

Examiners' Report

June 2014

GCE Religious Studies 6RS02 1B

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Introduction

Expressing annual praise for the quality of candidates' work is a delight because, once again, the Investigations paper evoked excellent studies drawn from an inspiring range of topics within a wide range of varied academic fields. The high standard of work evidenced in June 2014 was no exception to historical high standards as candidates demonstrated a very high level of independent enquiry which clearly demonstrated engagement with their chosen area of investigation. Candidates showcased their knowledge of a particular academic field in the way they identified a line of enquiry, clearly expressed their view, analysed key concepts and deployed evidence with coherent understanding of their task whilst fluently evaluating a wide range of source material that they had at their disposal. The enthusiasm for and knowledge of the chosen topic was clearly conveyed in many answers that were truly academic in their approach. Some centres continue to focus on the same or similar topics for all their candidates, whereas other centres permitted considerable choice for individual candidates. Candidates were very well prepared for the examination and it was evident that centres used their specialist resources and interests to encourage candidates to research in depth a particular area of study. It is important to stress again that the 'Investigations' unit has a definite academic purpose. The aim is to involve candidates as active participants pursuing open-ended enquiries with an emphasis on independent learning. Questions were designed to be inclusive of all possible approaches to various topics and all valid answers were considered.

Whilst most centres had entered their candidates for the correct option there were still a few entries for particular Areas of Study where consideration regarding entry for a different Area of Study may have been beneficial to the candidate. It is important to ensure candidates know which area of their investigation is the best fit for the question they answer on the paper. There was evidence of candidates choosing a different question on the paper to the question they had clearly prepared for before the examination. In some of these cases the candidate was using material suitable for Question 1 to answer Question 3 (or vice versa) and not really grappling fully with the demands of the question. This practice does not always work to the best effect as the candidate might end up answering neither question as fully as possible. It must be noted that each question was written for ONE of three topics within each particular Area of Study. Candidates were not penalised if correct entries were not made or a cross was put in a box that did not match the answer or if no box was ticked at all. However, evidence shows that candidates have decided that the question for a topic that they clearly had not prepared for looked more inviting and selected that question but that did not necessarily mean they were best prepared to answer that question. More candidates in this session answered a question they had not prepared for and may need to be reminded which question their material is best directed at and be advised to answer that question. Centres should ensure that candidates are entered for the option that matches their Area of Study and that candidates are clear about which question they have been prepared for on the paper. There is still evidence of centres studying Papers 1B and 1F being entered for 1A. This might be an oversight regarding filling out the form – centres must choose 6RS02 and then identify which of the seven papers from 1A to 1G is the specific entry.

Variation in achievement was related to the two assessment objectives. These objectives should receive prominent attention in the process of the investigation. Importantly there must be explicit attention to both objectives in the examination answer and also to the question that is intended to focus the answer. Each question consistently referred to the assessment objectives with the trigger word 'Examine' for AO1 and 'Comment on' for AO2. These dictated the structure of the question and helped candidates to plan their answers. It would be advisable for candidates to pay regular attention to the level descriptors for these assessment objectives as a way of monitoring their development and progress during their investigations. The phrase 'with reference to the topic you have investigated' will always appear in the question to ensure that the generic question can be answered with material

from any appropriate investigation. The mark scheme itself is generic to all questions but the answer itself is not necessarily generic as candidates are expected to use their material to answer the question. The purpose of the question is to challenge candidates to adapt their material so that at the highest levels they may demonstrate a coherent understanding of the task based on the selection of their material. Widely deployed evidence/arguments/sources were evident in well-structured responses to the task whereby a clearly expressed viewpoint was supported by well-deployed evidence and reasoned argument. There was skilful deployment of religious language in many answers and the fluency of good responses showed command over the material; such command makes for high outcomes and rewards the amount of hard work done by the candidate. Many candidates had clearly learned much in the process and their overall grasp of the issues involved and command over their material was highly commendable.

Less able candidates struggled with the demands of the question. In preparation for this examination some candidates may find it useful to write up their investigation under exam timed conditions to a variety of different possible questions. They might build up a number of different response plans to different possible questions. The important point in these activities is to enable candidates to develop their management of material such as how to best structure their content to answer the specific question. However, success can be undermined by writing up a rote-learnt answer which was not adapted to the question set or by answering a question that has been written for a topic they have not studied. There was evidence of rote learned answers using the same structure and material inclusive of quotes; whilst much information was relevant to the topic and consequently was awarded in terms of AO1, there was a significant lack of engagement with the specific demands of the question and consequently marks for AO2 were low, with only generic evaluation provided. This approach is contrasted with another form where candidates were trained to answer the question; arguably, this is evidence of good practice but at the lower end some candidates thought it was sufficient to simply use the question stimulus at the end of each paragraph. The more able answers were those which were guided by the statement as opposed to simply 'tagging it on' to content that they were already anticipating to write about. A balanced approach to the question that meets the highest levels of achievement according to both assessment objectives is obviously desirable and the generic question accommodates many possible routes to success whereby any valid approach to the question was credited.

Candidates are strongly advised to develop their practical handwriting skills and then practice writing under timed conditions. Centres are assured that much time was invested in attempting to decipher illegible answers but there is always the risk that a badly written word/phrase/paragraph could be misinterpreted and it is best to avoid the chances of this occurring. Examiners understand the time constraints that candidates are writing under but this problem regarding illegible handwriting seems to be on the increase. Centres need to address this issue because the current format for examinations requires candidates' ability to sustain handwriting and academic standards under examination pressure.

That said, the excellent work of centres and candidates in 6RS02 bears testimony to the academic potential of candidates that is a joy to behold when it is fully realised.

Question 1

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE; MEDITATION

This question gave candidates the opportunity to really demonstrate the breadth and depth of their knowledge and understanding of the Philosophy of Religion in the context of the question (i.e. religious experience and claims about God and/or human nature). It was good to see that the majority of candidates made the most of this opportunity by making reference to the works of many philosophers and theorists on the matter. Most candidates also grouped a number of philosophers together in terms of their particular perspective/time period/field (i.e. existentialist, Greek, Scientific, etc). Moreover, some candidates began with one or two core philosophers from a particular perspective and then made reference to other philosophers whose understanding of the topic supported this particular perspective. This was good to see as it demonstrated a sound understanding of how a number of ideas and perspectives intersect around a particular philosophical issue.

The more able candidates integrated material from a wide range of scholarship into a coherent response rather than just re-telling a range of views/theories/life/work within the chosen investigation. There were some outstanding responses where the candidates had a coherent understanding of the task, and responded skilfully to the question with a clearly expressed viewpoint supported by well-deployed evidence and reasoned argument. It was refreshing to read a variety of answers which explored the topic in original ways.

The majority of candidates produced thoughtful and authoritative responses which demonstrated comprehensive understanding of key ideas that were discussed critically with confidence and authority. It is clear that many centres have chosen the topics very carefully indeed and so there appears to be more able candidates taking on more demanding topics which offer a genuine challenge and which has led to some very thoughtful and probing work. The majority of responses were well structured, relevant and well written. There was clear evidence of subject knowledge and most candidates were able to use this knowledge to discuss the question in relation to their topic. Candidates were very well prepared and some had researched their subjects very thoroughly. More able candidates in increasing numbers ventured towards a wider range of sources deploying a wide range of scholars, ideas and traditions. The psychology of religion material has increased in popularity and this material was well handled. Many candidates of all abilities covered material on St Teresa, Julian of Norwich, the Toronto Blessing and conversion experiences; this material was handled critically by more able candidates and sharply contrasted the uncritical approach typical at the lower range of achievement.

Overall the majority of candidates were well prepared for this question and had no difficulty in responding to it. However, some candidates had more difficulty with manipulating their material. Less able candidates focused on types of religious experience and their outlines of 'scholars' were often confined to descriptive accounts that lacked understanding of the issues at stake. Whilst they still produced responses of merit, there was evidence of a formulaic style of answers by some candidates who apparently relied on the same source(s) and quotes; A02 achievement was undermined when less able responses became overly descriptive of religious experiences at the expense of at least some essential philosophical analysis of their meaning and significance. James, Persinger and Swinburne remain the most popular scholars for many candidates and, there were several cases of Dawkins being used uncritically regardless of whether the candidate agreed or disagreed with his views. In such cases the responses could be a little one sided and less able responses lacked balance and had little appreciation of the conflict and debate within the area of study. A few candidates were over reliant on a study of Persinger's helmet or case studies of Near Death Experiences.

The phrase 'with reference to the topic you have investigated' led to responses ranging from general statements with little or no reference to a particular topic, to some very precise analyses of particular ideas and scholars. Some candidates covered a lot of topics, often in a rather shallow way, providing a general narrative account of views of religious experience. Of the less able candidates it was common to see accounts of miracles and a discussion of Hume interpreted by the candidate as an account and discussion of a religious experience. Some candidates gave a good outline of the argument for the existence of God based on religious experience and considered its strengths and weaknesses; such responses gained some credit, but these candidates struggled to relate their responses closely to the question set. Candidates must be reminded that the demands of this paper are different to the demands of 6RS03. Weaker analysis and evaluation amounted to an awkward juxtapositioning of ideas and perspectives, e.g. 'Plato states this...whereas Darwin would say that...' More able candidates' evaluation was blended within a myriad of perspectives, e.g. 'Plato states this.... From which we can learn... this is interesting when compared with Darwin whose understanding differs from that of Plato in that he....' etc. Evaluation is more clearly obvious in the latter example.

Nonetheless, the point is that some analysis and evaluation of ideas was exceptional or very good (as in the majority of cases), whereas some merely listed the opposing/numerous views. There were still a very high number of responses that made a serious attempt to answer the question. The more able responses considered the question against the background of the scholarship they had engaged with. These candidates assessed the persuasiveness of their argument in relation to the range of scholarship deployed and many answers were very well done. Exceptional responses tended to respond to the question more directly, thus recognising the opportunity offered by a deconstruction/discussion of the question.

This is an example of a very good response where the candidate presented widely deployed evidence that formed a well-structured response to the task. This response was representative of the quality of work produced by the more able candidates who could skilfully adapt their material to the demands of the question. The candidate explored the subjective nature of religious experience and discussed why it may/may not be unreliable as a basis for making claims about God and/or human nature. The discussion of the question is sustained throughout the entire response and the reader is led towards a convincing conclusion. This was a substantial piece of work.

The term 'religious experience' can encourage different understandings and concepts of God, from hearing voices to having visions. Metaphors are often used to describe and define religious experience, as its subjective nature is complex to define in normal language - there are no objective facts. However religious experience can generally be defined as a non-empirical occurrence, occasionally perceived as supernatural, undergone by individuals as a mental event. The religious experience often draws one into a deeper understanding of God and should not be seen as a substitute for a Deity, but something that brings a Deity closer to one's heart.

Religious experiences can be viewed either objectively or subjectively. An objectivist would say that religious experience brings us a knowledge of God, regardless of the subjective nature, whilst a subjectivist would suggest as the experience is true for the recipient, it is the effect on them that matters. A subjectivist may pose the question of "do religious experiences shed light on ourselves and our human nature, or illuminate a God, or is religious experience an unreliable way of doing this?"

It was not until 1850 when scholars began to analyse religious experience testimonies such as those of Bernadette

Soubrious initiated curiosity, with the idea of being in the presence of a divine being, yet feeling distinctly separate from it. Rudolf Otto examined this concept of 'numinous' in his 1936 work 'The Idea of the Holy'. It received much criticism, implying that God was not a personal being. Kierkegaard suggested that God could be made personal but it depended on the believer taking a 'leap of faith'. This was re-iterated by Buber in his 'I-Thou' explanation of the believer's relationship with the Divine.

Yet in terms of religious experience and what they may show about human beings and God, they must be identifiable. Many talk of knowledge of an 'ultimate reality', oneness and unity. William James proposed four characteristics in his 1902 'Varieties of Religious Experience' and these were ineffability, having a poetic quality, transiency and passivity.

James suggested that ineffability was easiest to recognise; the fact that religious experiences are private may make a description complex. St. Teresa of Avila commented 'I wish I could give a description yet I find it impossible'. Recipients also talk of gaining unobtainable truth and insight - knowledge of God. This knowledge is non cognitive and intuitive rather than being based on rational intellect, and James

found it to be 'noetic quality.' Scholars such as Dawkins, A. J. Ayer and Anthony Flew, would, indeed, reject this knowledge as unreliable as a basis for making claims about God and human nature due to the lack of verification.

James also put forward transiency and passivity, with transiency being the length of experience. Whilst it may last only 2 minutes, the effects won't be proportional, seen in St Francis of Assisi. Passivity, the final aspect outlined by James, suggested one loses control to a greater being, perhaps speaking in tongues like disciples at Pentecost or assuming an entirely different personality, e.g. those in the Toronto Blessing.

One experience which fit all of James' criteria would be the conversion of Saint Paul on the road to Damascus. Conversion can be seen as a change in religion and / or adoption of a new religious way of life. James reminded all, that, whilst subjective, it was very true for the believer who feel that God brought about a change. He also suggested that it was reasonable to make claims that it was down to God, as the experience seemed to come from outside the person.

However, it does prove hard to validate religious experience, and thus it can be unreliable when making claims about God and human nature. Many talk of a specific being rather than a substance, e.g. Catholics

seeing the Virgin Mary and Hindus the Goddess Kali. This was suggested by R. M. Hare to be 'bluck' where those having experience only see what is expected due to surroundings. This was backed up by the 'vicious circle challenge' which noted that experience depends on prior assumptions of those involved. This might bring one to Lash and James. James who suggested that religious experience was primary to religion, and Lash who felt it was merely a product of religion.

James also felt that when looking to religious experience, it must not be confused with effects of consuming alcohol or psychotropic substances. James likened the drunken consciousness to the mystical consciousness, perhaps suggesting that humans have a spectrum of consciousness, with a creative, non-cognitive end being on the mystical side. Religious experience, whilst subjective, might tell us that it is not our minds causing experience, but a transcendent being, separate from creation.

Yet elaborating on psychotropic substances, it seems that many experiences have been caused by entheogens, suggesting that religious experience is unreliable. The 'soma', used in the Hindu Vedas, for example, could be the *Amanita muscaria*, or 'fly agaric mushroom'. This is known to cause profound religious experience, seen

M. R. James' 'Soma; Divine Mushroom of Immortality' (1968)

James recognised that some substances did 'stimulate the mystical consciousness in an extraordinary degree.'

Despite criticisms on the unreliability of religious experience, many continue to believe it can show truths about God.

Yet many argue it is not God who appears in religious experience, it is a 'mystical union with angels and saints.' e.g. Joan of Arc. P. Kivy also commented that appearance can differ from reality; what appears to be a vision of God may simply be a delusion of the ill mind.

However ^{many} most argue that we can learn of God through experience if angels and saints exist, then surely God's existence is affirmed; what else is their purpose? In terms of religious experience being unreliable due to its subjective nature, Swinburne put forward the 'Principle of Credulity'. This suggests that unless evidence points away from something we should accept it as true. This was strengthened by the Principle of Non-Contradiction, suggesting unless one had a reason not to believe someone, you should take what they say as true. Thus religious experience can be reliable. ^{however,} ~~but~~ truth and religion remain very subjective matter.

Due to long debates about truth, especially that

concerning the nature of God, ~~then~~ John Wisdom proposed a 'Parable of the Gardener.' This suggested that whilst one person might see something as beautiful and created by God, another may see it as imperfect and/or coincidental. Thus we must look to theories of truth.

The correspondence theory of truth asks whether a statement is corresponding with the known facts in the world, yet cannot be applied to religious experience, as we cannot contact God. The coherence theory of truth, however, queries if the statement coheres with others. It is only when an inconsistency is discovered that it should be rejected as incoherent. In terms of religious experience, we must see if the concept of God espoused by the believer - generally perceived as all-loving, if a religious experience recipient commented 'God wanted me to kill person A' it could be rejected as incoherent as God is presented as all-loving (John 3:16).

David Hume, however, criticised this way of proving religious experience and knowledge of God gained to be true. He argued that knowing whether the Divine Being is the God of classical Theism is impossible. Furthermore, why would an all-loving

God only makes himself available to a small percentage of the population - there was a lack of testimony. Yet the R.E.R.U. conducted surveys through Mori and Gallup polls and found 40% had had religious experience. Thus it is perhaps fair to make claims to knowledge of God.

Some, however, such as Freud and Sartre, would take religious experience as not only subjective, but ridiculous. Freud said it shows us nothing but human need - perhaps a parental substitute, as religion is an illusion. Sartre also commented it was result of existential crisis. Pfeiffer's God helmet experiment also suggested some humans were receptive to the idea of a God, others, not. It was all in the mind.

There is thus a schism between atheists and religious believers, the latter who believe that experience should be seen as true and can tell us huge amounts about God, the former who believe it would tell one nothing about God but, despite unreliability, can show us an awful lot about human beings and their need for reassurance.

One example of religious experience would be having visions. A vision may be defined as seeing

something / someone in a dream or trance, or as a supernatural apparition. One famous claim of visions would be that of Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes, France.

Bernadette had 18 visions of the Blessed lady around Lourdes from 1858. ~~the~~ Gradually many hundreds began to accompany her, seeing a deep absorption and reverential atmosphere around Bernadette. One local priest commented 'What struck me was the joy - sadness, reflected in her face ... respect, silence and recollection reigned everywhere.'

Yet many remained sceptical and wouldn't believe the claims; even devout Christians took Bernadette to a mental asylum, showing the truly subjective nature of religious experience. They could not believe what Bernadette saw, whilst they saw nothing. No flaws were found yet Bernadette had been sickly growing up. If the visions were not from a physiological lack of moral well-being, they were result of a psychological need for hope, thus unreliable. Furthermore, France was devoutly Catholic - whilst Bernadette was illiterate she could have had her 'bliss' influenced by art, such as 'The Lady of the Grapes'. Her description of the Virgin Mary was traditional 'a white dress, a blue girdle, and a yellow rose on each foot.' Bernadette may also have

been dehydrated, leading to reduced nerve impulses and thus chance of hallucination (see E'Brera et al. 2009).

However, some miracles do seem to have occurred at Lourdes, such as Serge Francot having ability to walk after being paralysed. Scientists found no possible explanation and he is believed to have received the 68th miracle of Lourdes. Thus even if experience is subjective, it could still show us of God's all-loving nature, and humankind's willingness to believe.

A less well known vision would be that of Akiane Kramarik, who claimed to see heaven in 1997 at 4 years old. These visions of heaven and God have allowed her to paint beautifully, and the visions still continue.

Regardless of whether one believes Akiane's experience to be true or not, it cannot be denied that she has talent, and thus it is in human nature to link talent to God. It may also suggest to a atheist that God wants to communicate through art - perhaps he gave her this gift.

Not only that, but Akiane was born into a non-religious family. Thus her knowledge of God seems incredible. However, the USA remains a culture full of religious symbolism, and she may have been influenced solely by

to surrounding. Again, we come to Lash and James, is religious experience primary to religion or simply a product of religion?

Another experience seen to have a profound effect on humanity, regardless of its subjective nature, would be that of Ignatius of Loyola from Spain, his ~~blick~~ had would have ~~had~~ ^{had} a Christian influence. He joined the Spanish Military at age 16, and was injured and hospitalized in 1521. Rather bored, he read up on Jesus and the saints, and began having visions. He described a form in the air near me which was beautiful and gave me much delight and consolation... but when it vanished I became disconsolate!

Loyola hoped to emulate the heroic deeds of St Francis of Assisi, becoming now a 'spiritual warrior' not a physical one. Again, regardless of its subjective nature, Loyola did, some say, single handedly salvage Catholicism during the Reformation. Jarski would dismiss the experience as untrue and the result of an existential crisis: Loyola had no purpose now, and had to find hope in religion. However, some argue that the experience definitively shows that the Lord was guiding Loyola through, and allowing him to save Catholicism. Thus, we can learn about God from religious experience, regardless of

its subjective nature

Ultimately, most will be divided on deciphering whether or not the subjective nature of religious experience makes it unreliable as a basis for making claims about God and/or human nature. For a start, it depends on the prior acceptance of God as existing, as without this, all religious experience and claims of God will be dismissed. For a religious believer who takes religious experience to be true and God as existing, the claims made about God and human nature may truly be used as proof for the existence of God. Ultimately, however, claims about God and human nature cannot really be verified or empirically tested. It does not prove or disprove anything, and, regardless of personal beliefs, many see religious experience as true, and thus the experiences and claims about God and/or human nature must be taken seriously, and not simply be dismissed.



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Examiner Comments

In the introduction the candidate interacted with the question by discussing very clearly what an objectivist or subjectivist would say about religious experience. After a thorough exposition of a range of scholars and approaches to the question of religious experience, the conclusion was substantive and wrapped up a competent response that covered much ground in depth.



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Examiner Tip

Clearly adapting your material to the question makes for a good outcome. Solid study of the topic involves studying at least some of the most notable scholars in the field. Work logically through your material to answer the question.

Question 2

MIND AND BODY

Much of the comments regarding question 1 are also relevant to question 2. However, this year it appeared that on the whole, the responses to question 1 were of a higher standard than those of question 2; although there were a large number of outstanding scripts for this question. The fact remains that variable achievement for this question is a movement away from the predominantly outstanding achievement of the past. It is hard to say how far this movement is happening but it is reported that many of the responses to question 2 were limited in the breadth of their knowledge of 'the philosophy of mind' or even how this can be understood in relation to the 'philosophy of religion'. The consequence of this was a much reduced number of philosophers and thinkers being referenced, too descriptive prose on the perspective – rather than allowing a flow of debate between ideas and perspectives or even a depth of analysis/evaluation of these perspectives.

Candidates need to resist the temptation to merely rehearse learned material because it is essential that there is clear engagement with the question. There were still rather a lot of low to middle ability scripts where candidates provided (often lengthy) accounts of near-death and out-of-body experiences. Some less able responses tended to present the various positions in the debate as a list with insufficient commentary and discussion. Many candidates provided a systematic account of various positions in the mind/body debate, covering monism, materialism, behaviourism, dualism etc. These topics are generally very well understood, but some candidates disadvantaged themselves by not relating these positions to particular scholars.

Having noted the above caution regarding achievement in the mid to lower range; this question continues to attract outstanding scholarly responses and was very well done by the majority of candidates who were effective at analysing the question and discussing the relevance of their research in this context.

The more able responses systematically examined forms of monism and dualism and tackled issues of interaction, some then with life after death as more of a case study as to how these theories might then play out in relation to the question. It was very pleasing to read the high proportion of scripts which handled the material from key scholars in a balanced and critical way. The majority of scripts discussed the various viewpoints of dualists, monists and materialists very effectively. The question invited some very thorough responses from many candidates offering a technically competent, detailed, analysis of dualism and monism accompanied by an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses that was skilfully targeted at the question.

There was evidence, however, of more able candidates who did not do justice to their A01 material in their evaluation because they were less confident about discussing the question. It is encouraging to see such a wide range of scholars included in responses and generally there were few really weak answers in this Area of Study; less able candidates included rote learned material which did not answer the question and were defined by a simplistic approach and difficulty in manipulating the material. Less able candidates confined their response to describing accounts of near death experiences and out of the body experiences whilst more able responses were fluent in their handling of a wide range of scholarship in their discussions of Descartes, Plato, Aristotle and Ryle with the best of them focussing effectively on Greek philosophy particularly well. As with other questions, less able candidates did not always tackle the question on the paper. It is also a matter of some concern that many candidates seem to have a confused sense of the historical context of the scholars they refer to. By contrast, more able candidates often discussed the cultural context of ideas, thereby demonstrating a very authoritative grasp of the subject.

The candidate got off to a tentative start in a fairly short response of 6½ pages. The first page was devoted to outlining the mind body debate with no attempt to acknowledge the question or indication what their argument might be. In the next few pages the candidate described the position of Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes, Huxley, Malebranche and Ryle. The response ended with a useful and valid recognition of Dawkins' materialist view and then in the final sentence the question appeared to be answered. This candidate had clearly studied a useful range of material but the brevity of the response did not allow for in-depth exploration of these ideas. This response was indicative of the range of good candidates who did not do justice to their A01 material in their evaluation because they were less confident about discussing the question. This response was not unlike that of many other candidates who had clearly learnt the material but were afraid to make a judgment/critical evaluation; evaluation needs to be practised in response to the material that they examine.

The argument of the mind and body has been one that has been discuss for hundreds of years. There are two main thought process when approaching this dilemma. The first is the belief that the mind and body are two separate substances or entities and this is called dualism. Dualism can further more be split into property dualism which is the ^{claim} belief that the mind and body are mental and physical property compared to Substance dualism which is the knowledge of the ~~one~~ physical and mental substances working as one but ~~separate~~ actual substances. The other approach is in the form of monism and that the mind and body are ~~one~~ one and there is no separation or differences from each other. John Locke approached the dilemma of the mind and body problem by using the analogy of the prince and the cobbler. He stated that when they switched bodies they still remembered previous thoughts and questioned the identity of themselves.

Plato was an ancient greek philosopher who took the approach of dualism. Plato believed the soul ~~or~~ psyche was more than just a by-product of the brain/mind (brain).



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Examiner Comments

This response was a rehearsal of the main concepts within the mind-body debate. No theory was covered in any great detail. The candidate did not address the question until the end of the response.



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Examiner Tip

Answer the question. Knowing the topic in detail will help to you to substantiate any valid comment on the question. General coverage of essential ideas does not meet the requirement of the highest level descriptors. Material must be well selected to demonstrate emphasis and clarity of ideas and widely deployed to answer the question.

This response was an example of a more detailed piece of work that paid close attention to the question. The candidate set out their stall in the introduction and sustained the promise of some comment on the question itself. Whilst there were other responses that were arguably worthy of more than the available marks, this candidate had certainly done enough to earn full marks.

There are as many perspectives on what our personal identity consists of. ~~The most popular~~
~~mind is merely a by-product of the brain.~~
Materialists hold the view that the mind is merely a by-product of the brain. Due to the development of science, materialism has become a prominent theory supported by contemporary philosophers such as Hume and Huxley. This ~~materialism~~ ^{dualism} contrasts to the views of Plato and Aristotle that consider the mind to be more than a by-product of the brain. First distinctions were outlined by great philosophers Plato and Aristotle, Plato being a dualist and Aristotle being a monist throughout, I will comment on the claim the mind is merely a by-product of the brain.

Dualism is the belief that we are two entities and the soul could exist independently of the body as it has the ~~essence~~ 'essence'. Dualism first arose from

rationalist pre-Christian thinker Plato who criticizes his view of the same in his dialogue Phaedo. By taking an a priori approach, Plato, ^{develops his} ^{in a word} ^{many} distinguishes that there are two realities; the realm of forms, where an idea of everything existed and the physical realm, where things we could perceive. The second Plato entitled this as Ontological Dualism. In order to explain this idea further, Plato uses the 'Allegory of the Cave'. Within this ~~Plato notes~~ Note here are prisoners chained ^{in a} ~~in a~~ dark cave (Physical realm), each one of which is set free and led outside (realm of forms). Plato makes the point that when the prisoner returns to the cave to tell the others what he had experienced they could not comprehend what he hadn't ^{experienced} ~~experience~~ for themselves. In addition to this, Plato also argued the soul originated from the realm of forms whereas the body originated from the ~~body~~ physical realm. This was Plato's Anthropological Dualism.

To explain his ideas further, Plato develops four arguments for the immortality of the soul. The first was cyclical, the belief that everything comes into existence from its opposite eg. birth and death. As Plato expressed the soul originated from the realm of forms, this meant it once possessed all knowledge & meaning that throughout our lives we recollect knowledge not learn it. Plato uses the example of the same boy who quickly grasps mathematical concepts without any prior education to express his idea of recollection. The third was affinity, the idea that ~~the soul~~^{we} had affinity for the realm of forms and no body had affinity to the physical realm so at death it retreats to the place in which it was affining for. The 'final' argument stated that ~~the body~~^{upon death it} ~~opposite approaches~~^{has} ~~its opposite~~ so must either retreat or be destroyed. As the body was composite it was destroyed. However, as the body was simple it wouldn't be destroyed so retreats back to the realm of forms. To explain why the soul forgets knowledge upon travelling to the ~~real~~ physical realm.

Plato used the myth 'Myth of Er' to explain that the soul after death passes from the 'River of Forgetfulness', explaining why we recollect knowledge. The myth 'Myth of Er' also displays a punishment/reward system in the realm of form, as those that were good were rewarded and sent to an upward place, whereas those that were bad were punished times ten to that they had inflicted. Due to this, scholars argue that Plato's ideas have influenced Hindu beliefs in the punishment and reward systems. This is because depending on their actions, Hindus move up or down the Samsara cycle in attempt to become one with Brahman in Moksha. This could also suggest that Plato believed in reincarnation, however it is not fully clear.

Despite thinkers like Magee who argue that Plato's Two world theory "gives value and meaning to our present world" with reference to religion, others who argue Platonic dualism has been

influential in world religions, his ideas still encounter scepticisms. Brian Paris makes the point that not everything has an opposite, invalidating Plato's first argument for the immortality of the soul. Bernard Williams argues that our personal identity comes from our physical characteristics too and without our body we wouldn't be identified, expressing the ^{body} mind is not important. Plato's arguments deductive nature makes it subject to the criticism of subjectivity, and clearly pointed out by his pupil Aristotle, as his argument is A Priori it lacks any empirical evidence suggesting the mind is not a by-product of the brain.

Despite the criticisms made of Plato's ideas, French rationalist thinker went on to develop a more contemporary form of dualism influenced by Christ. In his senior seminar text *Meditations*, Descartes questions all he knows for he notes that 'there are no reliable signs by which I can distinguish sleeping from waking'. He goes on to argue that the only

certain thing is his own consciousness, simply as it is the only self-evident thing, all else may be an illusion. ~~The~~ Descartes ~~death~~ illustrates this using his most famous maxim, "I think, therefore I am". He entitles this as substance / Cartesian Dualism.

Similar to Plato, Descartes ~~were~~ were also A Priori and therefore lack empirical evidence. Hard materialist Ryle picked up on the flaws of Cartesian Dualism and refers to it as "a category mistake" and "the ghost in the machine" which resulted in people speaking of the body and mind as different phenomena. Ryle argues further that the mind is no more than the brain so when the body dies, so did the mind. These ideas are supported by Darwinist Richard Dawkins. Dawkins argues all existence is as a consequence of evolution and humans are just "bytes and bytes of digital information". As there was no concrete evidence for the soul, for Dawkins it didn't exist. On the other hand, philosophers such as Searle and

Hick began to often their view of the relationship between the mind and body so often referred to as soft materialists.

Searle, like Bay Ryle considers Descartes but also considers hard materialists that reduce the mind the same way as a physical object. Searle argued that even though the mind was produced by chemical reactions in the ~~go~~ brain, it had a separate form of consciousness, this was epiphenomenalism. Searle uses the relationship between the projector and film to illustrate this idea; whilst the projector creates the film, the film still appears to have a separate existence. He adds that the mind could be analysed to like other biological systems however we lack the scientific capacity to understand it. Hick was also a soft materialist. However, due to the ideas he expresses in his re-creation theory, 'The Replica Theory', it makes it hard to distinguish him from a ~~materialist~~ ^{monist}. Within his re-creation theory, Hick explains that at the resurrection of the

mind and body is logically possible,
expressing more ^{contemporary} materialistic ideas of post-
mortem existence. However, some argue
that 'how many replicas would be
made and where?' highlights a
major flaw in Nick's ideas. However,
in attempt to rectify his argument, Hick
points out that only one replica would be
made and in a resurrection world. In
addition to this, Hick adds that his ^{ideas} could be verified using eschatological
verification, as it was the replicability in
the resurrection world that would verify
his ideas. However, as Hick ^{additionally} argues to ~~himself~~
as a ~~psychoph~~ psychophysical unity, it
becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish
him from a monist.

Monist thinkers such as Aristotle and
Aquinas argue the soul is perpetuated by
the body. For Aristotle the body came before
the soul. Aristotle's disagreement with
Plato's ideas caused him to develop
the first monist theory. Aristotle began to
argue that the soul allowed humans to
~~achieve~~ achieve their purpose, which some

liken to the relationship between the bulb and its light. Whilst the bulb creates the light, the light is the reason for the bulb's existence. This is similar to Plato's idea on a tripartite soul. Aristotle argues that the soul ('anima') consists of three faculties; "the nutritive" - moved the body to get food, "the locomotive", enabled ^{us to move} thought and "the intellectual" enabled thought. Aristotle added that it was the intellectual part of the soul ('anima') that distinguished a human soul from an animal's. Aristotle's philosophy had a huge influence on medieval thought, particularly seen in the work of saint theologian Aquinas. Like Aristotle, Aquinas also believed the soul ('animate') the body. "The soul is what makes our body live". Unlike Aristotle, Aquinas believed Plato's first argument for the immortality of the soul that expressed the soul could exist independently of the body. Therefore, however, he argued that it was through the link with the body that each soul is individual; upon death the soul retains the identity of the body and continues with God in an afterlife after Judgement Day. However,

Amelie H argues that 'What judgement Day comes we're all gonna go?' Due to theodicy problems associated with resurrection, Christians today tend to be more dualist, expressing the mind is more than a by-product of the brain.

Contemporary view
Contemporary philosophers such as God, Swinburne and Ward defend the existence of a soul and argue against hard materialists that claim we are no more than physical matter. Swinburne argues that the human soul is unique and capable of logical and ordered thought as it could distinguish right from wrong. The Swinburne is supported by Klem Ward who uses the Bible to express his ideas. He explains that in Genesis, when God "breathed the breath of life into man's nostrils" this was an old soul, ~~and~~ it was only our soul that would continue with God post-resurrection, resolving the early problems of resurrection.

Start from 'by-product' theory

By discussing whether the mind is merely a by-product of the brain, this debate seems

to remain open. As both dualistic ideas expressed by Plato and Descartes encounter can be described as failing to empirical evidence, makes their arguments insufficient in proving ~~that our mind is a by product~~^{whether our mind is a by product} of the brain, but decreases the credibility of the mind being more than the brain. Despite this, the Platonic theory is considered influential in world religions and traditions. For example, Plato's ideas express that we all travel to the realm of Form, similar to the contemporary Christian view in afterlife. Similarly, Aristotle's views are also considered influential to early Christianity as Aristotle's resurrection of mind and body is almost identical to the resurrecting Jesus. However, like Platonic and Cartesian dualism, there is no conclusive evidence for the reconnection of the soul/mind and body, even if we consider trick's neurological verifications. These views contrast to materialism that use ~~present~~^{present} discoveries e.g. evolution, to argue the argument that the mind is merely a by product of the brain. Due to this, I conclude that materialism

Or me only scientifically sound argument
rearing the mind is no more than a
by-product of the brain.



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Examiner Comments

The introduction set out the structure of the response and promised a more substantive coverage of the topic.



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Examiner Tip

Establish a position in relation to the question and then argue for or against it.

Work logically through your material to answer the question. More detailed work brings its own reward in higher outcomes.

Question 3

A STUDY OF ONE/MORE PHILOSOPHERS OF RELIGION

Candidates chose to demonstrate the breadth and depth of their understanding by using a number of philosophers of religion and their ideas throughout to answer the question directly towards supporting their own conclusion. The responses in terms of their knowledge and evaluation were generally of an exceptionally high standard. As always, this question attracted a large variety of answers, including some truly outstanding responses to the question. Candidates routinely demonstrated a very accurate, comprehensive and often sophisticated understanding of the key ideas of a scholar with really good accounts of the works of Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes, Hume, Kierkegaard, Nagel, Nietzsche, Leibniz, Kierkegaard, Bonhoeffer, Marx and Sartre. One of the most popular combinations was Kierkegaard and Sartre. The obvious enthusiasm so many candidates had for the area of study was clearly conveyed by very mature responses in which the significant features of the work of philosopher/philosophers within the philosophy of religion was discussed. The more answers referred to a range of ideas or works by the chosen philosopher and put them in the correct context of their time or the impact on subsequent thought which made for interesting and scholarly analysis of their ideas. More able answers focussed on an interesting range of philosophers with many candidates choosing to compare and contrast two different philosophers; thus allowing for easier AO2 comment on any useful insights into religion and/or God that might be derived from any the study of the philosophy of religion. Candidates were well versed with the significant features of the work of the philosopher(s) they had studied and most gave an accurate analysis of the philosopher(s) they had investigated. The more able candidates referred to a range of ideas or works by the chosen philosopher and placed them in the correct context of their time whilst assessing the features of their work with great ease.

There was a discrepancy in the way less able candidates responded to the question; some simply offered a biographical account of a scholar and could have addressed the question itself more explicitly. Some candidates discussed both Sartre and Kierkegaard and did less well because of time constraints; they just did not cover the material they clearly had intended to cover. In this range not many answers included much by way of comment from scholars on the views of their philosophers, and although this was not a requirement it did enhance the answers of candidates who were able to do it. Some candidates chose one idea/argument from their philosopher and did a strengths or weaknesses of that view; whilst this was not necessarily a bad approach it was most often done at a simpler level and not fully focused on the question in terms of concluding about the significant features of their philosopher(s) within the philosophy of religion. The followers of Dawkins increase year on year and are often hallmarked by one-sided analysis and discussion that is coupled with a certain enthusiasm for Dawkinian rhetoric. These interesting responses can be improved by connecting the ideas under discussion to a wider range of philosophers in the field.

There was continued evidence of candidates following the same structure for a pre-prepared answer that was not subsequently manipulated to answer the question. Some candidates tended to argue from the outset for the existence of God rather than answering the question; this was especially apparent in responses that focussed on Aquinas or Paley. A few problems persist with candidates answering an apparently different question without paying due attention to the question on the paper. Some candidates who had clearly studied material directly related to Question 1 on Religious Experience attempted this question. Whilst there is nothing to prohibit this, candidates might limit achievement if they attempt a question for a different topic to the topic they had been prepared for; especially if they are not explicitly answering the task set by the question. Centres are reminded that the three questions on the paper are written for three different topics.

This response, like many other responses at this level, answered the question and showed a clear command of the topic. The candidate showed understanding of Grayling's position very well and clearly conveyed essential elements of his thought. Grayling is a rare choice for study and this candidate clearly understood his ideas and deployed a range of ideas coherently.

While many philosophers of religion focus on the nature of religion and specific issues within religious philosophy, A.C. Grayling approaches the issue by examining the nature of the debate itself and by clarifying any confusion that can be found therein.

In the second half of his book "The God Argument", which deals predominantly with humanism, Grayling distinguishes between the three debates in the philosophy of religion. The first debate is of an ontological nature; it deals with the existence of God. The two main positions in this debate are theism and atheism. The second debate is about "the place of and volume of the

~~religion~~ thought religion religious voice in the public square. This debate essentially focuses on secularism and its opponents. The third debate is ~~which~~ Grayling ~~that~~ Grayling identifies is ~~between~~ in relation to necessity of morality or religion for the existence of moral truth, or even just morality. This is the debate which Grayling discusses in most depth as a component of Humanism. It is extremely important to distinguish between these three debates as ~~some people~~ the sides of each debate are not quite aligned. For instance, while atheists are always secularists, religious people can be secularists too! The significance of this becomes clear in relation to some comments that Grayling makes about the nature of the first two debates.

The first issue that



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Examiner Comments

The opening sentence identified a distinctive element in Grayling's approach in contrast to that taken by many other philosophers. The introduction and the first two pages clearly showed the grasp the candidate had over their material and this control was sustained throughout the response.



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Examiner Tip

Do not be afraid of choosing a topic that is of interest to you nor of reading material that pushes the boundaries of your thinking beyond knowledge into critical appreciation. Excellent studies always stand out as distinctively engaged with the nuances of the topic and its adaptation towards the question.

This response was another example of a well-executed piece of work showing clear command of the topic. The candidate answered the question fluently. The candidate understood the connection between the dialectical materialism of Marx and how this methodology has been adopted within Liberation Theology. The candidate clearly conveyed essential elements of Marxist thought with insightful reflection on the question.

Karl Marx is a philosopher who has answered questions about God and religion but from an atheist perspective. Marx saw religion to be an expression of economic injustice rather than a lie in itself and his views are quite successful for an atheist but not so much so for a theist.

Marx's stance on religion was influenced by early childhood experience where his parents had to convert religion to avoid persecution under Prussian Law. Therefore he saw religion to be a problem in some ways. He lived in the 1800s in a society that was heavily divided between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Marx believed that it was the discovery of agriculture and concept of private property which lead to a division in labour and separation of classes depending on economic status. Although Marx also saw religion to be keeping this divided Marx ~~was~~ held a very sociological stance and was concerned by economics a lot so in answering questions about

religion he may not have been so successful because his economic concern always came apparent. Marx saw money to be the master tool of modern society as it controlled the interactions of all other tools. By having little money and being religious people in Marx's opinion lost control not only of their tools but also their own destiny.

Yet to atheists Marx's ideas were successful as he described religion as the 'opium of the masses' inferring that religion is used by oppressors to make the oppressed feel better about the distress they experience due to being poor and exploited. For Marx continues to criticise religion by saying it leads the people into a false state of consciousness as it brings the promise of happiness yet true happiness can never be ~~fully~~ understood unless the proletariat stand up to the oppressors. Having said this people don't as religion acts as a compensator for the proletariat to accept their alienation. Therefore Marx believes religion to be the 'heart of a heartless world' suggesting if the world was equal there would be no need for religion. However a problem with this quote is people often misunderstand and misinterpret its meaning. therefore they think Marx

completely rejects religion which would suggest his ideas are not so successful but if the quote is read in full Marx doesn't dismiss religion as he acknowledges that religion is merely a symptom not the disease so it isn't all bad religion does have a use.

Moreover the idea that religion would not exist if the world was equal was not so successful either because under Communist regimes such as Mao's China and that in North Korea show that although equality exists so does religion. Malcolm Muggeridge ~~helped~~ provided further evidence for this as he turned from atheist to Christian religious believer after experiencing the 'sheer devotion' of people living in Communist regimes because even when social and economical situations are removed religion remains because the only thing that remains and is constant in people's lives is God.

Marx's views on religion were influenced by other philosophers also. Marx thought institutions such as government, religion and marriage could not be truly understood unless looked at in relation to economic forces. Due to this Marx saw religion and other institutions to be

a superstructure based upon economics which are completely dependant on economic and material realities only, yet his view of this came from that of Hegel who believed that a superstructure was raised by religion not economics. Furthermore the idea of alienation also came from Hegel to which there were 3 stages, immediate perception, self consciousness and reason itself. All of these are thought to be a creation of the mind yet also superior and independent of the mind. Hegel saw religion and philosophy to be similar in concept but the way in which it apprehended it was different as religion uses imagination and philosophy concepts therefore these imaginings form imprecise knowledge of what philosophy comprehends rationally. Marx agreed with this and is quite successful in doing so or so atheists would agree, but Marx critisized the ideas of Hegel more so than agreeing which lead to the formation of his ideas. But by critiquing a critique it is difficult to understand Marx's true thesis on religion and society so sometimes his ideas are a matter of opinion and not so successful.

Thus Hegel's dialectics of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Hegel thought ideas to be the dominant

force unlike Marx. Thesis for Hegel was new ideas whilst for Marx it was a new system. Antithesis for Hegel was that contradictions lead to new ideas as ideas come from outside the material world so no matter the ^{material} situation of a person the idea will have still come about whilst for Marx conflict would be what brings about new ways of life by standing up to the oppressors for example Capitalism being overriden by people in favour of equality. Lastly synthesis for Hegel was a new idea then comes about and the cycle is complete but Marx said that once new system comes about the cycle starts again and is continuous and this is how he explains history.

Ideas from left Hegelians that the 'rational is real' also influenced Marx particularly on bringing about his belief in ~~spiritual~~ reification as objectivity was seen to be a ~~new~~ product of activity which Marx said was praxis. Praxis is the idea that it is not enough to just think about doing something instead action on thoughts must be taken. This is a success because this is true in life for many and religion is seen

to be an ideology as ~~it's~~ the religious world is but a reflex of the real world. This is true even theists agree both religious and real world are not complete parallels yet religious teachings can be applied to the real world. so this idea of Marx is successful due to this.

Another influence of Marx ideas on religion and God came from Feuerbach. He influenced Marx with the idea of projectionism. He believed ~~ver~~ is that humans project all their desired attributes which they cannot necessarily have onto an imaginary focus which they call God. Humans do this because they need an image in which to orient themselves. Therefore God does not actually exist and we impose such attributes as it makes us feel better to place someone above ourselves who is the ultimate reality.

This idea that God doesn't exist it just makes people feel better is successful as in terms of liberation theology that is all religion does. Religion is used by the top the hierarchy of the church to oppress those who are poor.

~~Bishops~~ Bishops and Catholics at the top used religion to legitimise the inequality rather than religion being derived from the idea to achieve things such as peace beauty or trust.

Liberation Theology was a movement set up in South America in 1960s to bring about social change and aimed to emancipate the poor. They were heavily influenced by Marx and were so to do something successful to try bring these at the top down as Marx thought should happen.

They also showed that religion did have some good purpose if interpreted correctly and not used to oppress. This is shown through the quote the followed 'if Jesus were on earth today he would be a Marxist revolutionary' this implies that Marx's ideas on God and religion were useful and successful in bringing about change.

However Marx's ideas also fell under huge criticisms which suggest that his ideas of God and religion weren't so successful as maybe first thought. Richard Dawkins didn't believe that religion had any good purpose as religion is the cause of all intractable conflicts.

such as 9/11, terrorist bombings, troubles in NI and middle east Conflict.

Sigmund Freud was another who criticised Marx's views. Freud felt that religion wasn't only needed by those who were oppressed but rather by everyone for all humans have deep psychological needs in which it fulfils so yes like Marx and Hegel is seen as a psychological crutch but for everyone not just some. Freud also believed that guilt is the origin of ~~inequality~~ ^{religion} not ~~religion~~ ^{economics}. Gutiérrez tended to agree because he believed if sin is removed and we desire to be a heavenly figure who forgives then equality and religion can exist together. Yet Freud understands that we need religion due to our childish ways but so religion may not always be necessary as we can grow out of such ways but we tend not to due to the way in which humanity has been conditioned. Rodriguez also saw religion to be due to childish ways of due to a retreat from rationality but not from economic hardships as Marx suggested.

However there is some light that Marx

ideas were of some success because Freud once in his 80s although still didn't believe in religion himself he saw that it did in fact serve a purpose which was of benefit. He drew upon Judaism which helped keep people together in past and provides inspiration of future.

Both Freud and Nietzsche agree that it would be better to describe religion as 'the poetry of the people' rather than the 'opiate of the people' because it does in fact provide inspiration and hope.

Overall Marx ideas were of reasonable success in bringing about change but due to his non-religious more socialistic approach which was more concerned with economics his views on religion and God which seemed to provide an answer were often undermined.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate's clear style of writing helped the reader to follow the argument. The juxtaposition of ideas showed a clear and thorough understanding of the task in hand as the response progressed. The response was not overly long but achieved a high outcome nevertheless.



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Examiner Tip

Last year's tip is repeated again because there is no substitute for knowing your field. Assimilation of the essential concepts in preparation for the exam helps the response to flow easily. Coherence within the structure of a response is related to proper selection and deployment of material. Work hard to get this right. It pays off in the quality of your work.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance, candidates are offered the following advice:

- do not ignore the question
- a generic question is not best answered with a generic answer. The question is made up of two parts. The question itself and the generic phrase 'Examine and comment with reference to the topic you have investigated.' Answer the question
- use appropriate sources and, if possible, include recent scholarship
- well deployed material will show how well you understand your topic and how you are using your material to answer the question
- do not forget to comment on your material in relation to the question
- use your evidence to substantiate your argument
- comment on alternative views if you know them
- express your viewpoint clearly
- practice writing under timed conditions as part of your preparation
- do not spend too much time on your response plan to the detriment of the response itself
- write legibly.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

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