

Examiners' Report
June 2012

GCE Religious Studies 6RS04 1B

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Introduction

It is clear that very many candidates worked hard in their preparation for this paper. Many showed evidence of commendable study skills. This included the ability to focus explicitly on the demands of the question, structuring their answers in a clear coherent manner and marshalling arguments into a critical evaluation.

Very few candidates attempted to fuse parts (a) and (b) together; in previous years this approach led some candidates to pay insufficient attention to the various demands of AO2 (Assessment Objective 2).

The main focus in all the levels for the mark scheme of AO1 (Assessment Objective 1) relates to an understanding of the passage. Candidates have different methods for examining part (a). For example, two popular methods are:

- (i) working their way systematically through the extract and linking it to other scholars, and
- (ii) selecting relevant material from the Jamieson article as a whole and relating this to the passage.

These various methods are creditworthy and produced some very good answers. However, as with other methods, these may have potential problems, for example:

(i) sometimes a close analysis of the text becomes a simple and basic comprehension exercise, rather than the means of placing Jamieson in any meaningful context or showing evidence of analysis

(ii) occasionally some candidates, by summarising Jamieson as a whole, may pay scant attention to the selected passage.

It must be noted that there is no predictable pattern in the choice of selected texts, although over the lifetime of the specification all of the three texts will be used.

Question 1

AO1 features of good quality

- Evidence of excellent work with confident understanding.
- Examination of the passage in breadth and detail.
- Specific ideas/points of view raised by Jamieson being addressed. For example, some candidates focused on key areas such as the notion of 'moral theorising'. In examining such topics it was good to see candidates using a range of scholars being drawn into the debate, such as Anscombe, MacIntyre, Williams and Ross.
- Candidates showed good knowledge of coherentism and foundationalism in relation to their examination of the passage.
- Some candidates explored the ideas of ostensive, hypothetical and imaginary examples to good effect, drawing out the significance of the passage.
- Relevant links were made with other sources in the anthology: Schneewind and LaFollette.
- Creative use of material from other units including ethical theories in 6RS01 and 6RS03. In particular, candidates made very good use of Virtue Ethics. Strong responses were explicit in showing why the selected theories connected to the passage about moral theorising.
- Using the extract as a springboard to showcase their wider knowledge. These candidates wrote fluently about a wide range of scholarship both within the wider Jamieson text and beyond it.
- Clarity in the conclusion that cohered with the rest of the answer.

Examples of AO1 work that require improvement

- Generalised views on ethical theories that were not related to Jamieson.
- Some were not that clear about Jamieson's point regarding the difference between moral theory and moral theorising. Sometimes this entailed extensive material on various ethical theories that were not related to Jamieson's ideas about moral theorising.
- Some candidates provided lengthy material regarding the role of examples, indicating a lack of understanding of their use in Jamieson.
- Some examples of AO1 were shorter than the AO2 material, although there are more marks available for AO1.
- Evidence of candidates using a generic response to Jamieson that provided only incidental information on the extract itself.

AO2 features of good quality

- Good critical analysis reflecting an evident ability to think through the implications of the passage.

- In response to the question *Do you agree with the ideas expressed?* strong responses presented their own opinions and located these within their wider areas of study. They referred to scholarly opinion, debating and constructing a valid and well-justified argument. These showed a thoughtful understanding of alternative and challenging views and ideas.
- Use of arguments based around ideas of eg Rawls.
- Ability to debate implications for understanding both religion and human experience.

Examples of AO2 work that require improvement

- Some candidates answered AO2 in the same manner as AO1, with little evidence of evaluation.
- Part (b) was sometimes too short and descriptive, rather than evaluative.
- Some short answers omitted either implications for understanding religion or understanding human experience or both.
- Sometimes candidates presented paragraphs that were not linked together.

b) The passage highlights the view that morality is successful if we apply various fragments of the one that we consider the most appealing and appropriate. This issue of moral theorizing is part of the broader issue of whether ethical theories achieve ~~the~~ dominating, unifying morality in a universal sense. I am going to argue in line with the passage and section 'reconciling theory and practice' and in disagreement with the dominant conception and anti-theorists. I believe that our moral is somewhere in between those who advocate the dominant conception and anti-theorist school of thought.

The anti-theorists do present a valid point that we should be sceptical about the grand old theories because they never achieve the objectivity they set out to achieve and crave. Who has heard of Kantian Deontology anyway? And those who have, do they apply it in everyday life? If any, few do. In fact, students who have studied philosophy are more likely to mistrust the ethical theories because they have become accustomed to the flaws and faults they are

riddled with. Anscombe argued that we should not be pressured to take on-board such fallible ethical theories in the absence of God and I think she was absolutely right in saying so. All theories are so dreadfully flawed e.g. Kantian Deontology is deemed too unworkable in real-life because in instances such as Lonstant's 'murderer at the door' challenge, the categorical imperatives come unstruck. Deontology would prescribe that we tell the truth and advise the murderer on where our friend is hiding however, isn't lying the most intuitive and compassionate thing to do? Applying these theories in everyday life soon exposes their problems, so students are more likely to gravitate towards a logical positivist school of thought because they avoid the consequences of foundationalist methodology and accept the fact that ethical language is objectively useless and meaningless because it does not qualify for analytical truth or empirical verifiability (VEM).

However, this approach gives rise to Emotivism which has ~~many~~ implications because ethical statements are deemed ^a mere utterances of subjective sentiment "designed to provoke the reader to action of a certain sort" (Ayer). Therefore it is not the superior moral opinion that wins a debate but the ~~best~~^{best,} most talented emotive speaker ~~who~~ with the most linguistic flair. This falls victim to the problems coherentist methodology faces however because it fully embraces the futility of moral dialogue/debate and gives justification to moral relativism. This is a ~~very~~ concept for some as ~~an~~ on instance where reflective equilibrium is applied like Nazi ideology, it allows them to sail their ship ^{like Christians and nihilists,} even though it is plain that their conclusions are 'grossly immoral' because everyone has a right to believe what they wish as long as ~~they~~ their cycle of beliefs is internally coherent and non-contradictory.

Yet, I think these problems mentioned above are possibly overstated because emotivism / logical positivism / moral relativism / subjectivism is not such a terrible prospect.

It is with value systems like these that diversity arises and, living in a culture that has been diverse for many generations, it is more fascinating and enriching than divisive and disruptive. Just because there ~~is a lack of~~ is a lack of a unifying theory does not mean that individuals are totally unreflective and unthinking, no, they readily morally theorize and apply the most appealing sections of the published theories that they think fit the situation best.

To conclude, the ethical theories put forward on the dominant conception are not to be completely written off because they do have value and use. Jamieson warns however that we should not have all our energy dedicated to one theory to the exclusion of everything else, this would inevitably fail. Instead we should employ a patchwork morality, choosing a moral compass that fits well with our integrity and live our lives pursuing our own private conception of the good as Williams rightly suggests.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The candidate introduced this part with a clear line of reasoning. The following debate was well-informed and incorporated a good range of relevant scholarship.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

There was some evidence of the implications for understanding religion and human experience. This tended to be implicit and the candidate could have made a more systematic answer to specified demands in part (b).

This consists of the AO1 part of this answer. The candidate showed their knowledge of a considerable range of related material, including extensive reference to Jamieson's full article.

At key points, the candidate related this background material to significant ideas in the selected passage.

The important point is to ensure that adequate attention is given to the passage itself.

a) In Jamieson's article, 'Method and Moral Theory' he explores how moral theory and moral practice relate to everyday decision making. He evaluates the problems that arise in the chasm of moral theory and practice which was cause of many problems in moral theorising since not every theory is morally practical in this modern day.

From the extract, Jamieson suggests that moral theorising is "something that real people do in everyday life". This suggests that we do not require intelligence to be 'moral theorised'. This brings in the idea that as 'people do in everyday life' we should not link in the idea or concept of God for us to be moral in practice. This is because as modern society have become more secular we do not require God. This thus relates to Schneewind's article 'Modern Moral Philosophy' where the scholar

Montaigne, ~~argues~~ a catholic himself, argues that ~~like~~ 'most people' cannot live up to the 'standards of Christian morality' this is because many people of the modern society have ~~not~~ strayed away ~~to~~ from the teachings of religion this then therefore brings in problems for theorists. This links ~~it~~ into the idea of 'rationality', which from the passage we ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~use~~ "reasoning". ~~is~~ suggested we use "reasoning". The idea that has arisen in modern moral theorising opposes the nature of theory that ~~chambers~~ ~~discusses~~ discusses in his article, ~~is~~ the idea of 'foundationalism' which ~~or~~ suggests that there are beliefs that ~~do not require~~ ~~are~~ that are self-justifying and self-evident, this characteristic is ~~what~~ the foundation of the moral theory, which brings the problem arising ~~conversely to this view~~ another that how are we to know what and how are certain beliefs self-justifying than others.

Furthermore ~~and~~ another contrasting view to this which is proposed by Jamison is the concept of coherentism, which argues that there are no self-evident or self-justifying beliefs as certain beliefs can only be justified with their relation to other beliefs. This ultimately however a more appealing idea is derivationalism which argues we should be motivated by rationality than morality since ~~the~~ rationality is more motivating than reason. This ~~theory~~ ^{foundationalism} reaction to an extent undermines Emil Brunner's Divine Command Theory which is arguable a 'self-evident' ethical theory as it considers 'God' to be a self-evident concept.

Moreover the extract ~~considers~~ suggests the idea of "possible" appeals to 'outcomes of actions'. In terms of outcomes, Jamison argues that as the 'dominant concept' is an "abstract structure" that sorts

agents, ~~and~~ actions, goodness and rightness or into categories", however ~~they~~ ^{different} ~~different~~ theories take different categories primary, ~~brings in to the~~ highlights the ~~the~~ problems of what theory is right and what category can be used universally in "moral theorising" in "every day life". The Utilitarianism Principle of Utility which is a ~~core~~ ^{consequentialist} argument that takes 'outcomes' as primary, suggest "the greatest good for the greatest number" this however, can be limited as Bentham does not consider the minority in his ethical theory which thus does not make it ~~that~~ a universal theory.

However when looking at 'goodness' as a ~~the~~ category, it ~~the~~ causes the problem of 'what is goodness' as it a subjective view it varies from person to person - In relation to this we can consider where goodness comes from, which links

to the Euthyphro dilemma where Socrates argues "is what is ~~good~~ pious good because it is loved by the gods, or is it good because it is loved.

From the extract states "special responsibilities and obligation" in the terms of "special responsibilities can be ~~used~~ related to LaFollette's article 'personal Relationships' where it is argued that personal relationships conflict as with morality as it is "partial to the core" since we treat intimates differently ways we ~~do~~ would towards a stranger, as this is considered to be immoral since we need to act impartially to everyone in order to be moral. ~~the~~ When considering the view of "obligation" we can link to the section of Jamison of the 'Anti-Theorists' where Annette Baire ~~researched~~ a influential feminist voice in modern philosophy ~~was~~ researched that

'typical' ethical theories relating to males are focused on obligation whereas female ethical theories are based on love, which highlights whether what character-istics of ethical theories should we use in 'moral theorising'

Lastly the extract concludes by arguing "moral theorising... emerges when there is a conversational niche for it to fill" this thus shows that moral theorising is in a way responsible for resolving disputes in 'everyday life' which links to Jamieson's previous statement. However arguably as Jamieson concludes it does not however ~~so~~ 'reveal moral truth'



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The candidate created a clear and useful introduction.
There was commendable use of relevant scholarship throughout this answer.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

The candidate quite correctly identified the idea of 'moral theorising' as a key to understanding this passage. The candidate referred to this idea explicitly and at key stages in the answer.

This is the whole answer from a candidate. This represents a very high standard of work, especially in AO1 as can be seen in the extensive use of scholarship.

a) This passage is taken from Jamieson's essay 'Method and moral theory.' In the essay, Jamieson explores the nature of contemporary moral philosophy. He looks at questions moral philosophers have asked about moral theory rather than in moral theory.

Philosophers are especially interested in how reliable rule-based moral theories are (Deontology, Kant, NML), how they work in practice, and whether they throw up any inconsistencies or make judgements that we can see to be wrong. There is the important philosophical question, of the theory itself, how it is put together and whether moral theory is actually needed at all.

This passage starts with Jamieson looking at the process of moral theorizing and establishing it as something which ordinary people do everyday. People in universities have analysed normative moral theories and the role of law

based morality in comparison to more subjective and relative ethics, like natural moral law. Moral language has been developed over the years by scholars such as A.J. Ayer. Ayer believed that moral statements were meaningless ~~as~~ as they couldn't be verified analytically or synthetically (boo/hurrah). He also believed that moral judgements are expressions of our feelings so when we say 'murder is wrong' we are simply expressing our feelings and opinions. Also believed that moral arguments ~~are~~ serve no purpose as they are just expressions of our feelings.

Tamerson passage then goes a further by referring to situations in which we engage in moral theorizing. He believe that we empathise with people so we can put ourselves in their shoes in order to choose what we would do in their situation. He called this role reversal tests. This would also link with the sociological

term 'verstehen' as this is when we put ourselves in someone else's shoes to understand how they are feeling. This also links with Latourette essay on relationships and morality where we stated 'that personal relationships help us to develop ~~more~~ empathy.

Teleological theories are those which focus on outcome rather than action or motive (utilitarianism). Jameson suggests that ~~people~~ when normal people are making moral decisions they look to the consequences like Bentham and Mill. People automatically look to ~~what~~ what will happen if they carry out a particular action rather than referring to Bentham's hedonic calculus and Mill's higher and lower pleasures. However the consequentialist theories have been ~~criticized~~ criticized by Elizabeth Anscombe and Alistair MacIntyre. Anscombe ~~didn't~~ didn't like utilitarianism as she believed it moved away

from a personal character and just focused on the outcome of actions. She preferred virtue ethics. McIntyre believed that moral theory was used in places like universities but virtuous behaviour only happened in the real world. He said that people naturally act moral without having to follow moral theory. He also believed that we should follow Aristotle's ~~ethics~~ ethics as it is dependent on the situation and flexible, and also agent centered. Consequences are not as important as our intentions.

Tamerson suggests that we have 'special responsibilities and obligations'. It is our duty to look after those who we care for. Ross's prima facie duties link with this as he believes that we have a special duty to look after those who have once looked after us. He believes we should repay acts of kindness in a similar way. e.g. looking after our parents as they are the ones who have

brought us up and nurtured us. we do not need any justification on why we are doing this, because we owe it to them. This also links with Lafollette as he suggests it is right to choose an intimate over a stranger as we have formed a bond with them. Bernard Williams also agrees that it is right to save your spouse over strangers. Rachels however argues with these points as he believes universal love to be of ~~the~~ higher ideal than family loyalty.

Deontologists believe that obligation and duty are part of making moral decisions. Kant highlighted this ~~as~~ when he created his deontological theory that ~~morally~~ it is our duty to treat people as an end in themselves, rather than a means to an end. Kant believed emotions cloud the issue and thereby not needed in moral decision making. This is in contrast to Lafollette and Bernard Williams. Jamison suggests that 'special responsibilities' aren't only

relevant to ~~the~~ the individual, ~~but~~
but to groups also e.g. Religions.

Jamieson suggests that there is a moral counsellor in us all that enables us to control the moral behaviour of others. Freud ~~and Jung~~ ^{and Jung} believed that moral behaviour is learnt ~~by~~ from childhood experiences and upbringing. ~~Freud and Piaget~~ Piaget also suggested that moral behaviour is learnt from socialisation within the family, and this prepares them for adulthood. In Jamieson's article he says that 'we ask children how they would feel if they ^{were} treated as they treated others. This shows how we can see that treating people correctly is known automatically, ^{through socialisation} we do not need moral philosophical knowledge to understand what is right + wrong to do.

Jamieson's ~~theory~~ theory includes two principles, foundationalism and coherence. Coherence is ~~also~~ a test applied to all statements. If a new moral theory is accepted, then it has to work with

existing moral theories. Rawls used 'reflective equilibrium' which is starting with a theory you believe in, looking at its judgements, then modifying them as a result.

Philosophers like Singer and Brandt argued against this type of thinking. Brandt and Gauthier look to derive a moral theory from reason, as reason (illustrated by the work of Kant) is objective, whereas questions about morality are more subjective.

Overall Jamison's article shows how moral theories can be applied to moral dilemmas to help situations. However Jamison's suggest that moral theories are not actually used in practice, they are too time consuming and we do not have the knowledge to analyse each theory to find the best outcome.

B.) Jamison's passage shows how moral theory can be used in everyday life to fix problems with moral dilemmas. In this essay I will be showing my point of view and the implications for religion and human experience.

I agree with Jamison when he suggests we have obligations and special responsibilities. I believe that it is right to choose an intimate over a stranger as it is our duty to do so. We have been nurtured and brought up by our intimates so we owe it to them. ~~It~~ It is our obligation.

I also agree with Jamison where he suggests we apply role reversal tests to see what we would do in certain situations. I believe that we empathise with people as it can be instinct to imagine ourselves in their position. This links with Lafollette's essay where he says the personal relationships help us to develop empathy as we imagine what it would be like for us. David Gauthier suggests that morality is rooted in our

I also believe that there is a moral conscience in us all as I believe parents have the ability to control their child's behaviour. Freud and Jung also believe that without the guidance children are unlikely to function properly in society. The case of feral child Genie Wiley shows the negative impact of the lack of parental guidance. Karl Popper however disagreed as he believed Freud and Jung's beliefs were nothing but stories and dreams.

Jamieson talks about looking ~~after~~ after those who we have obligations to. ~~The~~ The religious message of 'treat others how you want to be treated' consolidates this as it is ~~right~~ ^{right} to repay acts of kindness ~~in~~ in a similar way. This message is very universal and ~~is~~ is used by many religious beliefs all over. Peter Tatchell says that 'I try to live life to the maxim: treat others how you wish to be treated.' This is not a religious philosophy, it is common sense and human decency!

When looking at the implications for human experience Jamieson shows

how we use empathy towards people to help understand their situation. This helps us to decide what we would do if we were put in their shoes, and give advice on what we believe to be correct. Using empathy is right as it helps to understand and care for others. Elizabeth Anscombe believes that society is now becoming more secular so therefore religion is no longer seen as important. This then has the knock on effect for those believers of God as they will not agree and feel that others are turning against what is right.

Overall Jamieson's article shows the importance of obligation and duty. It also shows how we learn to develop moral behaviour and to empathise with those who ~~are~~ have problems. I do not believe that ^{like Jamieson} moral ~~theories~~ theories are actually used in day to day lives. We do not have the time to spend analysing ~~a~~ situations for possible outcomes, we do this intuitively and through instinct.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

In AO1, this candidate analysed the passage in considerable detail. The candidate showed evidence of a close understanding of the details of the passage. This did not become a mere comprehension exercise. The candidate analysed key concepts and points of view by reference back to Jamieson's full article.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

The candidate presented a well-structured answer to AO2 by following the specific demands in the AO2 question.

Paper Summary

One of the purposes of this unit is to enable candidates to develop skills in textual analysis. There are important outcomes for candidates, including transferable skills across a range of enterprises, involving careful attention to detail, evidence and reason and preparation for university work. In addition, this unit provides an opportunity for candidates to reflect upon and debate the implications of their studies of religion.

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