

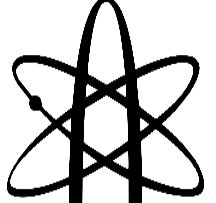


Philosophy of Religion

Theme 2: Challenges to religious belief – Religious belief as a product of the human mind

Booklet 2

Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief

D	Religious belief as a product of the human mind – Sigmund Freud: Religion as an illusion and/or a neurosis with reference to collective neurosis; primal horde; Oedipus complex; wish fulfilment and reaction against helplessness. Supportive evidence including reference to redirection of guilt complexes and reference to instinctive desires deriving from evolutionary basis (Charles Darwin). Challenges including lack of anthropological evidence for primal horde; no firm psychological evidence for universal Oedipus complex; evidence basis too narrow.	
E	Religious belief as a product of the human mind – Carl Jung: Religion necessary for personal growth with reference to: collective unconscious; individuation; archetypes; the God within. Supportive evidence including recognition of religion as a source of comfort and promotion of positive personal and social mind sets arising from religious belief. Challenges including lack of empirical evidence for Jungian concepts and reductionist views regarding religious belief arising from acceptance of Jung's ideas.	
F	Issues relating to rejection of religion: Atheism: Rejection of belief in deities; the difference between agnosticism and atheism; the rise of New Atheism (antitheism); its main criticisms of religion: non-thinking; infantile worldview; impedes scientific progress. Religious responses to the challenge of New Atheism: rejection by religious groups of New Atheist claims regarding incompatibility of science and religion; increase in fundamentalist religious activity relating to morality and community; increase in religious apologists in media.	

Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:

- How far religious belief can be considered a neurosis.
- The adequacy of Freud's explanation of religious belief.
- The extent to which Jung was more positive than Freud about the idea of God.
- The effectiveness of empirical approaches as critiques of Jungian views on religion.
- The success of atheistic arguments against religious belief.
- The extent to which religious responses to New Atheism have been successful

1. Glossary – Freud and Jung

Alpha male

Archetypes

Atonement

Collective neurosis

Collective unconscious

Ego

Empirical evidence

Eucharist – Jung - the religious ceremony in which Christ's last meal with his disciples is celebrated by eating bread and drinking wine

Id

Individuation

Instinctual impulses

Mandalas

Oedipus Complex

Obsessional neurosis

Personal unconscious

Primordial

Psyche – Freud – the mental or psychological structure of a person

Psyche – Jung – the totality of the human mind, conscious and unconscious

Psychoanalysis

Psychology

Psychotherapy

Superego

Totem

Totemism

2 D. Religious belief as a product of the human mind – Sigmund Freud:

Religion as an illusion and/or a neurosis with reference to collective neurosis; primal horde; Oedipus complex; wish fulfilment and reaction against helplessness.

- For Freud religion is just wishful thinking to combat psychological turmoil.
- This turmoil is due to pressures from society or fear of the natural world.
- In order to fulfil basic needs and desires the mind creates images and beliefs.
- For Freud religion is not necessarily false but illusionary – something which answers inner needs.
- Freud focused on the function of religion in overcoming inner fears and turmoil.
- Freud was interested in how the mind develops into adulthood.
- During childhood there are experiences which are traumatic.
- If these traumatic experiences are not resolved they are locked away in the subconscious mind.
- Where the locking away is unsuccessful, the memory can re-emerge and lead to trauma.

While he practiced as a doctor in Vienna, Freud noted the attitudes some of his patients had towards hygiene, for example, parents take great pains to instil in their children the importance of cleanliness. As an adult, the individual may still feel 'unclean' and washes, even though they are clean. Freud's treatment for these neuroses was to allow the patient to investigate their repressed memories, and to see their obsessions for what they truly were.

Freud saw religion operating on a similar level – **the ritualistic nature of religious activity is a compulsive obsessive neurosis** – this he called the **"universal obsessional neurosis"**. Freud argued that religion arises from a fear of a chaotic and unordered world (The Future of an Illusion, 1927). A person's resolution of this traumatic perception of the world is to project on to it their memory of their father, who provided a world of order and regularity while they were a child.

Freud believed that religion was an **illusion** based on **wish fulfilment**. He believed that in certain circumstances the human mind will create beliefs and images to satisfy its most basic longings and desires. *"The whole thing is so patently infantile, so foreign to reality, that to anyone with a friendly attitude to humanity it is painful to think that the majority of mortals will never be able to rise above this view of life."* Civilization and its Discontents 1930

Conscious/unconscious - The concept that the unconscious mind is responsible for heavily influencing conscious thought and behaviour, to the degree that Freud claimed that human beings effectively had no free will because of this.

Religion as a collective neurosis

Freud's work with his patients suffering from hysteria led him to conclude that as well as conscious areas, the mind also contains unconscious parts which we cannot normally access. Through his work on hypnosis and dreams he realised that the unconscious mind comprises a vast store of information about events which we consider long forgotten. He went on to suggest that unpleasant memories which are trapped in the unconscious can surface later in the form neurotic and hysterical behaviour. Freud believed that neurotics perform ritual actions, like obsessive hand washing, in the same way each time. If the ritual is broken or is not performed correctly, the neurotic feels an overwhelming sense of guilt. In the same way, religious people perform religious rituals; if they are not performed, they too feel guilty. Freud described religion as a **"universal obsessional neurosis"**. He believed that there are links between religion and the **"obsessive actions in sufferers from nervous affections."** Freud's conclusion is that religion itself was a form of neurosis, caused, as in the case of other hysterias, by traumas deep within the mind or **psyche**. The central and perhaps most startling feature of Freud's argument was his belief that the trauma in question was invariably sexual in nature.

Freud's ideas about the psyche (personality)

Aspect of the psyche	Explanation
Id	Primitive and impulsive part of the psyche, responses to instincts
Ego - decisions making part of psyche	Conscious self that is created by dynamic tensions between the id and superego, has the task of reconciling their conflicting demands with the requirements of external reality. Experiences moral conflict that Freud believed were reflected in dreams and neurotic symptoms.
Superego	Moral part of the personality that includes the conscience and ideal-ego

2. **Why did Freud believe that religion was a 'universal obsessional neurosis'? Add examples of religious practices that are repeated frequently by believers.**

Religion as a neurosis: the primal horde (Totem and Taboo 1913)

Looking at the work of various naturalists and anthropologists, Freud came up with the idea that in primitive human society there were hordes. He draws particularly on the ideas of **Charles Darwin**, who suggested that primitive men lived in hordes like apes (gorilla groupings). In these hordes dominant 'alpha males' have 'first pick' of the breeding females and become the natural leaders of these groups. Within the horde younger male members become resentful. This resentment and jealousy is coupled with their respect for the dominant male as head of the horde. Freud called their attitude to the father ambivalent. Eventually, they plot to kill him. They then eat his body as they want to absorb his strength and power.

After his death, they begin to idolise the father figure, setting him up as a **totem**. The horde experiences a traumatic collective guilt, which is transferred to some object or animal: the mind deflects the feelings of guilt onto the new totem. They create a totem animal to worship as a father substitute. The animal is sacrificed each year in the special totem meal which commemorates the original crime of killing and devouring the father. For Freud, this act is the beginnings of religion.

Australian Aborigines

Every clan had a totem, people were not allowed to marry those with the same totem. Thus preventing incest.

The totem becomes a way of controlling guilt. This stage of the process is called **animism**. Freud then traced the process through to its second stage, which he called **religious**, in which the reputation of the slaughtered father grows to divine proportions, though the ambivalence and respect remain. To illustrate this, Freud referred to the Catholic celebration of the eucharist – the mass.

In the mass, the slaughter of the God is recreated, and the representatives of the original horde eat the symbolic body. In this way, the guilt feelings are dealt with.



Freud was arguing that religion is a way of dealing with the inner guilt that is experienced as a result of the Oedipus complex (with its feeling of sexual repression), coupled with the natural fear of a disordered universe. Feelings of powerlessness are dealt with through the totemic projection of father figure and the ritualistic practices of religion.

Freud felt that every human being faces a conflict between what society expects from him/her and his/her own human instincts. For example, it is human instinct, Freud believed, to have sex with family members, and yet society declares that this is wrong and labels it as incest.

He felt that this leads us to feel mixed emotions towards society. In one way, we are glad that things like murder and cannibalism are not present in our society, but at the same time, we also feel hostile towards society for preventing us from following our basic human instincts.

This conflict leads to neurosis and feelings of helplessness.

Religion, according to Freud, helps us to deal with this helplessness, as it teaches that God is watching over us and will make up for our suffering. For example, a human may feel that they are helpless to prevent their own aggression. However, religion prevents aggression by introducing ideas of justice and protecting the weak. It encourages believers to 'love their enemies' rather than being aggressive towards them. Religion also gives humans a conscience which prevents them from

acting on their instincts, promising that controlling the instincts in this way will be rewarded in the afterlife.

3. What is a 'horde'?

4. Why does the horde experience collective guilt and how do they deflect these feelings?

5. Define animism and the religious phase.

6. How did Freud use the Christian Mass (Holy Communion/ Bread and Wine) to illustrate this idea?

The Oedipus complex

According to Freud the male child growing up is always closely bonded to his mother; this is achieved through breast feeding. The young male soon starts to become aware of his maleness (realising he has a penis the same as his father). So, the child begins to see his father as a rival for his mother's affection and becomes jealous. His developing feelings become mixed; respect and love for his father but also fear and guilt for loving his mother.

The boy is sure that his father will find out that he loves his mother and in doing so he will castrate him (deprive him of his maleness). The boy has feelings of wanting to kill his father.

All this is taking place in the unconscious mind rather than as a conscious thought; so because the boy knows he cannot actually kill his father he represses the thoughts deep into his unconscious mind.

The problem is; although repression is a good thing for us (a defence mechanism to protect our mind), it has a long-term effect on us by making through symptoms i.e. neurosis (anxiousness).

What Freud's is getting at is; religion is one of these symptoms; in other words, it is a type of anxiety or hysteria created by the **Oedipus Complex**. The child represses the conflict into its subconscious mind. Throughout its adult life, this repressed memory then takes the form of a neurotic obsession. In particular, the jealousy felt towards the father manifests itself in the apparent religious obsession with God as a father figure.

Freud felt that childhood was characterised by a feeling of helplessness. In childhood, one is comforted by the protection of the father. In adulthood, humans are still helpless against the forces of nature and the conflict they face between their instincts and the expectations of society. In a response to this helplessness, humans respond by turning to God as a supreme father figure, seeking the same comfort they felt in their childhood due to the protection of their own father. For Freud, therefore, believing in a father like God who will protect us from the evils of nature and our own human instincts and who will compensate for our earthly suffering in the afterlife is nothing more than wishful thinking, an illusion.

Religion and Sex

The best known aspect of Freud's explanation of religion is the involvement of sexual trauma. Freud argued that premature sexual experience, often in infancy, is the source of 'every case of hysteria'. This arises out of the body's most basic urges. As the child develops, the parent becomes increasingly concerned about manifestations of their child's sexual nature. As the child begins to explore their own sexuality, the parent tries to prevent them. This often results in instilling feelings of guilt.

Definition of Oedipus complex

A complex of males; desire to possess the mother sexually and to exclude the father; said to be a source of personality disorders if unresolved.



"Er... Nice tattoo, Oedipus."

Religion as wish fulfilment and a reaction against helplessness

Freud argues that the main characteristic of an illusion is that it is *“derived from human wishes.”* There is no real proof or evidence for religion and yet sensible men and women continue to believe. For Freud, this suggests that religion persists because it contains within it the wishes of those men and women which are so important to them that they cancel out any doubts they may have about the truth of the religion itself. Freud feels that there are things in our lives which make us feel helpless but which we wish to control:

e.g. The external forces of nature which threaten to destroy humanity (floods, earthquakes)

Freud believed that humans wish to defend themselves against the power of nature by creating religious ideas. For example, the forces of nature might be turned into gods/goddesses who can be worshipped and controlled. Thus, religion can help people to deal with suffering and feelings of helplessness in their lives. Even death is not to be feared for the religious, who regard it as the start to a new life where those who have had a good but painful life will be rewarded.

11. Why did Freud believe that religion persists/continues in the world?

12. Why did Freud believe humans feel helpless?

Research Ludwig Feuerbach’s ideas about religion.

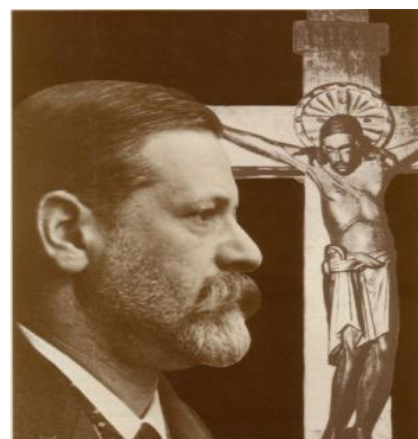
13.

Summary of Freud's ideas Freud does not provide any _____ proof against the possibility of religion. He admitted that his arguments prove nothing, since God could exist objectively anyway. In practice, however, he pointed out that beliefs that are derived from basic psychological needs turn out to be false. The beliefs of _____, for example, invariably have no grounding in fact. Freud therefore argued that in the absence of any other evidence for religion, we are justified in concluding that it is false. He goes on to support a complete _____ of all things religious. Towards the end of *The Future of an Illusion*, Freud creates a conversation with an opponent to his beliefs about religion. This opponent raises two points on the importance of religion. Firstly, without religion, civilisation would turn into anarchy; and secondly, depriving people of religion seems needlessly cruel because 'countless people find their one consolation in religious doctrines and can only bear life with their help.'

Freud admitted that religion has performed 'great services for civilisation.' He also accepted that if religion were entirely positive it would indeed be cruel to deprive people of it, illusion though it may be. He went on to argue, however, that religion is not in fact _____. It does not prevent people from rebelling against the restrictions of society. Many believers, moreover, _____ religion for their own purpose to justify social immoralities. He gave the example of penance: 'One sinned, and then one made a sacrifice, and then one was free to sin once more.' Religion has all too often been used as a tool against the oppressed, to keep them oppressed. Freud argued that we have been 'over-rating its necessity for mankind.'

Freud's suggested alternative is to replace religion with a _____, rational understanding of the world. This, he argued, would make people more willing to obey the demands of civilisation because they would see them as being for their own personal good. He believed it possible that humans can be educated to make their unruly passions subservient to their wills. Although many would see this as unrealistic, Freud argued that the pain of removing religion would be more than justified by the benefits.

- beneficial
- obsessional neurotics
- abuse
- scientific
- logical
- rejection



Explain how Freud understood religion (20 marks)

Intro – Some sort of background on Freud’s theories e.g. – Known as the ‘father of Psychology’, Sigmund Freud had a very negative view on religion, considering it to be dangerous and infantile, despite being born and raised a Jew. Although he held such atheistic views he had a fascination with religion throughout his life and put forward many theories on the Psychology of Religion.

Paragraph 1 – The Oedipus Complex – explain what the complex is and how it links to religion. e.g. – The most well-known of these theories is the Oedipus Complex. This is an analogy based on the Greek tragic play ‘Oedipus and the King’. In this play Oedipus unknowingly kills his father and marries his mother. The analogy Freud uses to link this to each small boy is this – when we are young we want the desires of our id satisfied. And so we want our mothers to ourselves and so want rid of our father. But our father is bigger and stronger and so we cannot beat him and we need him for protection and reward. So instead, we identify with him, incorporating his qualities such as strength and wisdom. We have a feeling of guilt however because we have this internal conflict with regards to our relationship of the father. As we get older we still run into difficulties in the world and so feel we need a protector like we had in the father as infants. Freud believes to satisfy this need as adults we project the qualities of the father onto God, thus creating the ultimate father figure. This satisfies our need to feel protected and safe. As we have guilt feelings due to our relationship with our father, this for Freud, is also partly why guilt feelings are associated with religion. As such, Freud’s Oedipus Complex is saying that religion is simply an illusion created to help us deal with the problems of the world and our internal conflicts of guilt.

Paragraph 2 – Totem and Taboo – a brief description of totem and taboo as supporting the Oedipus Complex and its link to religion e.g. – Freud’s theory of Totem and Taboo can be said to support the Oedipus complex. Totem and Taboo is based on the ancient society of the primal horde as speculated by Charles Darwin. In the primal horde there is a dominant father figure who is the male leader. He is in total control and reserves all the females for himself. The younger males have mixed, ambivalent feelings towards the father figure. On the one hand they respect and admire him on the other they are jealous and hate him for thwarting their sexual desires. Eventually the hostile side takes over and the sons group together, kill the father and eat him to incorporate his qualities of strength etc. After this event the sons start to feel guilty as the love they felt for the father that the suppressed at the time of the murder starts to remerge. This guilt results in the arising of totemism (an ancient religion). The sons installed a totem animal which was thought of both as the clan’s ancestor and as its guardian and protector. This totem animal eventually became a God and both the totem animal and the God symbolise the father. Freud explains that the tribe solved the problem of guilt through the fact that the clansmen are under a sacred obligation (subject to automatic sanctions) not to kill or destroy their totem and to avoid eating its flesh (or deriving benefit from it in other ways along with the taboo against having sexual relations with the women of their own tribe. Thus renouncing one and all the ideal of the father’s absolute dominance. Freud relates this to modern day religion by saying that it lives on in guilt and fear of God and avoidance of sex, in the Christian Eucharist (eating of God), and in atonement, leading to reconciliation with the father. The murdered primal father is said to constitute the original image upon which later religions and generations modelled their concept of God. Totem and Taboo supports the Oedipus Complex by showing that is not simply a personal trauma, but one that has affected all societies at a historical level. It helps to explain why religion is universal as a collective

neurosis and why the concept of God is such a powerful one: because it stems also from a historical experience that still affects us. Freud believed in some kind of psychological mechanism whereby guilt for the original crime is passed on genetically.

Paragraph 3 – Illusion and wish fulfilment. Explain how Freud sees all religion as illusion and explain wish fulfilment e.g. – As seen in the Oedipus Complex, Freud believes that religion is simply an illusion created by humans to fulfil some need or desire. The problem is that the nature of our society is often at conflict with our most basic desires (the desires of the id). And so religion provides us with a reason to submit to authority. It explains our suffering in terms of the need to obey an omnipotent God. It promises reward for suffering in the afterlife and makes society bearable. Religion therefore provides the necessary motivation for sublimation to occur. As the most natural outlet is forbidden it forces our libidos into other areas. Religion can also be used as illusion to help us overcome our fear or natural forces. Freud says that the natural human response to being confronted by natural forces (including death) is panic and helplessness at our defencelessness and solitude. Religion helps by creating the belief that the natural forces are no longer impersonal and that we are no longer powerless because through religious devotion we believe we can control them. We also have the promise of the after-life to look forward to. This also links to wish fulfilment because we wish to feel safe and secure in the world. Freud says we wish when we stand in need of something and we wish by remembering a formerly satisfying object from the past. So in terms of religion we can say that in the past we felt safe and protected from our father and so as adults we wish for this to continue to feel safe. To fulfil this wish we create a God as the ultimate father figure.

Paragraph 4 – Collective neurosis – explain what collective neurosis is and how it links to religion e.g. –

Freud also draws a comparison between religious rituals and neurotic compulsions. He points out that both are repeated, to be performed exactly, the person feels calm when they are completed and anxiety if they are not done. The similarities between neurotic compulsions and religious rituals lead Freud to the conclusion that religious ritual behaviour is an example of obsessive compulsive behaviour. However, because they provide a shared or common neurosis they are accepted by society. Freud claims that religion protects us from developing individual neuroses which may not be accepted by society. Religion and neurosis can also be linked through repressed guilt. The obsessional neurotic normally has a sense of guilt that motivates their actions (Freud says is usually to do with some sort of sexual repression). The religious believer also feels guilt if they have done something God would not approve of and it is usually at this time they carry out a religious ritual (e.g. prayer).

Paragraph 5 – Conclusion – sum up all your points and answer the question! Maybe include one evaluative point at the end in order to lead you into your next essay e.g. –

From this discussion we can see that Freud understood religion as illusion based on the desire to feel safe and protected. He also sees it as an immature thing as religion links back to an infantile state where we were weak and helpless and in need of protection and this is why as adults we create a father figure, which we call God. As such, it is something we need to be free from in order for us to develop into mature beings. However, you can argue that Freud's psychology of religion only really works for monotheistic religions (religions that believe in one God) and religions who see God as a father figure. His theories do not explain polytheistic religions (belief in more than one God).

14. Use the marking scheme to mark and comment on this essay.

Supportive evidence including reference to redirection of guilt complexes (Little Hans) and reference to instinctive desires deriving from evolutionary basis (Charles Darwin).

Two things at least need to be established for his theory to have any chance of success:

1. That the Oedipus complex is a **universal** sexual trauma
2. That buried trauma can reappear in the form (or is the **cause**) of religion.

A. Instinctive desires deriving from evolutionary basis - Why religion is the ‘universal obsessional neurosis of mankind’

Freud speculated on the work of Charles Darwin to assert the idea that in primitive societies, the social unit was something called a primitive horde. Freud believed the study of evolution was an essential part of the training to be a psychoanalysis and Darwinian theory was essential to psychoanalysis. Such was Darwin’s influence on Freud that Vitz comments: ‘Darwin had such a profound influence on Freud’s psychoanalytic theories that Freud wrote that Darwin’s Origin of Species was one of the most significant books ever published.’

The theory developed by Freud was based on the Darwinian idea that all behaviour is the result of a few basic animal drives produced by natural selection to facilitate survival. The survival genes that were passed on included those for a high sexual drive. This is why the sex drive became central in Freud’s theory of human behaviour.

15. Task – write a summary of Darwin’s ideas of evolution through natural selection as a process of growing towards maturity as human beings – having the ability to sublimate the instincts of the individual in the interests of maintaining social cohesion.

Hordes: groups of people arranged around a single dominant male who had total authority over the group and held claim over all the females. Over time, the resentments of the younger males grew, until they grouped together to kill him.

Hence **ambivalent feelings** were held towards the dominant male – hatred on the one hand combined with the veneration (profound reverence, respect) on the other. The strength of these feelings was so great that **the father became idolised and transformed into the totem of the group**. So the Oedipus complex is **not simply a personal trauma**, but one that has affected all **society** at a historical level. It explains why religion is universal and why the concept of God is such a powerful one (since it stems from a historical experience that still affects us).

Hence religion being the '**universal obsessional neurosis of mankind**'. Freud believed in some kind of **psychological mechanism** whereby guilt for the original crime is passed on **genetically**.

- B. **Religion is the redirection of guilt complexes?** You need to include reference to supportive evidence found elsewhere in modern psychology regarding the redirection of guilt complexes - an appreciation that the modern theories support Freud's original assertions.

Freud became convinced that the workings of the mind could be rationally explained through the scientific method of observation and analysis. His reasoning was based on his continued psychoanalysis of patients who were suffering from neurosis, or physical symptoms that had no obvious physical cause. Freud let his patients speak freely in an attempt to unlock their previously repressed thoughts. From his many case studies Freud saw clear evidence for the Oedipus complex and concluded that repressed sexual feelings were at the root of these illnesses.

- 16. <http://www.simplypsychology.org/little-hans.html> - Use this link to research the case study of Little Hans and how it was used by Freud to support his ideas about the Oedipus Complex

Freud claimed the natural reaction of the psyche was to control feelings of guilt by transferring it away from itself and on to surrounding objects and people.

Drawing from the historical support of the primal horde, Freud observed that as veneration of the father grew, the veneration was transferred on to a totem animal (see 'The Wolf Man' case study below for his evidence that people suffering from the Oedipus complex frequently transferred their fear on to animals). The totem became the symbol of identity of the group, while the ambivalence remained. For

while it was generally forbidden to harm the animal in any way, once a year there would be a **ritual killing and eating of the totem animal**.

The Wolf Man

Sergei Pankejeff was a patient of Freud's but to protect his identity, Freud referred to him as 'Wolf Man'. He suffered from depression and went to Freud for therapy. Freud focussed on a dream that Pankejeff had as a young child. The dream featured him lying in bed when the window suddenly opened and he saw six or seven white wolves. In terror of being eaten by the wolves he screamed and woke up.

Freud interpreted this as repressed trauma of Pankejeff having witnessed his parents having sex. Freud claimed that he was successful in treating depression having identified the repressed trauma.

Modern evidence

In support of Freud's theories, recent research in America at the University of Michigan focussing on brain activity suggests that unconscious conflicts cause or contribute to the anxiety symptoms the patient is experiencing.

There have been studies that aim to compare the perceptions of God to perceptions of parents (Father figure). *Hertel & Donahue (1995)* found that God was seen as a loving Father, especially with girls; (this relates to the image of the father in the family).

Ullman (1982) found a link between absent Fathers and children who later convert to Christianity

These studies support the concept of God as a "projected Father figure"

17. Research any other modern psychological research that can be used to support Freud's theories – e.g. Carroll

Challenges including lack of anthropological evidence for primal horde; no firm psychological evidence for universal Oedipus complex; evidence basis too narrow.

Freud offered a critique of his own position in *The Future of Illusions* (1927). In it a protagonist argues that **religion has done much that is good**. For instance, religion offers people real consolation during difficult times. Religion provides certainty and order in an otherwise chaotic world.

Freud conceded that religion was of some use. However, religion is not simply a benign ‘security blanket’ - it has been the vehicle for social repression. In conclusion he argued that religion should be replaced by a more scientific view of the world. Both disciplines require us to interpret data and impose order on the world. Freud’s assumption that science has the sole claim to the truth is therefore unacceptable. Freud has not so much removed the illusion of religion by replace religion with an illusion.

Almost all the evidence that Freud presents has been discredited in one way or another.

The following areas in particular have been attacked:

- the historical and anthropological evidence regarding the primal horde
- the psychological evidence regarding the Oedipus complex
- Freud’s dependence on a narrow selection of evidence
- Freud’s conclusion that religion should be overthrown.

Lack of anthropological evidence for primal hordes

The idea of primal hordes has now been discredited. The whole theory of the horde was based on Darwin’s mere speculations. Now it is accepted that it was more likely that there was a greater variety in the way people were grouped, rather than exclusively as hordes.

Not all societies had totem objects that they worshipped, and there is no evidence for ambivalent attitudes towards the totems, such as the totem meal. British anthropologist E.E. Evans Pritchard doubts that the totem meal ever happened. This means the primal crime never happened.

The idea that guilt is handed down from generation to generation is also discredited.

18. What particular idea of Freud’s theory does this discredit?

19. Is it a damaging challenge? AO2

Psychological evidence for the Oedipus complex

The major critic of the Oedipus complex is **Bronislaw Malinowski**, in his book 'Sex and Repression'.

Remember, Freud needed two things for the complex to be universal:

1. The complex had to be **universal** for it to be the cause of religion
2. Needed to be caused by our **natures** for it to precede religion and be the cause of it.

Malinowski's attack:

1. **The Trobriand race**, where the role of the father is that of a weak nurse. So there is no evidence of the complex in this race. Their religion, therefore, must have originated elsewhere.
2. Looking at the animal world, he found nothing inherent in the nature of animals that could cause such a complex. The role of both father and mother is one of support.



Malinowski argued instead **the complex is caused by the strict rules of religion – rather than being the cause of them**. Sexual guilt is not the cause of religion. So Freud's attack upon religion does not contain the force that it was once believed to have. Freud seems to have based his theory of the Oedipus complex on five main case studies and then generalised, assuming the Oedipus complex detected in those cases was at work everywhere.

20. What evidence does Malinowski use to challenge Freud's theory?

A narrow selection of evidence

His theories relied on the importance of the father figure, which is developed by the mind into the male God of Judaism or Christianity.

They therefore failed to take account:

- religions based upon female deities (e.g. Egyptian Isis cult)
- religions which do not have any single dominant object of worship (Buddhism)
- societies such as the Trobriand race, where the father played an insignificant role in the development of the child. No tensions with the father, required by the Oedipus complex, occurs here.

Freud can therefore be criticised for:

- constructing a theory to explain the societies and religions with which he was familiar, and ignoring those of others.
- the way in which he generalised the results of his five case studies, assuming that the Oedipus complex detected in those cases was in fact at work everywhere.

Karl Popper – every genuine scientific theory must be testable and therefore falsifiable, at least in principle. A theory that is compatible with every possible observation is unscientific. Freud’s theory seems to be compatible with every possible state of affairs and so cannot be falsified. Hence, Freud’s theory is not scientific. We will do more work on the Falsification Principle next year.

Donald Winnicott (British psychoanalyst) argued that religion is an essential buffer between the mind and external reality. Religion is useful as it helps humans adapt to their environment by providing a source of comfort and familiarity. The role and value of religion are similar therefore to those of art and music. **Ana-Maria Rizzuto**, a practicing Freudian psychoanalyst, argues that religion is no more an illusion than science, since both involve the interpretation of data, and the subsequent imposition of an order onto the world.

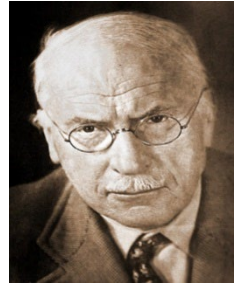
Evaluating Freud

Support	Challenges
Redirection of Guilt complexes	
e.g Little Hans	
e.g. the Wolf Man	
Instinctive desires deriving from evolutionary basis	

Religious belief as a product of the human mind – Carl Jung:

Religion necessary for personal growth with reference to: collective unconscious; individuation; archetypes; the God within.

Carl Jung was born in Switzerland in 1875. He studied medicine and psychology. He became a doctor and a lecturer in psychiatry and he travelled around the world. Jung proposed and developed the concepts of the *extraverted and the introverted* personality, archetypes, and the collective unconscious.



Summary of Jung's ideas about religion

- Religion as an expression of the collective unconscious
- The quest for integration/individuation
- The theory of archetypes – Shadow, Animus, Anima and the Self
- The god within

Religion as necessary for personal growth: collective unconscious

‘Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate.’ Jung

For Jung, the psyche consisted on the ego (consciousness), the personal unconscious (lost or repressed memories) and the collective unconscious. Just as evolution and heredity are seen as providing a blueprint for the body, so Jung saw evolution and heredity providing a blueprint for the psyche.

The collective unconscious is universal. It cannot be built up like one's personal unconscious is; rather, it predates the individual. It is made up of primordial images, derived from early human history: all the religious, spiritual, and mythological symbols and experiences. Its primary structures— the deep structures of the psyche, in other words—Jung called *archetypes*.

Jung stated that these archetypes were images or more precisely predispositions to act like our ancestors in our response to the world. These archetypes include mythical and religious themes that have appeared throughout the centuries across the world.

The collective unconscious is present in every human being, regardless of their personal experiences. It is made up of archetypes which Jung describes as, “*identical psychic structures common to all.*”

Jung believed that the **collective unconscious** is the oldest part of the human mind. All humans have the same ideas and images contained within their collective unconscious. These ideas and images come to humans in dreams and in their concept of God. For example, Jung found that many people liken their god to light. Therefore, he concluded that the relationship between light and religion is part of the collective unconscious. All humans share a common idea of God as it is part of the collective unconscious, shared by all humanity.

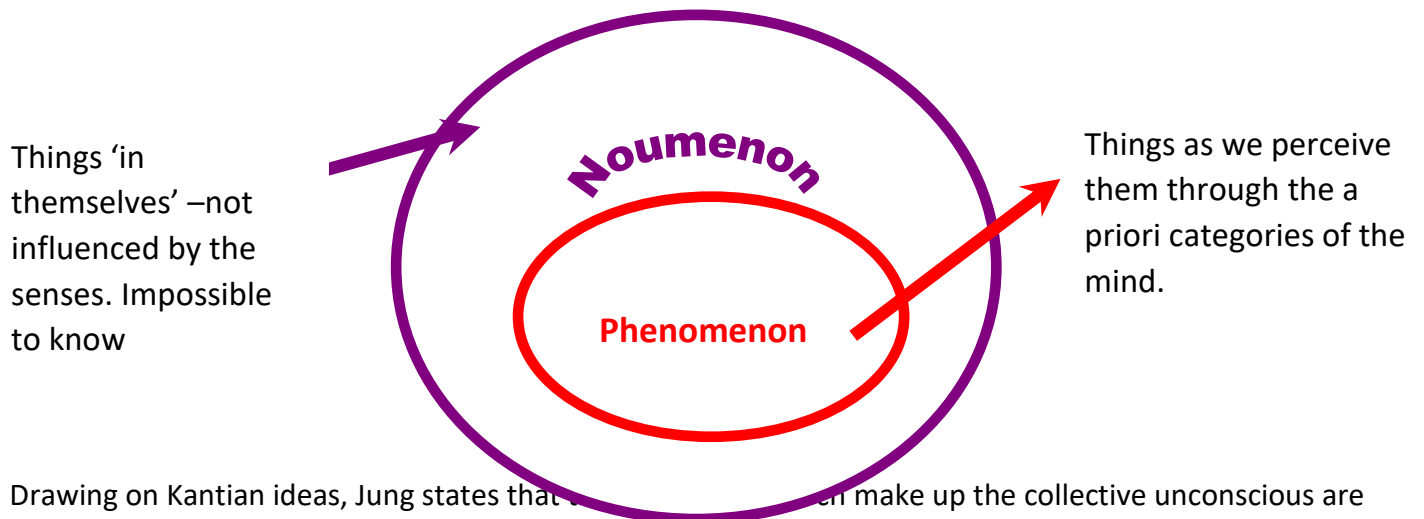
1. According to Jung what is the ‘collective unconscious’?

Religion as necessary for personal growth: Archetypes

Archetypes literally means 'original pattern' – they refer to symbolic forms which all people share in their collective unconscious. The archetypes give rise to images in the conscious mind and account for the reoccurring themes. These mould and influence human behaviour.

"Archetypes are those pre-existent forms or primordial types that have existed since the remotest times of humanity." (Michael Palmer)

Jung believes that every human has archetypes which are *a priori* (gained prior to experience). Examples of archetypes include, the mother, the hero, etc. In his theory of archetypes, Jung draws heavily on the work of Immanuel Kant. Kant believed that the mind has a priori categories through which it interprets the world, such as space and time). Thus, no human being can arrive at knowledge of a thing 'in itself', they can only arrive at an interpretation of a thing through these a priori categories or filters. Kant called the realm of things 'in themselves' the **noumenon**. Humans cannot access the noumenon, they can only access the **phenomenon**, which is filtered through the a priori categories of the mind.



Drawing on Kantian ideas, Jung states that archetypes which make up the collective unconscious are "*unconscious organisers of ideas.*" The fact that all humans have the same archetypes means that they are likely to form similar ideas about things, like God.

2. What are 'archetypes.?'

For Jung, the five most important archetypes are:

1. **Persona;**
2. **Shadow**
3. **Anima**
4. **Animus**
5. **Self**



1. The Persona - The Persona is what we show to the world – it is a mask. We hide the parts of our characters which we think people won't like and which society does not like and show off the parts which are pleasing to society. The advantage of the Persona is that people view us as predictable and reliable which means that we are likely to do well in our careers. However, repressing our true characters can be bad for our mental health. Thus, Jung believed that the Persona is *"a very fruitful source of neurosis."*

2. The Shadow - The Shadow is made up of the parts of our personalities which we do not believe are acceptable in society and therefore are not suitable as part of the Persona. Jung stated that the Shadow is *"Everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself and yet is always thrusting itself upon him directly or indirectly – for instance, inferior traits of character and other incompatible tendencies."*



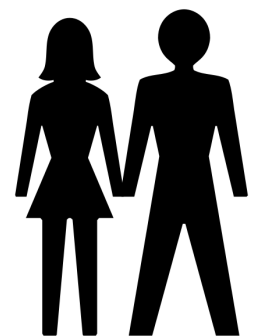
"Just as we usually experience our Shadow through someone else, so we experience our own attributes of the opposite sex through another person." (Michael Palmer)

Jung's name for this archetype suggests that he felt that there was something sinister about it. We try to ignore the Shadow, but it is still part of us and refuses to stay repressed, often appearing in dreams. If the Shadow were to stay repressed, it would lead to an imbalance in our personalities and so it must show itself sometimes. The Shadow can be seen in 'evil' people (cruel bosses), in ancient mythologies (fiend, tempter, **Satan**) and in fiction (Frankenstein, Mr Hyde, Shakespeare's Caliban) As we are ashamed of our shadows, we seek to project it onto others, such as the Devil.

3. and 4. Anima and Animus

- The **Anima** is the feminine side of the male;
- The **Animus** is the masculine side of the female.

Males are keen to include the masculine elements of their personality in the Persona, but repress their feminine characteristics. Likewise, women have a feminine Persona and repress the masculine parts of their personalities. As with the Shadow, these parts of ourselves cannot stay repressed and so are projected onto other people:



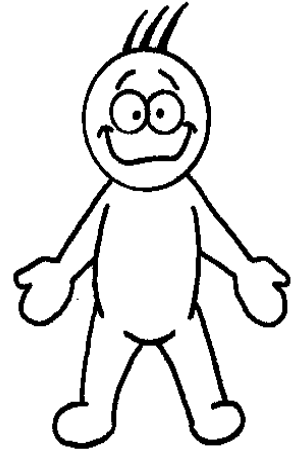
Thus, the women that a man is attracted to will have the characteristics of his Anima; those he is not attracted to will have characteristics which conflict with his Anima and the same for women. Images of the Anima and Animus are all around us: **Anima** – Virgin Mary, goddesses of Hinduism, Eve etc. **Animus** – Wise man, hero etc.

Both anima and animus need to be in balance

5. The Self

Jung believed that the Self is the most important archetype. The Self seeks the integration of all of the parts of our characters. It guides us through life. The Self can be the part of humans which looks for fulfilment in religion and art. It can be seen as the 'God within', the mystical part of humans or the soul.

The Self reveals itself in dreams, images and visions. It can be seen in figures of power (Kings and Queens), supernatural entities (gods and goddesses), outstanding religious personalities (Christ, Buddha) and religious symbols such as Mandalas.



3. Write a 10 word summary of the five key archetypes.

Religion as necessary for personal growth: Individuation

In Jungian psychology, individuation is the gradual integration and unification of the self through the resolution of successive layers of psychological conflict.

“Jung calls the process by which the individual integrates the conscious and unconscious parts of the personality the process of individuation.” (Michael Palmer)

Individuation is a process humans go through to become a separate individual.

“Individuation means becoming an ‘in-dividual’, and in so far as ‘individuality’ embraces our innermost, last, and incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming one’s own self. We could therefore translate individuation as ‘coming to self-hood’ or ‘self-realisation.’” (Jung)

Jung saw this ‘coming to self-realisation’ as a process which all humans go through. Thus, as a person will age as they go through life, they will also become a unique individual. However, individuation can be prevented by adverse influences of parents, education etc.

Individuation is allowing the parts of the unconscious mind to be integrated into the conscious. Thus, the parts of our personalities which have been repressed and neglected, like the Shadow (see below), must be embraced. Therefore, for Jung, our lives are split into two parts:

1. The first part of our lives (up to the age of 35/40) is about constructing a socially acceptable Persona and repressing parts of our personalities.
2. The second part of our lives (35/40+) is about embracing ourselves, asking spiritual and philosophical questions about life and the purpose of existence.

Therefore, the process of individuation could be considered a religious process. Jung believed that the archetype of the Self and the archetype of God cannot easily be distinguished from one another, *“The extraordinary difficulty in this experience [of the Self] is that the Self can be distinguished only conceptually from what has always been referred to as ‘God’, but not practically. Both concepts apparently rest on an identical numinous faction which is a condition of reality.” (Jung)*

However, the Self and God are not the same thing and the Self is not there to replace God, *“how could any sane man suppose he could displace God?” (Jung)*. They are linked because they are both impossible to describe and understand. Jung felt that the symbols of God and the Self are both symbols of unity, which can be seen, for example, in the Mandala. Individuation is about wholeness and totality: these are also the goals of religion.

Jung believed that archetypal symbols can be found in the Christian tradition: Christ, the Eucharist and the Trinity.

Christ – Jesus not necessarily a historical figure, but a psychic reality inside the deepest level of the human psyche. He is perfect, but incomplete as he lacks a ‘shadow’. The separation of Christ from God at his birth symbolises our human separation from our parents. Christ’s death symbolises the necessary sacrifice of the ego in our to become more complete.

Eucharist – this recalls how God sent his own son, who is also himself, to be sacrificed; however, this son rises again. For Jung, this symbolises those who sacrifice the selfish part of the ego, resulting in the self being transformed.



Jung was impressed by the religious symbol of the **mandala**. He believed that they revealed something about the Self and its quest for integration. He described mandalas as a *“premonition of a centre of personality, a kind of central point within the psyche ... this centre ... is the self.”*

3. Write a summary of Jung’s ideas about individuation and how he believed it was a religious process.

Religion as necessary for personal growth: God as an archetype – the God within

Individuation is the journey towards becoming a full individual. It is a quest to find the 'God within' and the symbol of 'the Self'. In its widest sense, it is a religious quest, because it is through religious images that the personality achieves its goal of integration. The religious images are simply images of the deeper self.

Jung felt that the images and ideas of God which humans have are archetypal, a deep 'inner' reality rather than an external object or person. This means that all human beings are born with a tendency to come up with religious ideas of God, angels etc. and God is an expression of the collective unconscious. A 'religious experience' with God is really an encounter with the 'Self' and the experience is called 'spiritual' or 'numinous'. Rudolf Otto described a numinous experience as mysterious and awe-inspiring. During the experience the person feels in communion with the 'wholly other'.

Jung considered that the Self archetype creates the same symbolism that has always expressed deity. For Jung, the Self is 'God within us'. He claimed that it is impossible to distinguish between a symbol of the Self and a God image.

However, Jung does not believe that stating that God is an archetype has any bearing on arguments for the existence or non-existence of God. He argued that when commenting on the idea of God as an archetype, ***“Nothing positive or negative has thus been asserted about the possible existence of God any more than the archetype of the hero proves the actual existence of a hero.”***

4. Why did Jung believe God was an archetype? Also read pages 19 and 20

Supportive evidence including recognition of religion as a source of comfort and promotion of positive personal and social mind sets arising from religious belief.

It is generally agreed that Jung's theories were experience driven. His concepts were constructed from evidence derived from his personal experience and clinical observations. He concluded that the archetypes occur universally in all cultures and historical periods. Myths and religions contain similar themes that were also found in dreams of his patients. Jung believed that archetypes provided a way of interpreting dreams and myths and features of traditional religions.

He felt that religion is constantly evolving by **helping to develop the personality**. It helps to **integrate** a person's conscious and unconscious life and nurtures a person through the different stages they go through in life. Therefore, Freud is wrong to label religion as 'infantile' – it is an evolving, nurturing processes which is beneficial to those who believe in it.

Jung believed that Freud was wrong to reduce religion to the sexual libido. He felt that in doing this, Freud had misunderstood the function of religion and had failed to recognise the collective unconscious which is the part of a human that allows him/her to know something of the meaning of life.

Jung believed that **religion is a positive phenomenon** which leads to good mental health. This means that his ideas do not challenge religious belief in the same way as those of Freud.

Unlike Freud, Jung does not believe that religion is a negative neurosis. Jung felt that religion is positive as it unlocks the collective unconscious which is therapeutic for the individual.

5. Example of World War 1

What impact did Jung believe World War 1 had on peoples religious, social and political certainties and why did he consider this to be a major problem?

6. How did Jung believe that religion could help?

As Jung provides a theory of religion and psychology which is less damaging to religion, he has been praised by religious thinkers:

- ✓ “[Jung has] rediscovered the religious and the sacred and got rid of an overwhelming rationalism. (Raymond Hostie – Jesuit theologian)
- ✓ “[Jung is] one who knows so much about the depths of the human soul ...” (Paul Tillich – Theologian)
- ✓ “[By studying Jung] we can gain an insight into the ways by which men become aware of God.” (Charles Hanna – Jungian)

7. Why did Jung believe that religion was positive for humans?

8. Research supportive evidence from modern psychology, particularly relating to mind-sets as a way of viewing the world that provides a reality for both the individual and the collective.

However, *“although Jung’s theories are perhaps less sensational than those of Freud, they have nonetheless been seriously criticised.” (Michael Palmer)*

Jung’s ideas about Western minds and how they could be helped	Jung’s ideas about ‘Asian minds’ and what they use to help themselves

Challenges including lack of empirical evidence for Jungian concepts and reductionist views regarding religious belief arising from acceptance of Jung’s ideas.

Jung states that we can never know whether God exists. We can never know if a religious experience is real or whether it is created by the mind. However, Jung accepts science, which bases conclusions on empirical evidence without worrying about whether the data is a figment of a person’s imagination. If there is empirical evidence for a religious experience, why can’t we accept that it is true?

The Theory of Archetypes - _Geza Roheim argues that the theory of archetypes is unnecessary. As humans share the same experiences, such as dependence on parents, it is not surprising that they construct similar myths. Also, some religious myths come from the experiences of a particular community and so it seems unlikely that they are born out of an idea which is present in all humans. Therefore, it is argued that Jung is not justified in stating that there is an ‘instinct for God’ just because people believe in God. In addition, many people do not believe in God. Jung himself countered this argument by stating that atheism itself is a religion. It seems that he will not allow anything to counter his ideas. If his theory is not open to *falsification*, some would argue that it is meaningless.

Jung’s idea of religious experience –_Martin Buber argues that an experience which takes place in the mind, rather than externally to the individual, is not a religious experience. Jung has also been criticised for suggesting that any vision is religious. Perhaps he has failed to understand the uniqueness of a religious experience and the effect that they have on religious believers.

Individuation –_Is this a religious process? If it is concerned with the Self, is it really about God? For example, Jung argues that the image of Christ is a symbol of wholeness to help balance our minds. However, for a religious believer, Christ is so much more than this. He is an historical person and the Son of God, not just a symbol of the mind.

Reductionism –_In reducing religion to archetypes and the process of Individuation, has Jung actually damaged religion? In stating that religion is a subjective phenomenon, does he suggest that God is not an objective reality? *“I think that the friendliness of Jung presents a far more serious and radical challenge to religion as we know it than ever did the hostility of Freud.” (Father Victor White)*

9. Write a 10 word summary of each challenge.

10. What do you think is the most serious challenge to Jung’s ideas about religion?

Freud	Jung
<p>God is a creation by the individual human mind and its neurotic desires</p>	<p>God as an archetype – ‘God within’</p>
<p><i>LIBIDO AS A DRIVE FOR SATISFACTION</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Freud uses this as a basis for why religion, as with all other neuroses are sexual in nature. ○ Freud argues that the highly sexual Oedipus Complex is the trauma that results in the neurosis of religion. 	<p><i>LIBIDO AS AN UNDIFFERENTIATED LIFE-FORCE</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jung rejects the notion that the libido is exclusively about satisfaction and desire – sexual appetite is just an expression of the general force. ○ This is important as it means Jung rejects the notion of the Oedipus Complex is at the basis of religion.
<p><i>RELIGION AS NEUROSIS</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Freud argues that religion is a neurosis – a psychological disorder (mental illness). ○ Religion as a neurosis that arises as a defence mechanism of the mind when repressed traumas re-emerge. 	<p><i>RELIGION AS CURE FOR NEUROSIS</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jung does not think religion is an actual neurosis. ○ Jung thinks that the religious impulse humans have is an impulse towards becoming psychically balance (mentally healthy) and, as such, is vital for the process of individuation.
<p><i>RELIGION AS DANGEROUS TO HUMANITY</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Freud argues that religion should be rejected because it is not beneficial to either society or morality. ○ History has shown that religion does not ensure order in society, and it has also been used for immoral purposes such as oppression. ○ Religion will eventually die out and be replaced by science. 	<p><i>RELIGION AS BENEFICIAL TO HUMANITY</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jung argues that the impulse towards religion is natural and belongs to all humans as it comes from the collective unconscious. ○ Religion is vitally important to the process of individuation – without a sense of spirituality we are more likely to suffer neuroses. It is helpful to balance mental health, key to the process of integration and individuation.

Chunking Theme 2 D and E AO1 Knowledge

Freud

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Supporting evidence and challenges

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Jung

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Supporting evidence and challenges

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2 F Issues relating to rejection of religion: Atheism:

Rejection of belief in deities; the difference between agnosticism and atheism; the rise of New Atheism (antitheism); its main criticisms of religion: non-thinking; infantile worldview; impedes scientific progress

Religious responses to the challenge of New Atheism: rejection by religious groups of New Atheist claims regarding incompatibility of science and religion; increase in fundamentalist religious activity relating to morality and community; increase in religious apologists in media.

Rejection of belief in deities

The term atheism derives from two Greek words: 'a' meaning 'without' and 'theos' meaning 'god'. Atheism therefore describes a position of being without a belief in God or gods. There are different interpretations, however, as to what this means.

1. Research and create a timeline of the history of atheist ideas

6th BCE Buddhism, Jainism and Taoism

5th BCE Diagoras of Melos

Socrates

Renaissance and Reformation - from 14th to 17th Century CE

Age of Enlightenment – 18th Century CE

20th Century –

21st Century – Rise of New Atheism – later in booklet

Atheism and how it differs from agnosticism

Types of atheism

The definition of atheism has changed throughout the centuries. Alister McGrath defines atheism as *'the religion of the autonomous and rational human being, who believes that reason is able to uncover and express the deepest truths of the universe'*.

Anthony Flew first introduced the terms 'weak' and 'strong' atheism in his book *The Presumption of Atheism* (1972).

Weak or negative atheism – involves a lack or absence of belief in God. This could be because someone had never thought about the concept of God e.g. a child. However, it may also be the result of careful thought leading to the idea that belief in God cannot be justified.

'I don't believe that God exists, but tell me why you do believe in God.'

Strong or positive atheism – goes further than negative atheism, it requires a conscious denial of God's existence, which in turn requires satisfactory reasons for this denial, so positive atheism can never come through lack of thought.

'I know God does not exist, and here are my reasons, so why do you believe in God?'

Critics may argue that positive atheism can never be established with certainty, for it is impossible to prove that a thing does not exist. Positive atheists may respond by saying that the burden of proof lies with those who believe in God.

Further types of atheism include:

Protest Atheism – research the character Ivan in Dostoyevsky's novel *'The Brothers Karamazov'*

'Even if God did exist I could not morally accept God'

New atheism (anti-theism) – the belief that religion is a threat to the survival of the human race. This view of atheism is a hostile reaction to theism and is expounded by Richard Dawkins in his book *'The God Delusion.'*

'I don't believe God exists, and neither must you.'

2. Summarise the different types of atheism in your own words.

Agnosticism

Agnosticism derives from the Greek words for 'without knowledge' and refers to the belief that there is insufficient knowledge to prove or disprove the existence of God. Agnostics neither believe nor disbelieve in God. The term 'agnostic' was first used by the English biologist Thomas Huxley in 1869.

There can be different reasons for adopting agnosticism. Some might do so because they believe that there is no good reasons for adopting belief in God and no good reasons for rejecting such a belief.

Some might explain this using the ideas of Carl Jung – nothing can be known about the world outside our psychological experiences, because we can never escape from the confines of our minds.

Others may be aware of the arguments for and against the existence of God as see them as equally persuasive.

Agnosticism is often contrasted with atheism. Clearly it is incompatible with positive atheism, for one cannot deny God's existence (positive atheism) at the same time as not deny his existence (agnosticism). Unlike positive atheism, agnosticism can be seen as the 'default position' for those who are not persuaded by the arguments for and against the existence of God. However, it has a much closer relationship with negative atheism, in that to be agnostic, one must not believe in God, which is the position that positive atheists adopt. In other words, agnosticism entails negative atheism. The difference between the two is that whereas negative atheists can go on to deny God's existence, agnostics as we have seen, cannot.

'Strong agnosticism' – the assertion it is impossible to know whether or not God exists. It is unknowable because our knowledge is limited, and we cannot know ultimate reasons for things. It is not that evidence is lacking, it is that evidence is never possible.

'I don't know whether God exists or not, and neither do you.'

'Weak agnosticism' – the belief that the existence of God is currently unknown, but it is not necessarily unknowable. God may exist or may not exist but judgement has to be withheld until evidence becomes available. This is the common usage of agnosticism where it indicates a suspension of a decision.

'I don't know whether God exists or not, but maybe you do.'

3. Summarise the different types of agnosticism in your own words.

4. Explain the difference between atheism and agnosticism?

The rise of new atheism <http://newatheism.org/>

'religion should not simply be tolerated but should be countered, criticized, and exposed by rational argument wherever its influence arises.' (Hooper, S.)

“Many of us saw religion as harmless nonsense. Beliefs might lack all supporting evidence but, we thought, if people needed a crutch for consolation, where's the harm? September 11th changed all that.” **Richard Dawkins**

The New Atheists are authors of early twenty-first century books promoting atheism. These authors include Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, and Christopher Hitchens. The “New Atheist” label for these critics of religion and religious belief emerged out of journalistic commentary on the contents and impacts of their books. A standard observation is that New Atheist authors exhibit an unusually high level of confidence in their views. Reviewers have noted that these authors tend to be motivated by a sense of moral concern and even outrage about the effects of religious beliefs on the global scene. It is difficult to identify anything philosophically unprecedented in their positions and arguments, but the New Atheists have provoked considerable controversy with their body of work.

In spite of their different approaches and occupations (only Dennett is a professional philosopher), the New Atheists tend to share a general set of assumptions and viewpoints. These positions constitute the background theoretical framework that is known as the New Atheism. The framework has a metaphysical component, an epistemological component, and an ethical component. Regarding the metaphysical component, the New Atheist authors share the central belief that there is no supernatural or divine reality of any kind. The epistemological component is their common claim that religious belief is irrational. The moral component is the assumption that there is a universal and objective secular moral standard. This moral component sets them apart from other prominent historical atheists such as Nietzsche and Sartre, and it plays a pivotal role in their arguments because it is used to conclude that religion is bad in various ways, although Dennett is more reserved than the other three.

The New Atheists make substantial use of the natural sciences in both their criticisms of theistic belief and in their proposed explanations of its origin and evolution. They draw on science for recommended alternatives to religion. They believe empirical science is the only (or at least the best) basis for genuine knowledge of the world, and they insist that a belief can be epistemically justified only if it is based on adequate evidence. Their conclusion is that science fails to show that there is a God and even supports the claim that such a being probably does not exist. What science *will* show about religious belief, they claim, is that this belief can be explained as a product of biological evolution. Moreover, they think that it is possible to live a satisfying non-religious life on the basis of secular morals and scientific discoveries.

From - <http://www.iep.utm.edu/n-atheis/>

New atheism is defined in both positive and negative ways.

The positive definition of new atheism is a modern, 21st century movement in atheism and among atheists which is openly critical of theism and religion and which is less willing to be accommodating to religious beliefs, traditions, or institutions. Atheists themselves are most likely to use this definition, assuming that they acknowledge that anything like "new atheism" exists in the first place.

The negative definition of new atheism is a militant, fundamentalist movement dedicated to the eradication of religion. Something like this definition will be found among critics and opponents of atheism and even occasionally among a few atheists themselves — usually those who seem to be embarrassed that they are atheists in the first place and feel some sort of need to apologize for the fact that there are people who dare to criticize religion.

Summary of new atheism - The arguments for the existence/non-existence of God are no longer of interest.

- There is no evidence for the existence of God.
- Religion = belief in God.
- Explanations for the origins of religion confirm that it derives entirely from social and psychological needs.
- Religion breeds extremism, violence and ignorance

5. What is new atheism?

6. What is meant by the 'rise of new atheism'?

Atheism - main criticisms of religion: non-thinking; infantile worldview; impedes scientific progress.

It is often considered that atheism as a deliberate rejection of the divine had its origins in ancient Greece. For example, Thales (6th Century BC) rejected religious mythological explanations of the world in favour of natural ones. It is further argued that atheism as a self-contained belief system, with an atheism world view to challenge the religious one, did not emerge until the 18th Century CE. David Berman's work *A History of Atheism in Britain* argues that the first avowedly atheist work is Pierre d'Holbach's *The System of Nature*, published in 1770. Before the rise of atheism, he notes that in Europe belief in God was universal. He refers to 17th Century writers who believe it was not even possible to be genuinely atheist.

Non thinking and infantile worldview

"I am against religion because it teaches us to be satisfied with not understanding the world."

Richard Dawkins

"Faith is the great cop-out, the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence. Faith is the belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence." **Richard Dawkins**

". . .one of the truly bad effects of religion is that it teaches us that it is a virtue to be satisfied with not understanding." **Richard Dawkins, The God Delusion**

"To be fair, much of the Bible is not systematically evil but just plain weird, as you would expect of a chaotically cobbled-together anthology of disjointed documents, composed, revised, translated, distorted and 'improved' by hundreds of anonymous authors, editors and copyists, unknown to us and mostly unknown to each other, spanning nine centuries" **Richard Dawkins, The God Delusion**

7. What does non-thinking mean?

“There is something infantile in the presumption that somebody else has a responsibility to give your life meaning and point... The truly adult view, by contrast, is that our life is as meaningful, as full and as wonderful as we choose to make it.” — **Richard Dawkins, The God Delusion**

8. What does infantile world view mean?

“Do you really mean to tell me the only reason you try to be good is to gain God's approval and reward, or to avoid his disapproval and punishment? That's not morality, that's just sucking up, apple-polishing, looking over your shoulder at the great surveillance camera in the sky, or the still small wiretap inside your head, monitoring your every move, even your every base thought.” **Richard Dawkins, The God Delusion**

9. Why do you think some atheists, such as Dawkins and Hitchens consider religion to be non-thinking and to have an infantile worldview?

Impedes scientific progress

In *Religion without God*, Ray Billington describes science as 'the supreme catalyst' for the rise of atheism. It has had this influence because the development of science has provided natural explanation for many of the universe's processes, even its very existence, that were previously seen as miracles that were dependant on God.

Billington argues that three scientific developments above all others have contributed to this process:

1. The invention of the telescope and the astronomical discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo showed that the solar system could be explained without the hand of God.
2. The biological revolution culminating in Darwin's *The Origin of the Species* – it demonstrated that nature was 'red in tooth and claw and had developed by trial and error
3. The twentieth century psychoanalysts such as Freud's ideas about the unconscious mind, suggesting that the idea of the conscience as the still small voice of God must go, to be replaced by that of an accumulation of experiences and ideas encountered at all stages of any individual person's life.

Billington's account makes it clear how the role of God in a world increasingly explained by science was slowly being squeezed out with each new discovery. God could no longer be associated with the smooth running of the cosmos, nor the creation of human life, nor even our sense of conscience and moral awareness. This gradual relegation of God's activity to explain those things which science still cannot know as 'God of the gaps'. This process leads some to conclude that belief in God can now be abandoned entirely, for it is only a matter of time before gaps will be filled and God will be fully redundant.

New atheists claim that religion has also been a reactionary force deeply opposed to intellectual and scientific advances. For example, for over a millennium (from the time of St. Augustine until the Renaissance), Christianity, the dominant religion in Europe, deliberately arrested the development of science and scientific thinking, limiting systematic investigation of the natural world to theological investigation. The scientific discoveries of the ancient Greeks and Egyptians were, as far as possible, suppressed and destroyed for centuries by the Christian Church, and were only later re-imported back into Europe via Middle Eastern sources. As a result, scientific knowledge progressed hardly at all during the so-called Dark Ages, and the populace was mired in the deepest squalor and ignorance.

Even when scientific investigation into the natural world resumed in the Renaissance of the 16th Century, organized Christianity did everything it could to stamp it out (the cases of Nicolas Copernicus, Galileo Galilei and Giordano Bruno are good example of this). The Church also opposed the introduction of the printing press, concerned that the scriptures and other knowledge would become easily available to the masses, thus by-passing the traditional vetting and interpretation of the clergy. Despite some significant back-peddalling, the conflict between religion and science continues today as Christian fundamentalists demand that their creation myth be taught in place of, or alongside, the theory of evolution in the public schools.

Religious responses to the challenge of New Atheism:

Rejection by religious groups of New Atheist claims regarding incompatibility of science and religion; increase in fundamentalist religious activity relating to morality and community; increase in religious apologists in media.

10. Read this lecture by Alister McGrath – it's long and detailed

<https://www.faraday.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/CIS/mcgrath/lecture.html>

or this summary article

http://www.faraday.stedmunds.cam.ac.uk/resources/Faraday%20Papers/Faraday%20Paper%209%20McGrath_EN.pdf

One way in which religious believers might respond to the challenges of atheism is to reject them completely and withdraw into the fundamental beliefs of their faith. One argument they might use is that the knowledge that comes from God's revelation, in sacred texts like the Bible, is inherently more trustworthy than the human and thereby fallible attempt of scientists and others who seek knowledge by themselves. They might also claim that the arguments of atheists are deliberate attempts to discredit belief in God in order to suit their own purposes. The difficulty with this approach is that it makes no real attempt to engage with and answer the atheistic challenges, instead merely ignoring them.

An alternative response therefore is to examine each of the atheists' challenges in turn in order to judge how serious they are. They offer various ways of overcoming the challenges in order to show that continued belief in God is justifiable.

Rejection by religious groups of New Atheist claims regarding incompatibility of science and religion

The challenges from science have been answered by the argument that nothing within these challenges amounts to proof that God does not exist (a point that Richard Dawkins, among others, would accept) and that scientific theories are entirely compatible with belief in God.

A typical argument would be that even if science explains how the world was created and functions, and give physical reasons for why these events came about, it does not preclude the possibility that God was behind these events, giving them their ultimate purpose, which science cannot reveal. For some religion explains why the conditions first came about in which these physical laws and events were able to arise.

Stephen Hawking's hesitancy as to the existence of God can be seen as supporting the possibility of God, which then becomes much more than a possibility if believers have reasons beyond science upon which to base their beliefs.

11. Increase in fundamentalist religious activity relating to morality and community;

Increase in religious apologists in media.

12. What is a 'religious apologist'?

13. Give an example of a religious apologist who is using the media to spread their idea. Explain. E.g. William Lane Craig <http://www.reasonablefaith.org/richard-dawkins-argument-for-atheism-in-the-god-delusion>

Sample exam questions

Examine Freud's view of religious belief. [AO1 20]

Candidates could include some or all of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.

Freud's psychological work includes claims that religious belief is illusory and believers use it as a means to escape from a sense of helplessness and the finality of death.

Religious belief can also be construed in terms of wish-fulfilment, the human desire for love, protection and there being a purpose to life.

Freud's work in the field of psychoanalysis led him to believe that religion actually hindered the psychological development of both the individual and society. He suggested that religion, religious beliefs and religious rituals could all be explained from historical and psychological perspectives.

For Freud, the 'God-figure' evolved to replace inadequate fathers (Oedipus complex – Greek myth – controversial Freudian claims based around this idea). These ideas were articulated in his work, 'Totem and Taboo'.

Freud's view of pre-history and the totem/taboo ('primal horde' and the desire of the son to kill the father in order to gain access and dominance of the tribe's women, the frustration and guilt that arises from this process, themes of sacrifice); religion provides neurosis through fear and guilt (link to obsessive compulsive disorders). In these ideas he was building on the work of the German anthropologist and philosopher **Ludwig Feuerbach**.

Religious belief is seen as harmful due to it being repressive and requiring an over-demanding morality. Freud therefore considered it to be anti-intellectual and a reaction against helplessness. Religion provided a structure that prevented individuals from developing fully in an intellectual, and therefore psychological way.

Concept of sublimation. For Freud, sublimation refers to the psychological ability to transform unhealthy emotions or instincts into healthy or socially acceptable behaviours – Freud considered religion to provide a structure for sublimated desires to be expressed in such a way.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

'Freud simply misunderstood religious belief.' Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Candidates could include some or all of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.

He ignored the benefits of religion, for example stimulating social altruism, maintaining morality, developing human potential and sense of contentment.

He was biased because of his rejection of religious faith. Freud never considered more liberal interpretations of religion and cited most of his criticisms on conservative expressions of religious belief. Anthropological studies used by Freud have been proved to be inaccurate; not all religions regard God as 'father figure'; not all people are religious. In fact, taken to their logical extension, Freud's promotion of atheism as a preferred system is in itself a rejection of the father figure (i.e. God), in which case his criticism is contradictory and self-defeating.

Freud fails to deal with non-theistic religion. No consideration is given to religions such as Buddhism which do not depend on a 'father figure' god.

Religion meets human biological needs and relieves human frustrations and anxieties. Positive effects from sublimation can be found in the expression of religious rituals that can enable individuals and society to be more cohesive and productive.

Totemism is neither universal nor the earliest form of human development. Freud's basis for many of his psychological theories has since been debunked.

Candidates may contrast with Jungian ideas that demonstrate religion is necessary for psychological health and therefore Freud misunderstood religious belief.

His 'illusory' theory was supported by studies of children's concepts of God; however, it does not take into account the 'maturing' of religious beliefs and concepts of God.

His work led to greater recognition of the subconscious, group behaviour, dangers of guilt, etc. It also led to an understanding that religious belief is sometimes harmful, for example, religious neurotics, deviant behaviour, bigotry, wars of religion.

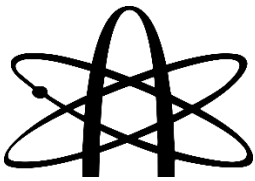
Certain anecdotal evidence widely supports Freudian experiences of oppressive religious belief and associative negative psychological effects.

However, such evidence is often selective.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

Component 2: Philosophy of Religion

AO2



Theme 2: Challenges to religious belief – Religious belief as a product of the human mind

Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:

- How far religious belief can be considered a neurosis.
- The adequacy of Freud's explanation of religious belief.
- The extent to which Jung was more positive than Freud about the idea of God.
- The effectiveness of empirical approaches as critiques of Jungian views on religion.
- The success of atheistic arguments against religious belief.
- The extent to which religious responses to New Atheism have been successful

Conclusion to the challenge by psychology to religious belief

<http://www.scandalon.co.uk/philosophy/psychology.htm>

Hick argues that the verdict that religion can be explained away by psychology is 'not proven'. While Freud and Jung offered valuable insights into the mechanisms that lead to religious belief, there is nothing compelling in either account to lead us to conclude that religion is a construct of mental activity.

Evaluating Freud

- **How far religious belief can be considered a neurosis.**
- **The adequacy of Freud's explanation of religious belief.**

Religion is a neurosis and is an adequate explanation.

- He believed that religion is used to oppress people and stated that humans have "*overrated its necessity for mankind.*"
- For Freud, the illusion of religion prevents humans from maturing.
- Humans need, he argued, to recognise religion for an illusion in order to make social progress.
- Religion is holding humanity back and it is only by rejecting religion that humans can progress.
- Rather than being satisfied with their easy to bear religious lives, humans should put their energies into their life on earth so that they can become mature.
- The evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins agrees with Freud and believes that religion has prevented the development of the sciences by refuting their claims and offering myths instead of facts.

Religion is not a neurosis and it is not an adequate explanation of religious belief

Freud does not provide any proof against religion – **Hans Kung** argued that Freud's interpretation of early religion is highly fictional; there is very little evidence to suggest the kind of totemism described by Freud was ever actually practiced by any society. Freud could have been carried away by the tide of enthusiasm for evolutionary ideas, looking for historical phases and making assumptions without supporting evidence

God could exist in reality and he cannot prove that this is not the case - Freud could be criticised for setting out to find a theory which supported his view, rather than forming his view on the basis of evidence. For example, he took for granted **Feuerbach's** projection idea and worked from that, with an assumption from the outset that there is no objective God. It is hardly surprising that he comes to the conclusion that religion is false, as this was his starting point. Even if it can be shown that religion can be wish-fulfilment, an infantile expression of an illusion, this does not mean that always is. Humanity's profound desire for God and for eternal life does not prove that these things exist, but it does not prove they do not exist either. Perhaps, if there is a God, it is not unlikely that he would satisfy our needs.

Belief in God can be very much influenced by a child's relationship with his or her father, but this does not mean it always is, or that God therefore does not exist.

Many believers would say that religion does give them happiness in their lives and that, far from promoting social injustice; religious groups actively strive to promote equality in the world.

Freud does not really understand the religious experience - He himself admits that he is not capable of relating to those who claim to have had ecstatic and mystical experiences. Believers feel that these experiences are extremely important and it could be said that Freud is wrong to dismiss something that he does not understand. Freud's atheism is in the end a hypothesis.

Issues for analysis and evaluation

To what extent can religious belief be considered a neurosis?

It is true that Freud's work treating patients with a neuroses drew his attention to their obsessions as having parallels with religion. In particular, the ritualistic nature of religious activity mirrored aspects of a compulsive obsessive neurosis. Therefore, it was not unreasonable to think that the same cause lay behind both, namely repressed memories. There is a clear correlation here and certainly signs of neurosis.

In addition, Freud argued that there were two universal sources of religious ideas.

One was the unconscious racial memories of the slaughter of the primal father. This involved a supposedly subconscious memory of events in human history or prehistory. The strength of this proposal is that Darwinian evolutionary theory clearly supported the primal horde theory and totemism. In support of his argument, Freud considered the Eucharist as a clear development of a totemic meal and clear parallels can be seen.

The second source was seen to be the early childhood experiences of our own parents which he connected to a sexual trauma and that he called the Oedipus complex. This is a little more difficult to support directly as it tends to rely upon our interpretation of religious stories but it can certainly be seen in aspects of Hinduism such as myths surrounding Ganesh or Ganapati, for example.

Both sources suggest that there is an underlying neurosis to certain aspects of religious belief and practice.

Furthermore, Freud's case studies such as Little Hans reaffirmed Freud's view that religion was an outward expression of inner psychological conflict. The conflict is an imbalance in the personality that is reflected in certain neurotic behaviour akin to religious activity. The characteristic of a neurosis is a reawakening of repressed trauma which is accompanied by compulsive obsessional impulses. This can clearly be seen in the ritualistic and liturgical aspects of many religions.

It could be suggested, then, that this all fits exactly with Freud's understanding of the origin of religion. Therefore, religion is a neurotic illness that affected all people. Freud's position that it is a mental illness and therefore harmful is directly related to his understanding of neuroses.

Freud also suggested that religion would eventually die out and be replaced by science. The evidence from the rise of atheism and the argument that people are moving away from religion in the 21st century would appear to support this.

AO2 Activity

As you read through this section try to do the following:

1. Pick out the different lines of argument that are presented in the text and identify any evidence given in support.
2. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
3. Think of any questions you may wish to raise in response to the arguments.

This Activity will help you to start thinking critically about what you read and help you to evaluate the effectiveness of different arguments and from this develop your own observations, opinions and points of view that will help with any conclusions that you make in your answers to the AO2 questions that arise.

However, the argument is not without challenges. Whilst it is appreciated that there is evidence to support Freud's views, the general feeling is that this evidence is not really 'scientific' in that it is not representative of the whole picture. Some see Freud as 'selective' in his evidence, some see his evidence as questionable and there are those who question the nature of the conclusions that he drew.

For instance, many challenge Freud's conclusions on the basis of a lack of real evidence. Although Darwin argued for the primal horde theory, there is little evidence to support it today in the field of biological and behavioural sciences and most think that there was a much greater variety of structure within the earliest groups and tribes.

Research also suggests that most people base their idea of God on their mother rather than their father. In particular, the work by Malinowski casts doubt on the Oedipus complex theory and in support the Hindu expressions of the feminine divine fully support this. In reality, religious and theological ideas about God are much more complex than Freud's theories suggest. Some would go as far to say that Freud's views about religion and God were very simplistic and theologically naïve at best and unsophisticated and ignorant at worst. Indeed, a more accurate explanation might be that it is religion that causes the Oedipus complex rather than vice versa.

Despite Freud's confidence in the powers of science his hypothesis was impossible to verify and so in that sense his work was unscientific. This is especially true due to the nature of psychology that interprets behaviour and draws conclusions that relate to how we perceive things in the first place. There appears to be no solid, physical evidence to support the conclusions.

Again, another line of argument would be that Freud was also inclined to ignore information unsuited to what he wanted to prove and preferred to select only those things that supported his views. This is not a scientific methodology. All variants and anomalies need to be accounted for through rigorous and repeated testing. All possible conclusions need to be considered and evaluated. Some would go as far to say that Freud simply discovered what he was looking for in the first place.

Another major criticism of Freud's views about religion as a neurosis is that he seems to misunderstand the essence of religion. He saw it merely in terms of sacred acts and rituals rather than a set of beliefs and doctrines that could be debated around evidence. Again, there could be argued to be a lack of respect and humility to Freud's approach in ignoring the maturity and complexity of religious traditions.

Overall, whilst there can be seen to be some correlation between religious behaviour and neurosis, the main issue to be resolved is how significant this is in the grand scheme of matters. In addition, it would be interesting to transpose Freud's interpretations of behaviour onto a military workplace, a school system or an office environment and see whether or not similar parallels of power, obsession and personal sense of duties can be explained through neuroses!

Study tip

As you work through the course do not forget that you can bring in other evidence from other areas to help with your evaluation skills. Jung is always a good source to use when evaluating Freud.

How adequate is Freud's explanation of religious belief?

Freud's explanations are a challenge to religious belief as it sees religion as a neurosis – a mental illness that is harmful. He sees religious belief as intellectually lacking since it cannot be rationally justified and it also devalues lives such that it makes people incapable of changing society for the better. However, is Freud right in his explanations of religious belief? Do his explanations stand up to scrutiny?

There do seem to be parallels between religious ritual and certain types of neurosis. Freud investigated neurotic behaviour through psychoanalysis and interpretation of dreams and concluded that the neurotic behaviour was an expression of the repressed trauma. Therefore, it seems reasonable that religion must have the same origin. The repressed traumas Freud identified for religion included the subconscious memory from prehistory of the primal horde and the totemic meals that expressed sexual guilt.

In addition, Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex identified another form of repression involving a son's sexual attraction to his mother but resenting the father. Support for these views could be found in Darwin's theory of the primal horde, Robertson Smith's work on the totemic system, and the Oedipus complex supported by the work of Kline. There can be no doubt that the 'father figure' features in religion and the ideal father in authority is exactly the idea of God who is able to answer human longings and desires.

However, many aspects of the evidence have been challenged including his fundamental approach. It is claimed that all Freud had were theories; there was no clear verifiable evidence or statistical data. In support of this line of argument many have questioned and rejected the validity of Freud's work both within modern psychology and beyond it.

Whilst Freud's work was claimed to be scientific, his selective methodologies and the validity of his conclusions have been questioned and challenged. Indeed, the theories themselves have come under attack, and been rejected, replaced or simply ridiculed.

In particular, Darwin's primal horde theory has been rejected and the idea of a suppressed memory of guilt that is universal has been ridiculed. These are crucial to Freud's overall system of thought and so without these there seems to be little of value left in his theories. Even the Oedipus complex has been found not to be universal as has been shown by the work of Malinowski.

Perhaps the most damning criticism of Freud's work is the fact that Freud was no academic in the field of theology and religious studies. Indeed, as has been echoed many times, his approach displays naivety and ignorance and his theories could be argued to be disrespectful to the advanced and complex nature of religious traditions.

For example, in a letter about the reading of books on religion, Freud wrote 'I am reading books without being really interested in them, since I already know the results, my instinct tells me that'. This view appears to border on arrogance and certainly appears to be unscientific.

As you read through this section try to do the following:

1. Pick out the different lines of argument that are presented in the text and identify any evidence given in support.
2. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
3. Think of any questions you may wish to raise in response to the arguments.

This Activity will help you to start thinking critically about what you read and help you to evaluate the effectiveness of different arguments and from this develop your own observations, opinions and points of view that will help with any conclusions that you make in your answers to the AO2 questions that arise.

In addition, Freud's prediction that religion would die out as science took over does not seem to have been fulfilled. Although there may be a rise in atheism, there is also a resurgence of religious traditions in a great variety of forms throughout the world today. There are also aspects of religion that Freud's theories are not able to explain. For instance, how do the theories account for Buddhism?

Overall, there could be argued to be alternative explanations that are far more successful in challenging religion than those of Freud. Jung was much more respectful about religion but at the same times challenged aspects of it in his theories. The proposal of the idea of a 'God of gaps' is a better explanation of religious traditions for many or simply the explanation that religion serves a simple human need as a source of comfort and hope in light of the unknown.

Study tip

It is vital for AO2 that you actually discuss arguments and not just explain what someone may have stated. Try to ask yourself, 'was this a fair point to make?', 'is the evidence sound enough?', 'is there anything to challenge this argument?', 'is this a strong or weak argument?' Such critical analysis will help you develop your evaluation skills.

Key quote

It seems that the verdict must be 'not proven'; ... the Freudian theory of religion may be true but it has not been shown to be so. **(Hick)**

Key quote

Freud's theories are archaic and obsolete. **(Western)**

1. Sample question and marking scheme from Eduqas

Give an example or supporting evidence for each point – use booklet 3, the previous pages and your own research

'Freud simply misunderstood religious belief.' Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Candidates could include some or all of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.

- He ignored the benefits of religion, for example stimulating social altruism, maintaining morality, developing human potential and sense of contentment.

e.g Christian charity

- He was biased because of his rejection of religious faith. Freud never considered more liberal interpretations of religion and cited most of his criticisms on conservative expressions of religious belief.

Many modern Christians . .

- Anthropological studies used by Freud have been proved to be inaccurate; not all religions regard God as 'father figure'; not all people are religious. In fact, taken to their logical extension, Freud's promotion of atheism as a preferred system is in itself a rejection of the father figure (i.e. God), in which case his criticism is contradictory and self-defeating.

Trobriand islanders . . .

- Freud fails to deal with non-theistic religion. No consideration is given to religions such as Buddhism which do not depend on a 'father figure' god.

- Religion meets human biological needs and relieves human frustrations and anxieties. Positive effects from sublimation can be found in the expression of religious rituals that can enable individuals and society to be more cohesive and productive.

- Totemism is neither universal nor the earliest form of human development. Freud's basis for many of his psychological theories has since been debunked.

E.E. Evans Pritchard . . .

- His 'illusory' theory was supported by studies of children's concepts of God; however, it does not take into account the 'maturing' of religious beliefs and concepts of God.

Little Hans

However . . .

- His work led to greater recognition of the subconscious, group behaviour, dangers of guilt, etc.
 - It also led to an understanding that religious belief is sometimes harmful, for example, religious neurotics, deviant behaviour, bigotry, wars of religion.

Religious attitudes to women throughout history . . .

The crusades . . .

- Certain anecdotal evidence widely supports Freudian experiences of oppressive religious belief and associative negative psychological effects. However, such evidence is often selective.

Religions have oppressed LGBT communities

- *Candidates may contrast with Jungian ideas that demonstrate religion is necessary for psychological health and therefore Freud misunderstood religious belief.*

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

2. 'Freud adequately demonstrates religious belief is a neurosis.' Evaluate this view. 30 marks

Introduction – what is meant by adequately demonstrates?

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He adequately demonstrates that religious belief is a neurosis . . .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He does not adequately demonstrate that religious belief is a neurosis . . .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation – which argument is the most convincing?

In conclusion,

Evaluating Jung

- The extent to which Jung was more positive than Freud about the idea of God.
- The effectiveness of empirical approaches as critiques of Jungian views on religion.

Overview of Jung from <http://journalpsyche.org/jungian-model-psyche/>

'Few people have had as much influence on modern psychology as Carl Jung; we have Jung to thank for concepts like *extroversion and introversion*, *archetypes*, modern dream analysis, and the *collective unconscious*. Psychological terms coined by Jung include the archetype, *the complex*, *synchronicity*, and it is from his work that the [Myers-Briggs Type Indicator](#) (MBTI) was developed, a popular staple of personality tests today.

Among Jung's most important work was his in-depth analysis of the psyche, which he explained as follows: "*By psyche I understand the totality of all psychic processes, conscious as well as unconscious,*" separating the concept from conventional concept of the mind, which is generally limited to the processes of the conscious brain alone.

Jung believed that the *psyche is a self-regulating system*, rather like the body, one that seeks to maintain a balance between opposing qualities while constantly striving for growth, a process Jung called "*individuation*".

Jung saw the psyche as something that could be divided into component parts with complexes and archetypal contents personified, in a metaphorical sense, and functioning rather like secondary selves that contribute to the whole.'

Recap - Critiques of Jungian views on religion – See page 28 of Booklet 3 (Theme 2)

The Theory of Archetypes –

Jung's idea of religious experience –

Reductionism –

Individuation

Is this a religious process? If it is concerned with the Self, is it really about God? For example, Jung argues that the image of Christ is a symbol of wholeness to help balance our minds.

However, for a religious believer, Christ is so much more than this. He is an historical person and the Son of God, not just a symbol of the mind.

Furthermore, how does Jung account for people with no religious belief or affiliation who have balanced mental health? If his theory of individuation is to be accepted and linked to religion then everyone would need some form of religion in their lives; this is not the case.

To what extent has religion been successful in response to psychology's challenges to religious belief?

Both Freud's and Jung's theories challenge the traditional view of God as an external being. However, religion has responded and raised doubts about the validity of these theories. For instance, religion is generally seen to be positive and of value rather than a mental illness and harmful. Freud fails to explain away God since he ignores the evidence for the existence of an external God. Indeed, many challenge Freud's theories that are based on the primal horde by pointing out that there is no evidence that such primal hordes ever existed.

Jung's theories have also been challenged. For instance, uniform images can be explained by uniform experiences rather than archetypes. His theories are also unverifiable since it cannot be demonstrated that there is a collective unconscious which contains the archetypes. If Jung is correct then it is not clear why atheism exists. The extent to which religion has been successful will be dependent upon the persuasiveness of the responses to the challenges.

The extent to which Jung was more positive than Freud about the idea of God

Freud is usually portrayed as being negative about the idea of God whilst Jung is seen as more positive. However, this is far from agreed as many see both Freud and Jung as equally negative.

Freud likened religion to mental illness. It was just another form of neurosis (in particular a sexual neurosis) where both the religious worshipper and the obsessional neurotic spend hours carrying out certain rituals. If the rituals are omitted or not performed in the correct way then the person becomes anxious and apprehensive. Therefore, just as the obsessional neurotic needs therapy and treatment to rid themselves of this neurosis, so also the religious worshipper needs therapy to free them from their neurosis. Seen in this light, religion is harmful and limiting.

Although Freud considers different causes of the neurosis (primal horde theory, totemism, Oedipus complex, father-figure), they all share the same theme – the neurosis is the result of repression.

Religion is not something that heals and makes whole but rather something that needs healing and curing. Religion is infantile and can lead to people not taking action to better society. They turn to pray to an omnipotent benevolent father-figure rather than act themselves. Freud sees the idea of God as a creation of the individual human mind and its neurotic desires.

In contrast, Jung appears to present a much more positive view of religion. Jung rejects the idea of religion as a sexual neurosis and argues that God is an expression of the collective unconscious.

For Jung, religion is positive. It is an evolving process in the development of the psychic personality – integrating the conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche. Freud saw religion as a mixture of guilt-ridden repressions and obsessions expressed through ritual. Jung, however, saw religion as a natural and legitimate dimension of psychic activity. Religious images are simply images of the deeper self and through these religious images the personality achieves its goal of integration. Religion is therefore positive and beneficial.

Indeed, it is necessary for human psychic development.

Some make out a case for both Freud and Jung being equally negative about the idea of God. Like Freud, Jung recognised a relation between religion and neurosis. Jung asserted that 'among all his patients in the second half of life there is not one whose main problem is not related to his attitude towards religion'.

Neither Freud nor Jung understood religion in its traditional sense. Freud viewed it in terms of rituals whilst Jung understood it in terms of religious symbols and religious experiences.

Jung also suggested that authentic religious experiences were possible. He borrowed the term 'numinous' from Rudolf Otto but 'extended its meaning ... by conferring a numinous quality upon the experience of the archetype' (Ellenberger). However, neither Freud nor Jung claimed that God did not exist.

Some see truths of religion in Freud's claim that the present is a direct and unavoidable consequence of the past and the experience of repression is repeated in every individual. This could be seen to bear some links with Christianity in terms of the Fall and original sin. Therefore, there are some areas of Freud's theories that, although they could be suggested to be negative, would more accurately be described as being realistic.

Freud also highlighted the struggle between the superego and the id, which has parallels in religions with the struggle between the spiritual and the unspiritual. This is not necessarily a negative thing but could be seen as a learning experience and one that helps a person to grow emotionally and spiritually.

In comparison, Jung argued that each of us has a Self-archetype and the Self most closely approximates to the divine. Individuation is innate to individuals and this could be seen to have parallels with the idea of human beings created in the image of God and having a spiritual aspect or imprint as part of their being.

Indeed, a Jesuit theologian, Raymond Hostie, wrote that Jung had 'rediscovered the religious and the sacred and got rid of an overwhelming rationalism'. (*Religion and the Psychology of Jung*, 1957)

Overall, it would be unwise perhaps to suggest that Freud was positive about religion; however, although it is clear that Jung could be argued to be more positive, there are areas of Freud's theories that are not overtly negative.

Study tip

It is vital for AO2 that you actually discuss arguments and not just explain what someone may have stated. Try to ask yourself, 'was this a fair point to make?', 'is the evidence sound enough?', 'is there anything to challenge this argument?', 'is this a strong or weak argument?' Such critical analysis will help you develop your evaluation skills

3. 'Jung was more positive than Freud about the idea of God.' Evaluate this view. 30
Complete the plan and add the missing words - Freud, unconscious, infantile, positive, archetype

Introduction

Jung was more positive than Freud about the idea of God

As Jung provides a theory of religion and psychology which is less damaging to religion, he has been praised by religious thinkers:

Raymond Hostie – Jesuit theologian

Paul Tillich –Theologian

Charles Hanna – Jungian

Jung claimed the experiences of the power or fatherliness of God were not a sign of _____ or neurotic behaviour, as they were for _____, but a right recognition of the shared archetype of the God-image. The father image of God is universal and inescapable; God is not a substitute for the infant's own father, but the human father is the infant's first substitute for the _____ of God. Jung has highlighted that religion can have a _____ effect on a person's mental health and well-being. A particular strength of this approach is the belief that every human, no matter what their culture, has a basic understanding of the God archetype. If this is true then Jung's theory of the God archetype gains support from well over a billion people.

Religion helps to balance the _____ and conscious mind which leads to happiness and self-fulfilment. This theory is in line with many religious ideas about God. Becoming closer to God and having a relationship with God leads to happiness and self fulfilment.

Freud said religion was a dangerous neurosis caused by sexual trauma . .

No he wasn't more positive than Freud about the idea of God

Reductionism

Despite Jung's positive view of religion he still believed it was a product of the human mind . . .

Martin Buber claimed that

As well as challenging religion Freud also claimed that . . .

Conclusion

To what extent are critiques of empirical approaches effective critiques of Jungian views of religion?

Empirical evidence includes the record of one's direct observations or experiences, and these can be analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Jung's methodology involved the inclusion of descriptions of certain observable psychic 'facts' such as dreams and visions. They are 'facts' in that they provide knowledge of our own psychic world.

Jung maintained that using subjective personal experiences were valid as an empirical method, since the imaging of reality by the psyche was the only reality for the individual who creates it.

However, his methodology was questioned, not just because of the areas he included as valid evidence such as dreams and beliefs, but because he derived from them metaphysical explanations, such as the collective unconscious and archetypes.

Jung's approach was, and continues to be, challenged and accused of being unscientific. Michael Palmer notes that in 1968, the co-founder of the Jung Institute in Zurich, called for a 'more scientific approach in Jungian psychology'. Similarly, Mary Mattoon argued that these psychic 'facts' were 'useful in the context of discovery, but not in the context of justification'.

The problem appears to be that whilst empirical approaches can in themselves be criticised for being selective, unrepresentative, not entirely proof and subject to interpretation, there also appears to be another layer of similar criticism when applied to the Jungian view of religion because there is no empirical proof in the sense of physical proof. However, it should always be remembered that just as any physical experiment has an element of observation and interpretation, so too, Jung's methodology is also based in the two same principles of observation and interpretation.

However, alternatively one could argue that a basic test of a scientific statement is whether it is falsifiable. Since Jung's evidence is derived from inner psychological states then the 'observation' of this is not really the same as observing at which temperature water boils.

In reality, Jung is concerned about what the state of mind is that is actually being experienced by the subject; he is not concerned whether the subjective experience has any grounding in a reality that is separate from the subject. This is where, for many, the second layer of investigation is removed from scientific method. Whatever is derived from the experience is subjective.

This would mean that truth in these circumstances is not about whether the experience corresponds to reality but about whether the subjective experience was a genuine experience.

For example, it is not the historical Jesus that is important for many Christians when considering the Christ of faith. Christian experience and the experience of the early Christian church is the interpretation of events that for many belong to the realm of faith and not science. It is this experience that, although real, is not necessarily 'real' in the empirical understanding of what reality consists of and is therefore not verifiable through scientific method. For thinkers like Jung and Rudolph Bultmann, a Christian theologian, the issues of what is 'real' and what is 'historical' are entirely different.

Some would argue that these criticisms are sufficient to reject Jung's views about religion. His methodology is flawed and so his conclusions are invalid. However, they appear to be no more invalid than those of religious believers.

Others are more reluctant to dismiss Jung's explanations. They draw attention to Jung's study of comparative mythology, the findings of which give support for his theories. Indeed, many see his theories as a bridge between the scientific and the religious that is both respectful and non-judgemental by avoiding issues of empirical verification.

Overall, one could coherently argue that even if the evidence is not verifiable, Jung's theories still give an explanation for religious beliefs that is consistent with the evidence.

Study tip

It is vital for AO2 that you actually discuss arguments and not just explain what someone may have stated. Try to ask yourself, 'was this a fair point to make?', 'is the evidence sound enough?', 'is there anything to challenge this argument?', 'is this a strong or weak argument?' Such critical analysis will help you develop your evaluation skills

4. The effectiveness of empirical approaches as critiques of Jungian views on religion.

What are empirical approaches?

How can they be criticised?

What is Jung's view of religion?

What was Jung's method?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empirical approaches are effective critiques of Jungian views on religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empirical approaches are not effective critiques of Jungian views on religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation

In conclusion,

Evaluating atheism and New Atheism

- The success of atheistic arguments against religious belief.
- The extent to which religious responses to New Atheism have been successful

The success of atheistic arguments against religious belief

New Atheism presents atheism as the only option for the serious, progressive, thinking person. Its proponents have focussed on the argument that science has disproved God. They claim that advances in science have now eliminated God from any explanation required of the universe. Science will eventually explain everything. It is certainly true that science has provided some answers in terms of natural explanations for which previously God had been the explanation.

However, science has serious limitations. The natural sciences are beyond the scope of non-empirical notions such as value and meaning. Science cannot tell us what is right. New Atheism would challenge this response. Atheists such as Sam Harris in his book *The Moral Landscape* argues that moral values are about promoting human well-being and science tells us what promotes well-being. Therefore, science can tell us what is morally right.

Another area connected with science that has been significant in challenging religious belief is empiricism, which is an important aspect of the scientific method. The claim is that God is not open to investigation by means of the senses since God is not a physical object. Science suggests that sense experience is the ultimate source of all our concepts and knowledge. Therefore, scientific theories are based only on evidence while religion, they claim, runs away from evidence. Atheism is rational and scientific while religion is irrational and superstitious.

However, this approach assumes that anything that cannot be verified or falsified is mere private opinion or belief or even delusion. But arguing about the existence of God and the meaning of life is surely open to rational debate even if it is beyond the scientific method.

The perceived failure of the arguments for God that Dawkins discusses in *The God Delusion* raises doubts about God's existence. However, some might challenge this, drawing attention to the apparent 'fine-tuning' that the universe exhibits. At the very least it is consistent with a religious view of the universe.

Rationality is a core part of New Atheism in that it claims that any alternative view is not rational. They claim that religious belief is irrational. However, this is to deny the historical evidence for the faith. For example, in Christianity there is a case to be answered regards the resurrection of Jesus. Even though both sides may disagree it would still be considered a rational debate.

One of the areas where New Atheism has attacked religious belief is the claim that human beings have invented God and that the God they have invented is evil. Dawkins describes the God of the Old Testament as 'arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction; jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.'

1. Highlight one strength of the first paragraph
2. Highlight five evaluative words used in this essay.
3. Highlight any scholars mentioned.
4. Can you add any more scholars? If so, add them to the essay.
5. What is empiricism?
6. Define rationality.
7. Can you give an example from the Bible to support the view that God is evil

However, New Atheism's depiction of religion has been a caricature. It is accused of misrepresenting religion and religious teaching, choosing to focus only on those who are extreme and resort to violence. If God is a human invention as they argue, then surely that means human beings are the cause of the violence not God. New Atheism also fails to be realistic about the darker side of Atheism (e.g. Lenin and his attempt to eradicate religious belief through violence). New Atheists also ignore the teaching of non-violence and forgiveness in world faiths.

Atheism's attack on religious belief has also centred around the existence of a multitude of world faiths. Not only do they contradict each other yet at the same time claim divine revelation; but also, it is argued that which religion you follow largely depends on where you are born. It has little to do with truth.

However, religions do not all have the same beliefs. Indeed, people convert from one faith into a different faith. There are great differences between Asian and Western faiths – for example between Buddhism and the Abrahamic faiths.

It seems clear that atheism has not gone unchallenged in its arguments against religious beliefs.

The extent to which religious responses to New Atheism have been successful

The attack by New Atheism on religious beliefs has not gone unchallenged. New Atheism argues that science has disproved God and religious believers are in denial about the advances of science to explain the universe. However, it is interesting that some of the voices challenging New Atheism have come from scientists themselves. Indeed, many scientists hold a religious belief and see no contradiction between science and religion. Professor Lennox, a Christian, has held many public debates with Dawkins yet neither have been persuaded to change their views.

Stephen Gould commented that based on the religious views of leading evolutionary biologists, 'Either half my colleagues are enormously stupid, or else the science of Darwinism is fully compatible with conventional religious beliefs – and equally compatible with atheism.' Gould was making the point that nature can be interpreted in a theistic or in an atheistic way – but demands neither of these. As Alister McGrath notes 'Both are genuine intellectual possibilities for science'.

The religious response to New Atheism is that they ignore the limitations of science. The natural sciences use the scientific methodology of observation and experiment, which are empirical in their approach. But empiricism cannot speculate about realities beyond the observable world.

However, it is also true, that many scientists are not religious and see religions' world-view as very different from their 'scientific' understanding. They might well claim that the religious world-view includes aspects that cannot be known and so question their inclusion.

New Atheism attacks faith, claiming it is a belief that is held in the total absence of evidence, whilst science is based on evidence and so compels us to accept the truth. Alister McGrath challenges this view of both faith and science. He accuses the New Atheists of failing to make the distinction between 'the total absence of supporting evidence' and 'the absence of totally supporting evidence'. Faith is acting on what you have good reason to believe is true. The evidence in science does not lead automatically to one conclusion. For example, scientists disagree about whether there is a single universe or a series of universes.

However, it might be claimed that the truth of the scientific disagreement can be resolved in the future, whilst the religious claims cannot. In response, the religious person might argue that if there is a God, then there is a possible eschatological verification or God may even make himself known on earth or through religious experience.

Religious responses about the arguments for the existence of God point out that they are not proofs nor were ever claimed to be. They are *a posteriori* demonstrations of the coherence of faith. Nevertheless, religious believers such as the Christian William Lane Craig and Richard Swinburne have recently defended the traditional arguments for God, showing them to be justifiable rather than proven. It is also noted by Alister McGrath that the cosmology of the 21st century is much more sympathetic to Christian belief than a century ago.

How far the recent reformulations for the existence of God are persuasive is debateable. The jury is still out.

Another major attack on religion from New Atheism has been the charge that religion is the root of all evil, especially regarding violence. The religious response has been to challenge the use of the word 'religion' and to challenge the claim that religion causes violence. 'Religion' is a false universal in that 'religion' as such does not exist, but rather individual religions exist. The individual religions also have teachings about peace, non-violence and forgiveness as major aspects of their beliefs. New Atheists focus just on a small group of extremists and label all with the same charge. However, it cannot be denied that religious belief seems to have led some to such violent acts as suicide bombings. In response, it is said that the violence is more politically inspired than religiously motivated. But is that true? The letters left behind by such people may suggest otherwise.

If anything, the attacks by atheism seem to have led to a strengthening of religious belief rather than a decline. Religious believers have been forced to address the charges and it has provided an unexpected public platform and welcome interest in the whole area of religious beliefs. Faiths have had opportunities to express their beliefs and to justify them. One wonders if it would have been more effective for atheism to say nothing rather than engage in high profile debate. Many books have appeared defending the rationality of religious belief. However, it is also true that traditional religion if measured by attendance at worship is declining, at least in the West, although there has been growing interest in Asian faiths.

It does seem that the religious responses have been successful since New Atheism has failed to create the knockout blow to religion that it had sought. Instead, possibly because of its caricatures or possibly because of religious responses, New Atheism seems in decline. To many it has come to be seen as a form of intolerant fundamentalism that focussed more on ridiculing opposition than engaging in intellectual debate.

5. 'Atheistic arguments effectively disprove religious belief.' Evaluate this view

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atheism is more effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious belief is more effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate – which one is more effective?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on scientific method • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems with scientific method 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

In conclusion,

6. 'Religious responses to New Atheism have been entirely successful.' Evaluate this view.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religious responses to New Atheism are entirely successful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religious responses to New Atheism are not entirely successful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate – which argument is most successful
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
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In conclusion,

