1 Explore key ideas about the nature of religious experience (8)

Candidates may refer to the following. • Some transient experiences may have life-long effects and be regarded as religious. • Some of these experiences may be public and appear to be unusual experiences believed to be created by God. • Some may be private, which may be expressed in normal language, but others may be more difficult to express in words. • An example of ineffable experiences may be seen in mysticism. • Some religious experiences may be what Otto referred to as numinous (the wholly other).

2 Assess the strengths of the ontological argument for the existence of God. (9)

AO1 will be used by candidates to underpin their analysis and evaluation. Candidates will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding using specialist language and terminology when responding to the question, and in meeting the AO2 descriptors described below. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1. • God is ‘that than which nothing greater can be conceived’. • It is greater to exist in the mind and reality, than in the mind alone. • God cannot have contingent existence because necessary existence is greater. AO2 requires candidates to develop their answers showing analytical and evaluative skills to address the question. Such responses will be underpinned by their use of knowledge and understanding. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO2. • A strength is that the definition of God is unique and therefore criticisms against the existence of contingent beings are not applicable to this unique concept. • The definition of God in this argument entails necessary existence, so that it is inconceivable for God not to exist and therefore this is a strong argument. • A weakness of the ontological argument is that it uses existence as if it were an analytic proposition, whereas existence is synthetic. • The argument has been reformulated in order to answer criticisms and therefore it is a strong argument overall. Candidates who show achievement only against AO1 will not be able to gain marks beyond the top of Level 1.

3 Assess the strengths of the design argument for the existence of God. (9)

AO1 will be used by candidates to underpin their analysis and evaluation. Candidates will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding using specialist language and terminology when responding to the question, and in meeting AO2 descriptors described below. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1. • It is based on experience and observation. • It provides a sufficient explanation for evidence of order. • Analogical reasoning about complexity draws parallels between man-made objects and the natural world. AO2 requires candidates to develop their answers showing analytical and evaluative skills to address the question. Such responses will be underpinned by their use of knowledge and understanding. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO2. • The cumulative effect of the combination of temporal and spatial order strengthens the argument for a designer. • The argument is strong because it links empirical and analogical reasoning. • The argument has been developed and refined in Tennant’s anthropic principle, and this adds to the rigour of the argument. • The inductive leap which infers the designer is God is contentious, therefore undermining the strength of the argument. Candidates who show achievement only against AO1 will not be able to gain marks beyond the top of Level 1.

4 (a) Explore the key ideas associated with the problem of suffering. (8)

Candidates may refer to the following. • Some suffering may be related to responsible agents who cause suffering, including God. • Some instances of natural suffering are not man-made, such as earthquakes, and God seems to lack the power to alleviate the suffering. • These types of suffering raise issues about the attributes of God of omniscience, omnipotence and omnibenevolence. • The inconsistent triad highlights the idea that the attributes of God are inconsistent with suffering. • The combination of moral and non-moral suffering highlights the problem of the scale of suffering.

4 (b) Analyse the success of one solution to the problem of suffering. (20)

5 marks AO1, 15 marks AO2 The question requires one solution. The specification refers to the solutions of Augustine and Irenaeus and these are used as exemplars. AO1 will be used by candidates to underpin their analysis and evaluation. Candidates will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding using specialist language and terminology when responding to the question, and in meeting AO2 descriptors described below. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1. • The belief that God and creation are good is a solution. • A key source for some of these theodicies is the biblical accounts of creation and the ‘fall’. • The reason for suffering lies within human nature and not with God. AO2 requires candidates to develop their answers showing analytical and evaluative skills to address the question. Such responses will be underpinned by their use of knowledge and understanding. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO2. • The Augustinian theodicy is successful because of the value given to free will, thus taking the responsibility for suffering away from God. • The disobedience of Adam and Eve towards God resulted in judgment and God is not seen as the cause of suffering. • This theodicy portrays suffering in such a way that it is a privation of goodness, and therefore is not an act of God. • Irenaeus believed that this is the best of all possible worlds, including the belief that humans are made in the image of God and therefore this is a successful solution because God is not seen as the cause of suffering. • The theodicy is successful because suffering is an aspect of ‘the vale of soul making’ and thereby purposeful. • Critics of these solutions may argue that problems remain with the notion of some attributes of God and also issues about human free will. Candidates who show achievement only against AO1 will not be able to gain marks beyond the top of Level 1.

Explore the key ideas associated with the problem of suffering. (8) AO1

Attributes of God of Classical Theism

Types of Suffering

Inconsistent Triad

4 (b) Analyse the success of *one* solution to the problem of suffering. (20) (AO1 - 5 AO2 - 15

Augustine

Basis of Augustinian Theodicy

* Genesis –
* Rebellion of Angels -

Strengths of Augustinian Theodicy

* Free Will
* The Fall
* Privation of Good
* Soul-deciding
* Aesthetics argument

Weaknesses of Augustinian Theodicy

* Free Will (Mackie)
* The Fall (Why did God allow A&E to find out about evil?)
* Privation of Good (realistic to sufferers? Excessive suffering?)
* Inconsistent Triad
* God created all – including the Devil?
* Aesthetics argument (is the world perfect?)

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Conclusion

4 (b) Analyse the success of *one* solution to the problem of suffering. (20) (AO1 - 5 AO2 - 15

Iranaeus

Basis of Iranaen Theodicy

* Genesis – 1:26

Weaknesses of Iranaen Theodicy

* Free Will
* The Fall (Why did God allow A&E to find out about evil?)
* Inconsistent Triad
* God created all – including the Devil?
* Excessive suffering? Suffering of innocents (Hick)?

Strengths of Iranaen Theodicy

* Image Vs Likeness of God
* The Fall
* Suffering is a benefit
* Soul-making
* Epistemic Distance

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Conclusion

Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Free Will Defence (9 marks AO2).

Outline of the Free Will Defence.

Weaknesses

Strengths

Conclusion

Assess the strengths and weaknesses of Process Theodicy (9 Marks AO2).

Outline of Process Theodicy.

Weaknesses

Strengths

Conclusion