

Examiners' Report
June 2015

GCE Religious Studies 6RS04 1B

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Introduction

Important information about mark schemes:

Detailed mark schemes are available on the Religious Studies web site. Examiners at standardisation are reminded that the mark scheme contains:

(i) General Marking Guidance: This consists of eight bullet points including, 'Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.'

(ii) Generic mark scheme: This divides each level across both AO1 and AO2 into three sub-levels – low, mid and high. Each concludes with a statement about quality of written communication.

(iii) Indicative level descriptors: These are meant to be indicative rather than definitional of content at each level. The introduction to the indicative level descriptors states: 'Examiners should be reminded that any legitimate approach to the clarification and discussion of the passage must be rewarded and there is no need for candidates to cover every idea mentioned in the extract.'

(iv) In addition, on pages 120-121 of the Specification there is an abbreviated guide to the level descriptors. Introduction to the paper:

Examiners commented that many scripts made for impressive reading. Good scripts had a full understanding of the key points of both the extract and the wider argument of Jamieson. The most able candidates engaged with all aspects of the passage. Candidates displayed high levels of achievement both in its strengths and weaknesses. Candidates at this level of success made the best use of the synoptic opportunities from related anthologies in 6RS04 and relevant material in 6RS03, plus, where appropriate, the two AS units: 6RS01 and 6RS02. Candidates were able to forge perceptive links with Virtue Ethics and Deontology and additional ethical theories.

Lower levels of work had a more basic understanding of the passage with limited scholarship to support the claims being made. There were instances of unsatisfactory time management relating to the respective demands of the two assessment objectives. A few spent too long on AO1 with too little attention to AO2 and vice versa. A few candidates merged AO1 and AO2. Typically, these paid scant attention to the issues of the implications of the passage for understanding religion and human experience. This year there were some candidates who were not familiar with the passage but quite good on related arguments. Whilst their AO1 marks were lower they tended to score better in AO2. Nevertheless their overall mark was lower than more balanced answers.

Question 1

Good practice and areas for improvement AO1 characteristics of good quality:

- Comprehensive understanding of the passage
- Well-managed and coherent answers
- Competent analysis of complex issues and problems
- Analysis of terms including 'anti-theorists', 'moral theorizing', 'hypostatizations'
- Confident use of scholarship to support their explanations, including Anscombe
- Effective and appropriate use of the other Ethics anthology sources
- Expansion of ideas briefly mentioned in the passage but developed elsewhere such as the significance of 'dominant conception'.

AO1 work that requires improvement:

- Evidence of extensive reference to a passage from either La Follette or Schneewind, at the expense of the selected passage on the exam paper
- Answers were not systematically focused on the passage in an explicit manner
- A simple comprehension task and typically short
- A generic account of the whole source from Jamieson, but lacking the ability to bring out the specifics of the passage
- A general account of related ideas on ethical theories with minimum attention to the passage
- Reference to scholars' names but with little analysis of their ideas.

AO2 characteristics of good quality:

- Impressive presentations with confident evaluations, including abstract structures as derivative of moral theorizing
- Effective selection and management of arguments and implications
- An ability to discuss key ideas such as the claim that the anti-theorists do not succeed in showing that we would be better off without moral theory
- Sustained debate with purposeful use of views for and against ideas associated with 'theory-fragments'
- A useful discussion was to explore MacIntyre's 'cafeteria of conflicting moralities' and then to build pertinent links with Jamieson's arguments.

AO2 work that requires improvement:

- Basic points of view with limited use of argument and evidence
- Isolated view-points without appropriate exemplary support.

The following scripts are examples of good practice.

Jamieson's passage is taken from the article "Method and moral theory." This particular passage features within the section of the anti-theorists, who challenge the views upon the dominant conception.

Jamieson critically analysed the view points of anti-theorists including philosophers such as Elizabeth Anscombe and Alastair McIntyre, traditionally recognised for their contribution within Virtue Theory. The main point of discussion for which there anti-theorists comment upon is the idea that moral theories are abstract structures which play no role within moral decision making - they prove ineffective. Furthermore, they argue that they initiate theory fragments which is possible to have some influence as they are playing a guidance role for individual. Lastly, Jamieson suggests that the anti-theorists position is useful when critiquing the dominant conception making it available for moral practices to be accessed by anyone.

Jamieson discussed the abstract

structures within moral theory. This is the idea that theories are made up of parts - they are "structures". He refers to these abstract structures as "hypostatizations" which suggest that they are an influencing role/activity of moral practise. Jamieson suggests that these structures are used for various purposes "to grade and categorize agents, acts and outcomes". This is a significant point to analyse as many of the anti-theorists believe this is where disputes resolve as these categories differ in terms of importance for moral theories. For example, a Utilitarian theory would place importance upon "outcomes" of moral behaviour as the theory, created by Jeremy Bentham, is a consequentialist, teleological argument which focuses on a means to an end - they look at consequences of a behaviour. Meaning acts have instrumental worth. However, this raises debate amongst philosophers as on the other hand, theories such as deontology place the agent at the centre of moral theory. For example, Immanuel Kant believed

humans have a duty to follow the good will and the agent has their duty to follow acts which are right in and of themselves. This differs to utilitarians as deontological theories are not concerned with consequences of behaviour but instead believe acts are either right or wrong intrinsically (in and of themselves). This is the reason why Jamieson describes the problems with moral theory, as the anti-theories point out, "we never use them for making moral decisions" This is because there is too much difference and debate between theories such as utilitarianism and deontology and thus, can never purely focus on one theory to provide a moral decision. For example, if a mad axeman was running after your friend who has told you to keep her hidden, and he asks you where she is or you'll die, the theories cannot make moral decisions as utilitarianism would suggest "greatest ~~number~~^{happiness} for greatest number" the hedonic calculi, meaning save your

friend whereas Kant suggests we have a duty to tell the truth and therefore tell the axeman where your friend is. *

Jamieson then suggests that individuals are constantly operating in their own moral theorizing, thus using individual ethics and are likely to take part or favour in one theory but may disagree with other selections/features. Therefore, this leads to "theory fragments" which as rightly implied by Jamieson, play influence upon decision making. To expand this further, Jamieson argues "although they may not play a starring role", they take effect, even if this is only minute. This is suggesting that when humans are placed within a situation, they may turn to a theory for support by just considering a 'fragment' or characteristic of it. For example, if Euthanasia was to be made legal, and someone was considering whether to terminate an ill family member,

some may turn to fragments of a theory for support. For example, Christianity implies "to treat others as thy want to be treated" suggesting to end their life or to a Buddhist approach of "ending suffering leads to Nirvana" which would conclude ending their life will leave them at peace, and enjoy a pain free after-life. * 2

Within the passage, Jamieson discusses the issues regarding anti-theorists. However, he suggests that although they address the problems of moral theorising, he also raises awareness that they are useful. He suggests "people in their own everyday moral practices create theory". Jamieson presents a view that theorising is available to all, and not just to powerful Gods. He therefore takes a bottom up approach. A theory which supports this is virtue theory which is an individual character based therefore that believes all can access morality by

practising virtues and reaching Eudaimonia. Anyone is capable of doing this. Furthermore, he believes there is a cap on what theories can do and thus "help us do what is right rather than true". This suggests that theories guide us to deciding what we believe is right rather than telling us the direct truth and following them as society is too liberal to follow a strict structure like that. For example, Thomas Aquinas' Natural Moral Law gives us primary precepts to follow and those who do not are defective. Precepts include 'preserve life, ordered society, worship God, educate / learn and reproduce. Jamieson believes the anti-theorists attack on the dominant conception is important and helpful for the reasoning being it offers an alternative approach and can make philosophers reconsider the purpose of moral theorizing. He therefore evaluates his statement by adding that although they give their opinion, it is not

strong enough to explain why we would be better off without moral theory.

In conclusion, Jamieson's passage identifies issues anti-theorists establish including abstract structures, how theories show theory fragments have effect on moral practices and finally, the role of moral practices and evaluation of anti-theorist beliefs.

*¹ LaFollette's article of morality and personal relationships would provide the opinion that in this situation there is no other just reason to save your friend other than because they are your friend. You show an intimate relationship with them and therefore, should show preferential care and integrity towards intimates for that reason.

*² Furthermore, Jamieson quotes that the evaluations go beyond what would be required of the "immediate situation." This suggests Ock

When a situation arises, you put aside theorising of what you would usually follow. A great example to illustrate this is Natural Moral Law and proportionalism influenced by Curran and House. Proportionalists believe that an immediate situation can put Natural Moral Law aside (following primary precepts) for the greatest / highest good. This also supports Situation Ethics, founded by Fletcher who believed situations indicate moral decision making.

b) Jamieson offers a range of discussion about the anti-theorist view upon moral theorizing - including abstract structures and limits upon theories.

When Jamieson discusses the view that a reason why there is disputes amongst philosophers regarding abstract structures (which categorize acts, agents and outcomes) I agree with the view put

forward by anti-theorists that disputes occur when different theories place their theories on primary importance on either agents, outcomes or acts and therefore agree with Jamieson that moral theories are 'abstract structures'. I believe that disputes are often caused by theories and their primary importance as it leads to a lot of confusion amongst individuals due to the wide spread of theories available. It leads to a world of confusion and uncertainty as because each theory differs (for example Utilitarianism focuses on outcomes and deontology focuses on agents) it can leave humans without support rather than with. Therefore I agree with Jamieson's ideas that 'we can never use them for making moral decisions' as if this is the case, how are humans meant to know which theory offers the most support/practical help. Christians would use this to make the implication that humans should merely

follow this religion path and follow the ten commandments as they offer clear, concise guidance which improves quality of life. *

However, I disagree with Jamieson point of view within his article as when he suggests 'people in their everyday moral practice, create theory', he is suggesting that everybody has the equal opportunity to place their own views and make conscious decisions for themselves. If this is the case, then how come many women in poor countries are unable to do what is right in their view but cannot due to laws?

Furthermore, a newborn child is not capable at that age of people creating theory everyday and therefore I believe Jamieson has generalised this to the extreme that everybody can do this. This holds a human implication that everyone has freedom of speech and own the right to follow what is good.

Furthermore, I disagree with Jamieson's ideas that there are 'limits on what theories can do'. Due to us living in a strong, multi-cultural liberal society, I believe we are capable of doing pretty much anything within our control. How can such moral decision making procedures have a limit? Surely if this is the case, then they are faulty for not being able to provide a full system for humans to follow? Also, how can this explain the life of monks of Buddhist tradition for example or Catholic priests? This aids understanding of religious experience as there are some individuals out there who devote their lives fully to follow a theory. Therefore Jamieson is very contradictory by suggesting there are limits.

*I therefore agree with Jamieson's claim that the anti-theorists view of

The dominant conception is "important" and "helpful."

Lastly, the claim that Jamieson makes about moral decision making have 'some effect' on moral practices give an implication for human experience. I agree with this view as often, we are influenced by what we see/believe. Thus although moral theories do not completely control our behaviour, it gives humans the choice to make their own decisions without being directly tied down by their religious background / Moral theory point of view. For example, Catholics completely shun abortion and Natural Moral Law believes contraception is wrong due to them going against their guidelines. It is a good thing that theories only influence decision making as it allows people to be flexible and free. If everyone was to follow religious / theory guidelines, there would be no diversity in society and therefore implies everyone would be saints.

In conclusion, I believe Jamieson's article offers an alternative viewpoint to the norm and therefore the anti-theorists give us the flip-side of the coin and show alternatives which I believe offer practical knowledge. Therefore, I agree strongly with Jamieson's passage on anti-theorists.



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Examiner Comments

There was much good practice in this answer. In AO1 the candidate very quickly focused on the details of the passage and its key ideas. The candidate analysed important expressions and phrases. There was a sustained attempt to examine reasons behind Jamieson's views. Ethical theories were used to analyse the passage in greater detail.

In AO2 the candidate discussed a good range of points of view and interpretations. There was a successful integration of agreement or otherwise with Jamieson's arguments with some implications for understanding human experience.

Dale Jamieson's article ultimately evaluates the usefulness (or otherwise) of ethical theory. He explores how moral philosophy has changed in recent years, from the dominant conception sorting agents, actions and outcomes into appropriate categories, to the use of examples in modern moral philosophy. Rather than singling out specific examples, ~~and~~ ~~the~~ of moral theories and highlighting their weaknesses, Jamieson concentrates on ~~the~~ how moral theories are generated. The author looks at contemporary moral philosophy and notes how philosophers have focused too much on the creation of moral theories than actually evaluating whether they work or not. Jamieson charts the rise of anti-theorism and ~~and~~ reviews the inherent problems with coherentism and foundationalism, however suggests that these problems could be superseded by the everyday ~~theoretical~~ use of moral theorizing.

This particular extract surrounds the idea of moral-theorizing and how we, in the modern era coincidentally use principles of theories, or 'theory fragments' in our everyday lives. Jamieson also notes the views of the anti-theorists who have moved away from the traditional views on evaluating morality, and acknowledge

that we do not need 'full-blown moral theories' in order to be moral beings. Anscombe is an example of an anti-theorist whom Jamieson expounds as an example. Anscombe argues that moral theory is useless without a universal divine lawgiver. We cannot base laws/rules on ~~the~~ trainings that do not have universal agreement. Therefore, Anscombe argues, there is a need for a return to the Aristotelian views on virtue ethics. Which would teach us to focus on the development of virtuous character rather than the decisions we make or outcomes we produce. Aristotle was the 'father' of virtue ethics and believed in Eudemonia or 'human flourishing' that we should all aim to achieve. Thus we need to look for the ~~of~~ 'Golden Mean' between the vices of excess and the vices of deficiency. A classic hypothetical example (which Jamieson ~~also~~ discusses in the Role of Examples) is supposing an old lady is being mugged on the street, do you show concidence and run away? ~~vice of deficiency~~ (vice of deficiency); charge in and be the hero but inevitably get hurt? (vice of excess); or call the police and stay to be a witness (the Golden Mean). The latter is an example of how we truly become virtuous being, though we may not live by the

Just Theory of Virtue Ethics. Anscombe argues the value of the 'theory fragments'. Jerome Schneewind also highlights the need for a return to the ²Aristotelian way of moral living with virtue ethics in his article, as a movement away from autonomy. ~~the~~

~~Moreover, in this extract, Jamieson comments on the use of 'abstract structures' in order to help us categorize agents, acts and outcomes. Abstract structures are ineliminable, we can use them in theory. Jamieson discusses ~~the difference between~~ reconciling theory and practice as there are many moral theories that we could use in moral dilemmas, but we almost never use them for making moral decisions. Though, these theories are 'abstract structures' (they are ineliminable) and as MacIntyre states there is a 'cafeteria of competing moralities' as there are too many theories in order to just live by one. When we are faced with 'actual social and political problems' as Schneewind states we have no use for moral theory. Instead we use 'role reversal tests' as Jamieson states, we think of how other people will feel and what effect our actions will have. Which is similar to the ~~the~~ feelings~~

of Situation Ethics. Situation Ethics was developed by Joseph Fletcher in the 1960s - a period of ~~the~~ many inquiries. This theory focused on the principle of Agape - Godly love. In any situation, we must do the most loving act in order to be moral beings. Jesus was the original ~~the~~ situationist, in theory he also ~~the~~ taught role reversal tests, as ~~this~~ the Golden Rule is 'treat others as you wish to be treated'.

The movement away from autonomy ~~and~~ and coming 'full-circle' towards Virtue Ethics is essential for the anti-theorists. As Anscombe argues you can't have laws without a 'divine-law giver', it moves further away from the most enclosed ethical theory of Natural Law. Natural Law ~~is~~ is ~~a~~ a normative theory that focuses on God's intention and nature. It is deontological therefore it focuses on the inherent worth of an action. Thomas Aquinas was the main exponent of Natural Law and he argued that 'we must use human reason in order to follow God's plan'. 'To disparage the ability of reason is the equivalent to concerning the command of God' ~~the~~

~~that~~ to a not value human reason is the same as saying God's commands are irrevocable and will ultimately lead to ~~the~~ sin. The Catholic ~~Church~~ church's teaching and strongly based on Natural Law and therefore when Catholics are ~~not~~ faced with moral dilemmas they utilize theory fragments of Natural Law perhaps with no awareness that they are doing so.

Some people live ~~by~~ morally by abiding by laws in society, using reason to allow them to avoid making bad decisions. The principle of using reason is a theory fragment of Kant's deontology, another moral theory that stems from the dominant conception. Kant focused on the importance of inner human reason and always performing our duty. Laws in society should be ~~not~~ created through the use of reason and it is our duty to abide by those laws, which is absolute - there are no exceptions to the rule. We must also only act in goodwill, 'it is impossible to conceive anything at all in the world, or out of it, as good without qualification, except a good will'. Meaning

that only acts that are done ~~with~~ using
true reason for a good purpose can be
deemed as a good will. Our reason allows
us to identify categorical imperatives which
are absolute commands that we must follow.
Kant offered several formula in order to help us
live by morality: formula of universal law;
formula of humanity; formula of the kingdom
of ends; formula of autonomy. For Kant,
providing we stick to these principles we
will be moral beings despite the consequences.

Overall, this extract highlights the way we
do use certain principles of moral theory but
in the modern day, it is unlikely that
we ever use full-blown moral theory. Human
beings are more concerned with their
relationships with other people, rather than
taking an absolute approach to morality. Lapallete
argues in his article that if we were to
live by moral theory our lives wouldn't be
worth living as our relationships would be
more like 'role specified ones' rather than what
we do owe to human nature. Therefore,
Jameson's note that even though anti-theorists

attack moral theory, it doesn't fully succeed to ~~the~~ disregard 'moral theory'. As we all ~~must~~ 'moral-theorize', and we should aim for a return to virtue ethics in order to ~~adapt~~ adapt with our ever-growing multi-cultural, secular and plural society.

(b) I agree with Jameson that moral theories are ~~the~~ 'abstract structures' and that we only use 'theory fragments' in ~~every~~ everyday moral theorizing. We can all be faced with situations when we need to make a moral ~~eterno~~ decision, and without realising it we use theory fragments. Sometimes we consider what will make the most amount ~~of~~ of people happy, which is indirectly Jeremy Bentham's greatest happiness principle, but we don't then go onto use the Hedonic calculus, measuring duration and intensity. We consider what is best for the people around us. So therefore the theories may not have a starring-role, however we do indirectly use these principles.

The implications for understanding religion

include how the church uses theory fragments of Natural Law. The church should explicitly teach that Catholicism comes from Natural Law however we should only use principles of it rather than the full blown theory. If the church encouraged people to use religious 'theory fragments' in order to make ~~exact~~ decisions people would be able to solve ethical dilemmas more effectively. Though they should more focus on Jesus' teachings that you should 'love ~~their~~ their neighbour' ~~and that's~~ Pope Francis should consider ~~attempting~~ promoting the build up of character and being a good ~~the~~ person, in order to adopt the absolutist and ~~be~~ inflexible concepts from Natural Law to relate to the modern world.

Implications for understanding human experience include how if the English Baccalaureate re-emphasises the need for the study of Religious Education, we could solve the moral confusion and ~~teach~~ ~~#~~ more towards Virtue Ethics, in order to teach children to be virtuous. This would ~~#~~ improve the behaviour of children who do not have a good sense of

what it is to be moral which could be due to a poor lifestyle. It could also encourage British values of morality and prevent children being radicalised. If children learn to be virtuous and avoid the vice of excess there will be a reduction of influence from radicalisation. For example the youngest ever boy to go to ~~the~~ Serbia recently, he committed suicide bombing in order to become a martyr, but he was born and raised in Britain. This could be avoided if it was taught in ~~set~~ schools that we need to be virtuous beings by doing good, according to British values ~~of~~ ~~the~~ and good, respectful behaviour.

Overall I do agree with Jameson, we all moral-theorize, but if ~~there~~ the best parts of moral theories are encouraged then we can have solutions for moral dilemmas. The foundationalist principles of all moral theories can be mixed and the virtue theory fragment to help with moral dilemmas.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate constructed a reasonably balanced answer across AO1 and A02. There was a clear understanding of key terms and expressions. There was good practice in the way in which the candidate integrated analysis of ethical theories into an examination of the passage itself. The candidate used synoptic issues related to key debates within ethical theories and how these contributed to an understanding of the passage. A good feature of AO2 was the way in which the candidate related discussions about points of view and implications to contemporary issues, noting this was done with varying degrees of success.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are encouraged to develop important study skills. This unit opens up the possibility of developing a range of study skills applicable to a number of career and HE routes. There are many excellent sources available. One noteworthy edition is:

The Arts Good Study Guide 2nd Edition 2008 Open University Worldwide, Chambers, Ellie and Northedge, Andrew.

This includes a scrutiny of:

- A range of reading and note making techniques
- The craft and process of writing good essays
- Significance of analysis and evaluation
- Preparing for examinations.

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