

No part of the candidate's evidence in this exemplar material may be presented in an external assessment for the purpose of gaining an NZQA qualification or award.

SUPERVISOR'S USE ONLY

S

93603A



Draw a cross through the box (X) if you have NOT written in this booklet

☐

+

TOP SCHOLAR EXEMPLAR



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Scholarship 2025 Religious Studies

Time allowed: Three hours

ANSWER BOOKLET

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

Answer ONE question from Question Booklet 93603Q, and write your answer in this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–20 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

Do not write in the margins (///). This area will be cut off when the booklet is marked.

YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.

PLANNING

A) Religion Presents ^{Transcend} Truth of Universal Identity (vs Modern DEI; Foucault (Post modernism))

B) Understanding A) promotes loving the "Other" and Social Justice
 Levinas
 Imago Dei
 "Born Again"

Organisational - ^{Deron Navon} Church 2019
 Individual - White Center
 - Martin Luther King Jr

but is the Imago Dei true (a given)?

C)

C)

Select (✓) ONE essay question to answer.

☒ Question One

☐ Question Two

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is arguably one of the most impactful movements of the modern day. Founded upon the pursuits of equality among categories (diversity, inclusion) and equality of outcome (equity), the DEI movement has spearheaded social justice in the 21st century.

~~Often, the principles of DEI come into conflict with religious traditions. Because of how varying religious traditions can be (i.e. Abrahamic theism vs. Buddhist atheism), these debates can often take upon different flavours and topics. However, this essay resolves to distill the nature of the dispute between DEI and religious traditions into one overarching question: the nature of~~

While the two have historically been harbingers of social justice, the principles of DEI come into conflict with religious tradition. Because of the vast variation between different religions (e.g. Abrahamic theism vs. Buddhist atheism), these debates can often take on different flavours and topics. However, this essay resolves to distill the nature of the dispute between DEI and religious traditions into one overarching question: the nature of identity.

This nuanced question will be answered ~~with~~ three different headers:

~~1) A)~~

A) ~~Understanding~~ that religion also promotes social justice, ~~the~~ goal of DEI

B) ~~Explaining the difference in~~

B) Explaining how the DEI movement differs from religious traditions concerning truth and identity

C) Showing how these ~~ideological~~ philosophical disagreements can reflect where social justice differs between religion and DEI.

Firstly, Premise A).

While it is a given that "diversity, equity, and inclusion" promotes social justice (the goal of DEI), it is important to show how religious traditions have historically done the same.

The Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas proposed the idea of the "face of the Other". He describes all humans as having this face, not just a physical but "a living presence — it is expression." (Totality and Infinity, 1961) He ties in the concept of "infinity", that the face of the Other's infiniteness overwhelms the ~~self's~~ selfishness and ego,

calling the self to a natural response of selflessness to the face of the Other, which is uncategorisable ~~and not reducible~~ (remember categories for later, it is very important!) and "not reducible to knowledge." (Totality and Infinity, 1961). Because of this calling to selflessness, Levinas states that "The idea of infinity is [...] the very possibility of the ethical." (Totality and Infinity, 1961). ~~This shows~~ Levinas' concepts of natural selflessness are reflective ^(to an extent) of the wider Jewish religion, particularly the more Gentile-welcoming ~~Jewish reformed~~ Reformed Judaism. This acceptance of the "Other" is the first step of religion to achieve social justice.

In Christianity, this takes on the form of the Imago Dei. This is the belief in the inherent truth that all humans are made in the Imago Dei (image of God), and thus should be afforded basic respect and dignity. ~~The Sistine Chapel Ceiling fresco, painted by Michelangelo, shows~~ The Sistine Chapel Ceiling fresco, ~~the~~ work of Michelangelo, depicts the moment that God touches Adam's hand giving him the Imago Dei. ~~Scripturally~~ However, though ~~hasn't actually touching~~ Adam already looks perfectly like a man (in line with the traditional Renaissance idealism), he is not yet truly a

human. Why is this? It is because the Imago Dei is unseen; it is ~~not~~ a physical concept, but the living fact that ~~all men~~, ~~every human~~ everyone with the Imago Dei, every human, ~~is~~ ~~called~~ into communion with God". (Second Vatican Council, 1962-65). Thus, Michelangelo's masterpiece is a depiction of the concept of the Imago Dei. Scripturally, the Imago Dei is referenced in Genesis 1:26, where God resolves to "create man in ~~Our~~ Image, under ~~Our~~ Likeness, so they may rule over ~~all~~ the earth." (Gen 1:26) The Imago Dei and the Face of the Other, as truths, similarly call religious practitioners to live selflessly, ~~from~~ a stopping stone to promoting social justice.

~~But Practice~~ Of course, ~~real~~ examples are needed beyond the theoretical to show that religion promotes social justice. They can be both organisational and individual, showing the nuances of social justice and the wide acceptance of social justice in religion.

Organisationally, there are many examples of huge organisations and groups coming together to support social justice. For example, the 1891 ~~Catholic~~ papal encyclical "Rerum Novarum" was published by Pope Leo XIII. The Catholic encyclical, in the face of two mainstream ideologies

(socialism and capitalism), bowed down to neither and criticised both. Pope Leo advocated for great reforms, especially the main issue of the day: workers' rights. This progressive attitude highlights the Church's openness to social justice. But action can be taken too, not just writings. After the 2019 Christchurch Mosque Shootings — a national tragedy for New Zealand — the Jewish community stepped in. Standing in solidarity and ~~understanding~~ ~~accepting the~~ selflessly catering to the Others (Muslims) needs before its own, ~~the~~ Jewish community all the way in ~~the~~ USA raised a million dollars to send to the victims. The Jewish head of the international Jewish Agency for Israel, Isaac Herzog, stated that ~~he~~ "We ~~also~~ stand united with [the Muslim Community] against the scourges of terrorism and racism." This shows not just an incredible commitment to social justice, but the unifying power of religion transcending national boundaries.

Individually, religion inspires social justice ~~too~~ on a personal level too. For example, Martin Luther King Jr. was the face of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's. He was inspired by his inner Christian beliefs like the Imago Dei, which motivated him to say

that "We are called to be people of conviction, not conformity; of moral nobility, not of solid respectability." The audacious advocacy of MLK, inspired by religious traditions, reaped huge wins for social justice such as the 1964 Civil Rights Act, 1965 Voting Rights Act, and the 1968 Fair Housing Act.

Religious traditions certainly promote ~~of~~ social justice. This can be both organisational and individual. ~~inspired or~~ Therefore, it could be said that in terms of the ends (achieving social justice), religious traditions and the DEI movement both adhere to this truth. This indicates that the dispute goes beyond actions, but is rooted in different beliefs around why social justice should be achieved. This brings us to ~~the~~ Section B).

B) Explaining the difference between the DEI Movement and religious traditions concerning truth and identity.

~~The~~ argument The great assumption behind the entirety of Section A) is ~~the~~ ~~both~~ (concerning religion) is the broad belief in a universal identity, such as the Imago Dei

or the Face of the Other. ~~What if this~~ If this identity is simply ... untrue, then the principles of religion promoting social justice fail to hold. In this section, the differences between DEI and Religious movements will be highlighted, mainly around their approach to the idea of truth.

In religious traditions, it is believed that there is an objective truth. ~~For~~ Christianity, Jesus Christ is very direct with his statements. He announces that "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:32) Later, he clarifies that "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6) ~~These show~~ that These quotes demonstrate that the belief in objective truth is a requirement for foundational religious dogma (like salvation through Jesus the "truth"). In Buddhism, the teacher Thích Nhất Hạnh states that the "Four Noble Truths" are "the path which causes us to refrain from doing things that cause us to suffer...to reach salvation."

Even in an Atheistic religion like Buddhism, contrasting the theistic Christianity, the beliefs in an objective truth to salvation still holds. ~~This shows that the religious~~ Because of these beliefs in objectivity, concepts

like the Imago Dei are inherently true. Thus, under this premise, it is easier to understand the ~~religious conviction~~ deep religious convictions of MLK or ~~Maori~~ Maori activist Whina Cooper, who told reporter Michael King in an interview that "I have believed in The Lord all my life. He has been my strength..." (1982) The religious traditions' belief objective truth provide a bedrock for concepts of a Universal identity like the Imago Dei or Face of the Other to proliferate. Thus, it ~~is~~ ~~conclusive~~ to say that the belief in objective truth is the root of religious social thinking and social justice.

However, taking away this belief, it then becomes easier to understand the DEI position on social justice. This position can be best summed up in the writings of the foundational Postmodernist philosopher Michel Foucault. Foucault believed in a linguistic position called poststructuralism. This poststructuralism is the belief that words are only defined in terms of their relation to what they are not. For example, the "sun" is only the "sun" because it is not "moon", "sky", or "heat".

Because of how quickly these meanings can hence change, Foucault concludes that "There is nothing in man stable enough... to serve as the basis of self-recognition or for understanding others." (1971), ~~furthermore, and~~ in contrast with Levinas' position that understanding the "Other" is natural and pre-conscious. Furthermore, Foucault ~~claims~~ stated that "There is no single, totalizing truth." (The Archaeology of Knowledge, 1969) This is because of Poststructuralism, as words of a "language" (the words we think by) change too quickly to approximate a truth.

Under this premise — that there is no objective truth — ~~it becomes to one~~ view religion less charitably with regard to social justice. Saying that "Power and knowledge imply each other," (Discipline and Punish, 1975) he describes religion as a "power... [that] ensures men's salvation by ensuring their obedience." (Religion and Culture, 1999) From a Postmodernist perspective, ideas like the afterlife or truth and salvation are part of a great power game. For example, Malcolm X viewed ~~White Ch~~ Christianity as "white" and stated that "Christianity has failed the negro," ~~showing~~ which would be a power dynamic. DEI, in this situation, would be focused on achieving

equity - ~~an~~ equality of outcome - between the two ~~categorised~~ ~~anti~~ categorised identities of white and black (unlike the universal identity espoused by religion). ~~For this~~ In this scenario, it seems that religious traditions don't stop or even condone discrimination and destroying social justice, while DEI helps fix these to achieve ~~social~~ justice.

However, there are problems in the Postmodernist position. Mainly, without an objective truth or moral guidance, it can be difficult to ascertain an ~~about~~ reason to pursue social justice at all. Pope John Paul II sums this up, ~~as~~ writing that "If there is no transcendent truth, there is no sure principle for the guarantee of just relations between nations." (Centesimus Annus, 1991). He gives an example of what Postmodernist thinking can do, reminding the reader that "The root of modern totalitarianism is ~~to~~ be found in the transcendent dignity of every person." (Centesimus Annus, 1991) This rings true to an extent. For example, in Nazi Germany (a totalitarian regime), the Jews were treated without dignity, nor any non-Aryans (note: a category). It could be said that categorising people could inhibit social justice, not help

if MLK spoke on this topic, saying that
 "Whenever men come to see others as things,
 it dehumanises them." (Strength to Love, 1963)
 Malcolm X reported on the fortitude of a universal
 identity during his Hajj, saying that "We
 were truly all the same, because their beliefs
 removed the 'white' from their minds, removed
 the 'white' from their behavior" (Letter from Mecca, 1964)
 stating the better livelihood and unity without
 Postmodernist and Foucaultian categorisation.
 Lastly, the assumption of Poststructuralism,
 the language theory upon which Foucault's and
 many Postmodernists' beliefs about truth,
 is less credible today. Thanks to developments
 like Noam Chomsky's "universal grammar", Poststructuralism
~~is usually not no longer~~ less credible
 today.

~~Though both have in~~ Ultimately,
 it is clear now that the two shore
~~disputing~~ beliefs about the nature of
 truth and identity. Both have assumptions
 inherent to them (i.e. belief in the ~~unseen~~
 or Poststructuralism) that make the dispute
 much ~~more~~ deeper and debatable.
 However, the fact remains that
 both do promote social justice.
 But how far do they do this, and
 what happens when ideas about social

justice come into conflict with each other? This brings us to Section C).

C) How the differences of B) can reflect the nuances of social justice between religion and DEL.

The sociologist Emile Durkheim often concerned himself with how religion could impact culture. Of great interest to him was that religion fosters a "collective consciousness", terming it the "consciousness of the consciousnesses," (The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, 1912) ~~that~~ ^{the} collective consciousness ("CC" from now on) is the ~~set~~ ^{source} of moral code and set of social norms that define a society. Durkheim observed that religion ~~produced~~ fostered a collective consciousness. When individuals existed or didn't conform to the CC, they ~~described~~ were thrown into what Durkheim described as "anomie", which could lead to deviant behaviours.

~~In terms of social~~

In Durkheimian terms, the ~~answer~~ DEI answer to this would be to accept ~~and~~ ~~into~~ the community, in line with the belief in inclusion of diverse groups. ~~However~~, This would mean changing the ~~collective~~ consensus to fit these groups and ideas into the religious society. Through this, equality of outcome (equity) would be achieved as ~~without it~~ they would all be treated the same.

In contrast, traditional Catholic teaching would object to this. For one, while

the ~~dominant~~ moral code and social norms (collective consciousness) ~~could~~ of religion could ~~certainly~~ be changed and reformed, ~~there it~~ (e.g. Rerum Novarum (1891)) it cannot be fully broken. If it were, no one would be in the CC and a state of "societal anomie" would ensue. An example of societal anomie is in the Biblical Book of Judges, when the Israelites were in turmoil for not obeying God. At the end of Judges, the writer starkly warns that "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (Judges 21:25) Without something to guide them (in religion, a CC), unfortunate times could commence. This could help explain the doggedness of the campaign, the same convictions of ~~the Vatican~~ that influenced MKK also inspired this ~~harrowing~~ experience for [redacted] and [redacted], seemingly rejecting the CC.

However, it could be unfair not to explain the Catholic position of [redacted] and [redacted], and gay marriage in general. It is a good example of "soft equity" (repha) versus "hard equity" (DEI). The document *Fiducia Supplicans*, approved by Pope Francis, allowed for the blessing of ~~social~~ same-sex unions as long as it

was clearly not a sacramental marriage, showcasing the reformist attitude of religion towards promoting social justice within the bounds of the CC. This ~~it called~~ can be referred to as "soft equity", clarifying the CC to become more inclusive without ~~bursting~~ the CC bubble. This urge to not burst it comes from the "argument from tradition". Catholics believe that divine revelation was fully realized ~~by~~ the end of the Apostolic Age (1st-century CE), and thus the knowledge from it is ~~all~~ that is needed to achieve ~~salvation~~ through truth. Called the "Deposit of the Faith", Catholic dogma cannot controvert it, such as the sacred sacrament of Marriage being between a man and a woman "for the procreation of children" (Aquinas, Summa Theologica), or St Paul's condemnation of same-sex activities in his epistles.

Before continuing, it is worth noting a potential assumption. The word "porneia" is used in the New Testament a lot. While some claim "porneia" doesn't include same-sex activity, it is not a sound challenge. The fact that "porneia" was used in the Jewish Septuagint (a contemporary document of the day, the Jewish Old

Testament) for same-sex activity ~~help~~ support this claim. Thus, the Deposit of the Faith does indeed condemn same-sex activity.

Continuing where ~~it~~ left off, ~~under~~ the premise that divine revelation ends ~~that~~ the Apostolic Age, homosexuality becomes a cross to bear for the individual. It is easy to simply adopt the category of the LGBT+ community or ~~the~~ ~~the~~ some other categorical identity, but ~~for the words of~~ lesbian activist Rosaria (who was "born again" and became Christian) Rosaria Butterfield, "~~For the~~ in Christ, temptation is not about some essential truth — and therefore should not become a term of selfhood or identity." (Openness Unhindered, 2015) While this affirms the Church's position on gay marriage, it could draw claims that religion promotes uniformity, ~~even~~ stifling diversity. In support of this, Malcolm X's "Letter from Mecca" even says that "We were truly all the same, because their beliefs..." (Letter from Mecca, 1964). ~~What~~ The main take away from this ~~is that~~ while religion promotes diversity within bounds of the CC, DEI promotes an unlimited level of diversity based upon ~~for~~ ~~conclusion~~ ideas of self-determined identity, at

the risk of the CC. On one hand, religion provides a limited level of equity ("soft equity, fiducial supplicants), in the hopes of an immaterial truth of salvation, an achievable outcome for all peoples (Imago Dei). On the other hand, the DEI movement promotes a perfect level of equity ("hard equity") giving everyone ~~material~~ equal material opportunity (Gay Marriage), in the ~~belief~~ of a lack of belief in the immaterial (Postmodernism).

In conclusion, the nature of the ~~debat~~ dispute between DEI demands and religious traditions is complex. As shown in Section A), the debate isn't a black-and-white DEI pro-social justice and a religious anti-social justice. Like the DEI movement, religion promotes social justice and inspired many of its leaders like MLK and Wanda Cooper. In particular, religion promotes a ~~much more~~ convincing position of solidarity, rooted in belief in the truth of universal identity. ~~However as shown in Section C),~~ However, this is the core debate between DEI and religion. It is not in the effects and idealization of social justice, but even deeper, concerning the core beliefs of the two positions surrounding

truth and identity. ~~The~~ From a religious perspective, there is an objective and transcendent truth that defines a universal identity. Examples of this belief in truth can be found in teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh or in John 8:32. Examples of universal identity include the Image Dei and Face of the Other.

However from a ~~different~~ perspective, there is no objective truth (see poststructuralism) and this allows for the proliferation of many diverse categorical identities. Even deeper, while religious traditions are immaterialist, the modern DEI movement is largely materialist, not believing in ideas like divine revelation.

93603A

Nuances like these, rooted into both sides, help explain their debates on topics particularly concerning the religion's "collective consciousness" (Durkheim) affecting the DEI's demands and the religious traditions' response. For example, DEI propagators would reject the immaterial Deposit of the Faith ~~while~~ religious people will accept it, affecting their response to [redacted]

in Section

E).

and [redacted]. Betty ~~born again~~ born again could cause even more differences between them like Rosanna Butterfield, causing enmity. The dispute between DEI and religious traditions centre around the debate of ~~truth, identity, and the very concept of the materiality of~~ truth and identity.