism there is a risk that their view on persons as being so impermanent could damage and devalue humans? However as time moves on and all religions progress and are influenced by different movements I think there is a risk that Buddhism could also become absorbed and lose focus. Many already view Buddhism as an incredibly relaxed religion and so I think that it could already be happening, I believe Pure Land Buddhism is an example of this as, ~~it~~ it seems to have adapted Buddhist values and beliefs, especially in the way that it worships Amitayus in a God-like manner. This demonstrates perhaps Buddhism becoming more like an abrahamic tradition and that it could be becoming more monotheistic. However this contradicts with the Buddhist view on persons.

I believe Griffiths should & perhaps have focused more on the tradition and history behind the Buddhist view on persons. Although I do understand the Buddhist view on persons I believe it's incoherent with other beliefs.

The candidate demonstrated a high level of understanding of the key ideas in the passage. Throughout the answer there was a confident presentation of a wide range of relevant material.

In the AO2 part the candidate debated a wide range of pertinent issues with a good discussion about implications.

A) A common question asked about Buddhism is is it a philosophy or a religion. In studying Giffkins it appears that it is very much a religion in today's world but is philosophical in its basis. This appears to be so because of its existential nature & reliance on the individual & self development rather than adherence to a supreme being. Hence there is clear focus on the person which is discussed in the passage. The essay by Giffkins deals with many issues such as persons, gods, ontology & epistemology & philosophy of language.

The above passage examines Giffkins section on 'persons'. This has links with the idea of no enduring self which is related to the idea of a human being who is not in possession of an immortal soul in contrast to traditional Christian thinking. Hinduism is a rejection of the Vedic concept of Atman & this relates to the idea of no enduring self. In Buddhism the fundamental belief is all reality is all things are impermanent & this also refers to the person. According to Buddhist thought a person is made up of a combination of psychophysical factors called the 5 skandhas.

these work together & as a combination of ever changing elements that should not be clung to. Clinging & forming attachment to the self is simply a negative reflection of the ego as we are deluding ourselves & indulging in falsehoods that prevent the clarity of mind necessary to attain *nirvana*. This must be let go & this can be done by practicing the 8 fold path & the 5 precepts.

The questions of *iccha* munda address the idea of both *ananda* & *anna* in the analogy of the chariot in which 'Ragpole' & 'Staff' are simply labels of convenience for constituent parts. This recognises that ultimately there is no ~~def~~ separateness, all things are part of the same.

~~Enlightenment expands upon this in~~ despite this Buddhists do observe an element of continuity though they deny the existence of a permanent soul they state that a chain of continuity follows all rebirths from moment to moment, life to life. The transmigration of karmic merit thus

show that Buddhists do acknowledge the person as being the same but different in the many stages of life.

Griffiths expands upon this in his section on ontology. ontology means 'of being' & characterises the Buddhist worldview. Ansems on Indian ontology therefore differs from Buddhist ontology while Buddhist ontology is similar to the vedic tradition in terms of interconnectedness however in this religion Brahma remains dependent on nothing. Griffiths mentions the importance of anicca & states if we do not understand the correct perception of Buddhism we are likely to read it to it in an incorrect way.

for Buddhism our existence is based on the fundamental principle of change & dependency; to have change there must be a series of interdependent events & this is the law of cause & effect.

for Buddhism reality works on 2 levels, the ultimate level & the conventional level under which we are

harbouring delusions about the nature of reality, however Buddhists recognize that the elements of the conventional level that we need in order to exist in today's world such as a name & recognition of individuality however on the ultimate level there is no ~~separateness~~ separateness.

Another idea with concept of nonduality which states it is an illusion to perceive the world as separateness existing subjects & objects on the ultimate level all things are interconnected & therefore the same with no clear distinction:

These beliefs derived from the 3 philosophical schools:

Madhyamaka was formed by the monk

Nagarjuna who received the

prajnaparamita literature from the

Arjya spurs. In this theology it states

that everything lacks its own being

therefore all are empty. Emptiness

(Shunyata) is the ultimate reality

behind all phenomena as all things are interdependent & everything exists

epistemology & philosophy of language
Section states that the truth of the
pharmaceutical culture can
be fully known however it is not
always possible to communicate
the truth through language.
Language can explain some things
but can't adequately explain
ultimate truth which is beyond
our conceptualisation.

201 is a good example of this
& uses logos & mados to break
the confines of limited language
& conditioned thinking.

This can be used to discuss
Kierkegaard's language via William
James' concept of 'weakness'.

~~Sublime maintained their~~
Maimonides via negative stated
their language is inadequate to
describe ultimate truth in his
case God as when you try to define
God you limit him. This is the

same as Buddhism which is why
speaking in negation can be
effective. Mythe symbol is used to

help to define ultimate truth in Buddhism. Like analogies like 'blowing out' & 'extinguish' which help explain how Buddhists see the world.

Gods: most clearly unlike to persons Buddhism is a non theistic tradition in that it does not adhere to any Gods. For a concept goes against Buddhist principles like impermanence. as a god or monothemism is an unchanging & permanent entity.

Buddhists also place emphasis on self discipline & virtuous goodness as way to recognising enlightenment rather than reliance on another. Hence there is focus on the person living a good life rather than being willed to do so & thus it tests the virtue being extertained, this is reinforced as Buddhism has no concept of an afterlife so the focus is on the now and living an ethical life. The focus of the religion is therefore on the person who must recognise his own impermanence.

~~occasionally~~ Mahayana uses celestial Buddhas & Bodhisattvas but there are not gods - they are a representation of virtues & characteristics & on such are a tool for understanding. Dharma accordingly, this can be taken to extremes like pureland & reciting 'Amida' however Amida is simply a savior in medius; again ~~religious~~ sects like Nichiren & Tibet have a focus on magic & so the true aim of focus on the self 'persons' is forgotten. Therefore persons never more relevant as we must overcome such delusion.

A

B) In this essay deals with Buddhist philosophy and the passage has a focus on the person. The passage about the Buddhist perspective of the person is appealing to me as even though ~~it is~~ pain toward is a less attractive prospect than eternal life it ~~present~~ presents a stark reality of the way things are. We can see

impermanence in today's world, things break, we age, people get sick etc. nothing starts or same & going by empirical testing & observable

senses there is limited evidence to support the Buddhist stance.

even if it is critiqued by other religions like Christianity & Plato's view of an indestructible, immortal soul that survives the death of the body. however the religions lack proof of God or that anything is impermanent.

We can also see the interconnectedness of the world as described in Buddhism. We rely on oxygen which comes from trees our food comes from plants & animals as we are not self-sustainable hence we are all dependant on something for our existence.

The Vedic tradition presents a web that bridges the gap between Buddhism & ~~the~~ the religions like Christianity as it recognises the interconnectedness of all things but ~~it~~ still acknowledges the spirit of divinity in all things that

to Bhrama. I think that John Hick was right that such religious statements are non cognitive as they lack fact to substantiate claims. Hick stated that we could never know for certain the truth about God & therefore about humanity's purpose ('persons') He used the term epistemologically verification to highlight this reinforcing which that religious people who believe in God rely on faith claims & biblical statements to support their views on life & death and that is precisely the point; faith is not fact.

~~Smith's~~ essay argues that it is also clear that language is finite & cannot explain what is transcendent hence concepts about nirvana are flawed. In fact there is no word to describe such truth. Islam recognises this and Muslims therefore do not write 'God' instead they depict him in calligraphy.

recognising the limited nature of language.

Despite aspects of Buddhism that can be criticised namely by other religions through their conflicting beliefs about God (Anselm's ontological argument ~~criticized~~ ~~supported~~ ~~counts on his idea of interconnectedness with God being the exception.~~)

Buddhism paints a real picture of reality & tries to get us to overcome that which causes suffering (dukkha). We can see this in war etc & Buddhism realists really recognises we must accept such harsh truths as an inescapable part of life. Any statement that Buddhism is clinical can be overruled by its status as the universal religion of compassion and its aim to alleviate suffering. This is best epitomized by the Bodhisattva doctrine where it is a duty to help all reach Nirvana. Therefore Buddhism has exclusive focus on the person rather than

God as compassion & motivation should come from within rather than being willed to do so. Hence the existential focus is clear - on the person & this is appealing in spite of the criticism as it tries to make people better & promote the virtue indeed John Hick's analogy of the liche potion asserts that the compassion & goodness for the right reason is better than forced - God manufactured values.

Hence clearly The Buddhist view on persons is agreeable to me as a concept ~~although~~ & the ethical & therefore existential nature promotes the good life which I feel all should try to live in accordance with & the religious ontologies I do not dispute proof to change my mind for religions to jump to believe need is simply a leap of faith.

The overall standard of this answer was slightly lower than the previous two examples but nevertheless it was a high standard of work. The candidate displayed a reasonable focus on the key themes in the passage, and made use of 'The Questions of King Milinda.'
AO2 showed evidence of critical debate. There was attention to some implications and these were embedded within the answer.

(a) To begin with, the passage highlights the fundamental Buddhist 'ontological intuition' that everything is ~~an~~ impermanent; known as 'anicca'. As one of the three marks of existence, this philosophy is vital to an understanding of Buddhist beliefs.

The principle of anicca states that all things in ~~the~~ existence are subject to the laws of Samsara; a cyclical, eternal ~~unending~~ state of ~~constant~~ change.

It ~~teaches~~ teaches that all things (dhammas or 'phenomena') are made up of and caused by other dhammas ~~and~~ so cannot have any enduring sense of self or individual essence. For example, in the story of King Milinda's chariot; the chariot is understood to itself comprise of an axle, crossbars and wheels, each of which are made of aggregate materials and furthermore, it is inevitable that at some point these comprising parts will cease to form what we recognise as a chariot.

This notion, known as paticcasamuppada or causal flow, teaches that everything arises, abides ~~and~~ eventually, fades as a result of other dhammas, such as the way in which parents give birth to a child; it affects its surroundings but from some cause eventually dies. This interdependence or contingency in which all things in ~~the~~ ^{the} universe are caused by and made up of other things is

what underpins the buddhist ontology of anicca.

Developing this, Griffiths highlights how buddhism extends this belief of impermanence and lack of individual essence to human beings, known as the principle of 'anatta' or 'no-self'. He also notes how unique this position is to buddhism in contrast to other religions such as christianity, for example, whose fundamental teachings and 'philosophico-religious' 'ontology' rests upon the permanent existence of the self and a soul. The principle of anatta develops anicca to provide an understanding for human existence and experience; defining us as united with ~~the~~ the universe; made up of the same dharmas and not, as is the consensus belief, solitary individuals, as we will one day fade and the dharmas that temporarily came together to form what is recognised as each of us will become something else.

The passage continues to dispell some of the potentially worrying or nihilistic conclusions that may be drawn from this type of philosophy. He argues that at some point in time we definitely do exist as ~~persons~~ persons, that we have perceptive ~~consciousness~~ consciousness, that we do, indeed, exist 'abide'

for a significant period of time and that we each have unique characteristics which allow our identification as individuals. ~~But~~ It is a common misconception that Buddhist philosophy denies these things because, even though it ~~does~~ argues against the permanence or ~~the~~ true 'individuality' essence' of any being (such as the 'soul' present in other religions) there is still understanding of how in the temporal present, dharmas make up forms which can be ~~very~~ recognised and used by us as a whole. For example, a person, though they will one day die, is still identifiable by his friends from one day to the next by his friends and he will still need to such things as water (even if it is a temporary dharma) to survive.

Instead, ~~as~~ as Griffiths explains, the conclusions which ~~we~~ should be drawn from Buddhist philosophy are as follows. Although they may not affect how we live in order to survive and understand the world in that sense, the common ~~mis~~ misconception of how things are is 'deeply mistaken' and leads to unhappiness. To attain Nirvana (extinguish suffering) Buddhism teaches that people must first understand the truths of anicca and anatta.

Suffering (dukkha) is caused by ignorance of this state of exists, leading people being

attached to (raga) or craving impermanent things.

Happiness is achieved when we understand we should not grasp what we will ultimately lose. For example, when a child builds a sandcastle that is destroyed by the sea it cries but its parents do not because they have not attached to that which is subject to anicca.

Similarly, isolation can lead to suffering as people make the 'deeply damaging' error of believing they are a solitary being. By understanding the principle of anatta it is possible to achieve 'harmony' with the universe and ~~eliminate~~ prevent dukkha through lovelessness.

Therefore, Griffiths has effectively explained the main ontological position of Buddhism and its contrast with what most people believe; establishing the idea that we should be grasping only what we need to survive rather than cling to what must ultimately fade. These core principles are the basis from which all other teachings stem from, such as living the middle way to achieve happiness or the ethical system which focuses on helping others not yourself.

b) I agree with many of the ideas expressed in the passage, ~~particularly~~ There is undoubtedly tremendous foresight displayed by these teachings which did not surface on ~~the~~ any other forum prevalently until the achievements of the 20th century.

As an atheist I can particularly sympathise with the buddhist idea of anatta or 'no-self', as I do not believe in an enduring soul. Like existentialist thinkers such as Camus and Sartre I believe this grants immense freedoms in living your life as an individual as opposed to the way many theists have for centuries. In this sense I agree strongly with certain buddhist schools.

Similarly, I agree with the idea that it is impotent to acknowledge the impermanence of all things and that through understanding this it is clear that to live a materialistic or superficial life will not bring about happiness. As the more you have, the less you appreciate it so it is logical to adopt this buddhist perspective in many respects. Following from this, as people are happiest when they have just what they need, buddhist advocacy of divisible and selfless effort is something I believe to be true.

Additionally, I agree with buddhist ethical systems which are formed directly from the position described in the passage. As opposed to deontologists like Kant or religions such as Jainism (which calculate the value of an action through its result) buddhist ethics ~~and~~ states that good karma will come to the person who decides to do the most good for others; making it both teleological and utilitarianist, both positions with which I agree.

In conclusion, the selfless nature of buddhism and understanding of the nature of things are issues on which I agree.

However, there are also ways in which I don't agree with buddhist thinking in some respects.

Firstly, buddhists make up around 7% of the population, spread all over the world so there is inevitably variety in their belief systems. Because of this, it can be hard to pin down a particular position in which all buddhists agree. For instance, Mahayana and Theravada buddhism have starkly contrasting existential viewpoints so where I may agree with one I ~~may~~ ^{might} disagree with another. This is particularly evident by ~~the~~ highlighting the Mahayana notions of rebirth, ~~and~~ karma and afterlife which, in my opinion, ~~are~~ in contradiction to the teachings already mentioned.

Next, I believe that ^{the} one sense, buddhist teaching of anicca is wrong. The consciousness of an individual is permanent to himself, when he loses consciousness he ceases to exist, ~~so we can't say he ceases to exist~~. As a result of this, from the perspective of each individual their own consciousness ^{is} in fact permanent.

Furthermore, the idea that there is no individual in any more than a physical sense is, in my opinion incorrect. Despite the fact we are all made up of samsara dhammas and eventually fade, it is ~~also~~ also true that we each have unique characteristics and interests. The teachings of buddhism can at times make generalizations which fail to take into account our different personalities. Philosophers such as Nietzsche for example place utmost importance on the significance of nurturing your individual character.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are encouraged to:

- develop their interest in an academic study of religion
- develop study skills that reflect these academic demands such as a thorough study of the texts, the ability to analyse complex ideas and to manage their material in order to answer the question in an explicit manner
- adopt a critical approach which reflects on their prior learning in the other RS units
- engage with the implications of their studies.

Grade Boundaries

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