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General Certificate of Education
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GCE Philosophy PHIL3

Unit 3

Key Themes in Philosophy

Final

Mark Scheme

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GCE PHILOSOPHY UNIT 3 GENERIC MARK SCHEME

	Knowledge and Understanding	**Interpretation, Analysis and Application**	**Assessment and Evaluation**
	AO1	**AO2**	**AO3**
Level 5	**13–15 marks** Answers in this level provide a comprehensive, detailed and precise account of philosophical arguments, positions and concepts relevant to the question, demonstrating a full understanding of the issues raised.	**13–15 marks** A range of points are selected to advance discussion. Points made and examples used are pertinent and judiciously selected; the nuances of the question will be specifically addressed. Answers in this level critically analyse the range of points and examples selected for discussion to advance a clear, directed and analytical treatment of the issue. The implications of positions discussed are considered and explored.	**17–20 marks** Reasoning and argumentation are effective, penetrating and expressed with some insight and sophistication. The construction of argumentation is relevant and sustained and reads as a coherent and integrated whole. Answers in this level advance a clear evaluative judgement: at the lower end of this level this may consist of a balanced summary of the strengths and weaknesses of positions or points evaluated throughout. The response is legible, employing technical language accurately and appropriately, with few, if any, errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. The response reads as a coherent and integrated whole.
Level 4	**10–12 marks** Answers in this level: ***Either*** provide a clear, detailed and precise account of a relatively narrow range of positions and arguments relevant to the question so that, while the response is clearly focused, detailed and precise, it is not comprehensive and some avenues remain unexplored. ***Or*** the range of points selected and applied may be quite full but descriptions of philosophical positions, arguments and concepts may lack some detail. Understanding, while good, may not always be precise.	**10–12 marks** Answers in this level: ***Either*** critically analyse a relatively narrow range of relevant points and examples to provide a clear, detailed analysis of philosophical arguments and positions. ***Or*** consider a wide range of material without fully exploiting it, so that some points are not analysed in detail or with precision and some implications are not explored. Critical discussion is focused and generally sustained although some points may not be clearly directed.	**13–16 marks** The critical appreciation of points raised is employed to advance a reasoned judgement although this may require further support. Some material will be explicitly evaluated although the construction of argumentation may lack some insight or sophistication and positions reached may not convince completely. At the bottom of this level evaluative conclusions might acknowledge some key strengths and weaknesses of relevant positions. The response is legible, and technical language is employed with partial success. There may be occasional errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar and the response reads as a coherent whole.

GCE PHILOSOPHY UNIT 3 GENERIC MARK SCHEME continued

	Knowledge and Understanding	**Interpretation, Analysis and Application**	**Assessment and Evaluation**
	AO1	**AO2**	**AO3**
Level 3	**7–9 marks** Answers in this level: ***Either*** present a range of knowledge generally so that relevant positions are identified and explained but specific arguments will be rare and those given will lack detail and precision (this type of response may be quite lengthy but lacking philosophical impact). ***Or*** relevant positions, concepts and arguments are introduced and accurately stated but exposition fails to develop beyond a bare outline.	**7–9 marks** Answers in this level: ***Either*** select a range of relevant points and examples to provide a focused discussion of relevant philosophical positions, arguments and concepts in which analysis is brief, lacking in detail and precision. ***Or*** interpretation is very narrowly focused, and analysis centres on a partial appreciation of the issue.	**9–12 marks** Answers in this level: ***Either*** evaluate some relevant points and argumentation but may not advance a position or reach a judgement in relation to the issue as a whole. ***Or*** positions are listed and juxtaposed so that evaluation is implicit in the order or number of points made and judgements may be made on the basis of limited argumentation. At the bottom of this level juxtapositions lack depth, detail, subtlety and precision. The response is legible, employing some technical language accurately, with possibly some errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
Level 2	**4–6 marks** Answers in this level: ***Either*** demonstrate a basic grasp of relevant arguments and positions through offering a sketchy and vague account lacking depth, detail and precision. Positions may not be clearly described and, at the bottom of this band, descriptions may also be inaccurate and confused in places. ***Or*** answers may be relevant but very brief and undeveloped.	**4–6 marks** Answers in this level: ***Either*** select some relevant points but analysis may be basic, sketchy and vague so that critical points are not developed. ***Or*** apply and analyse a range of philosophical concepts and arguments without sustaining a focus on the question. Answers lower in the level may exhibit both of these tendencies in discussions of a limited range of points where the focus on the question may be largely implicit.	**5–8 marks** Answers in this level: ***Either*** exhibit a limited attempt to develop argumentation, rather they describe a view. ***Or*** argumentation is confused in places. Judgements may be reached which do not seem to be justified by the reasoning provided. The response may be legible, with a basic attempt to employ technical language, which may not be appropriate. There may be frequent errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

GCE PHILOSOPHY UNIT 3 GENERIC MARK SCHEME continued

	Knowledge and Understanding	**Interpretation, Analysis and Application**	**Assessment and Evaluation**
	AO1	**AO2**	**AO3**
Level 1	**1–3 marks** Answers in this level demonstrate a very limited grasp of relevant positions and arguments. Knowledge and understanding of at least one aspect of relevant positions, arguments or concepts will be present.	**1–3 marks** Answers in this level provide a limited analysis of philosophical arguments and positions: ***Either*** through offering a brief, fragmentary, interpretation and analysis of the issues. ***Or*** through offering a tangential account in which some points coincide with the concerns of the question but relevance is limited.	**1–4 marks** Argumentation is likely to be brief, judgements may be asserted without justification and reasoning is confused, misdirected or poorly expressed. Technical language may not be employed, or it may be used inappropriately. The response may not be legible and errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar may be intrusive.
0 marks	No relevant philosophical knowledge.	No relevant philosophical points.	No relevant philosophical insights are presented.

GCE PHILOSOPHY UNIT 3 QUESTION-SPECIFIC MARK SCHEME

Examiners should note that the content suggested in the question-specific mark scheme is intended as an indication of the range of issues students are likely to draw from but is not exhaustive, and other relevant material and approaches should be credited. Note also that the range of potentially relevant material mentioned is not intended as a prescription as to what students' responses ought to cover and examiners should refer to the Generic Mark Scheme when awarding marks.

Theme: Philosophy of mind

EITHER

01 Assess the claim that mental states cannot be reduced to physical states of the brain. *(50 marks)*

AO1

The question has a broad focus on the issue of the possibility of a reduction of the mental to the physical. Mental states form a distinct ontological category and cannot be explained in terms of the purely physical states and processes of the brain.

The claim might be identified with a range of theories of the mind, viz. substance or property dualism, or non-reductive materialism (anomalous monism or biological naturalism). (The claim that mental states are reducible to *behaviour* - in contrast to states of the *brain* – might also figure.) However, students need to maintain focus on the issue rather than simply elucidate any one of these theories.

In rejecting the possibility of ontological the claim may be contrasted with the identity theory (or functionalism).

Depending on the approach taken the claim may be further developed in various ways:

- The essential nature of the mind is different to that of the brain (e.g. thinking/extended; subjective/objective). The mind as a distinct substance in causal interaction with the brain and body. Thus the mind does not depend on the body and disembodied consciousness may be possible. Discussion of Descartes' view is likely to be prominent in many responses.

- The mind is dependent on the brain and so not a distinct substance and the mental and physical are not accidentally associated with each other. Emergentism and the view that higher order and novel properties emerge once the brain has evolved a certain level of complexity. Nonetheless these properties remain irreducible.

- This may be linked to supervenience: Mental properties depend on and co-vary with neurobiological processes, so that there can be no change in mental state without a corresponding change in brain state. But because mental states are multiply realisable, it is not possible to determine mental states from knowing the brains states that they supervene upon.

- Although mental events are (token) identical with brain events, there are no causal laws by which mental events can be predicted or explained (anomalous monism).

- Mind as caused by the brain, but not ontologically reducible to it. Consciousness is a systemic property of biological organisms: the neurons of which the brain is composed are not conscious, but consciousness is caused by micro level neuronal organisation, much as the macro-level properties of e.g. water arise from the micro-level arrangements of the molecules it is composed of (biological naturalism).

- Epiphenomenalism: the view that mental properties supervene on the physical, but have no reciprocal causal influence over it.

- (Students might consider functionalism as involving the claim. Mental states qua functional states of the brain are not reducible to physical states. However, a response focused purely on functionalism should be considered narrow.)

AO2 **(0-15 marks)**

Different approaches are possible.

Students may argue for the irreducibility of the mental on various grounds, e.g.

- Mental states are irreducibly first personal and so cannot be explained in terms of brain states (or functional states). The explanatory gap between the private mental realm and the publically observable brain.

- Cartesian arguments: the mind is indivisible, the brain divisible. The essence of mind is pure thought, the essence of body is extension in space. The existence of the body can be doubted, but not the mind. I can conceive of myself without my body, not without my mind. Identifying mental with physical commits a category mistake.

- Arguments for the irreducibility of *qualia*, intentionality, the subjective viewpoint. Any reduction must take the third person perspective on the brain. No examination of the brain will reveal a mental state (Leibniz's mill, Mary the superscientist).

- Our vocabulary of mental states and processes does not *mean* the same as our vocabulary of physical states and processes occurring in the brain and so we cannot be talking about the same things. [The distinction between meaning and reference may be used in response to this argument. The identity theory as claiming a contingent identity rather than an analytical reduction.]

- The possibility of zombies shows that there is more to being minded than possessing a certain purely physical organisation. So minds must be non-physical.

- We must ascribe an integrated set of intentional states to persons (holistically) in order to make sense of them. These mental states are related to each other by the normative constraints of rationality. However, brain states, qua physical, are related to each other by physical laws. So there can be no psycho-physical bridge laws linking mental states and physical states (anomalous monism).

- Arguments to show that mental states are multiply realisable and so any type-reduction of mind to brain will not work. This view can be defended through examples of stroke victims, other species or Martians possessing mental states.

- Type reductions of mental states to physical states are not possible, since mental states are characterised functionally rather than by their composition, and so mental states must be (functional) properties.

<u>Arguments for the possibility of reducing mental states to physical states of the brain</u>

- Students may see the view as a challenge to substance dualism and offer arguments against the possibility of distinct incorporeal substances.

- Appeal to physics: There is no room for non-physical substances or properties within physics. The physical universe is causally closed. A causal influence from outside the physical universe would contravene the principle of the conservation of energy.
- Naturalistic arguments: The purely physical origins, and physical constitution of each individual human being, and the material evolutionary origins of the species suggest there is no place for an immaterial mind. Minds don't exist independently of certain complex biological arrangements of matter.
- Evidence for the neural dependence of all mental phenomena (the affects of drugs and brain damage, MRI of the brain) is best explained by supposing them to be properties of brains. The impossibility of disembodied consciousness. Evidence of awareness in deep coma patients.
- Successful reductions in the history of science (e.g. sound to compression waves of air), show that an equivalent reduction is possible in neuroscience.
- Ockham's razor: reductionism is to be preferred over dualism as the simpler theory, so long as it explains the phenomena (at least) as well as dualism.
- Responses to Descartes: Leibniz's law doesn't apply in intentional contexts. The masked-man fallacy. The mind is indeed divisible when the brain is divided, e.g. brain bisection.
- If all events have a complete physical cause, then there can be no properties distinct from physical entering into causal relations with the physical. So if the mind is not an epiphenomenon, it must be reducible.
- We cannot explain how the behaviour of the micro-level parts gives rise to the systemic property of mind, so mind must be reducible. Searle's analogy with water is poor since we can understand how liquidity is produced by the behaviour of water molecules, but have no parallel explanation for how consciousness arises from the activity of neurons.
- The relationship between the micro and macro level cannot be a causal one, since the behaviour of the parts is in reality identical with the behaviour of the whole. The behaviour of water is not distinct from the behaviour of the molecules it is composed of. Rather the micro features constitute the macro features.
- We may be incapable of developing the theoretical apparatus which would provide a naturalistic reduction of the mental, but this doesn't mean such a reduction isn't possible and a fact of nature.
- Problem with the token-identity thesis, that it leaves no explanation of what it is that makes a brain state identical with a mental state.
- Laws of nature operating consistent with the absence of consciousness (Chalmers)

AO3 **(0-20 marks)**

The central issue concerns whether the mind can be reduced to the brain and students should make a clear, reasoned judgement on this based on the considerations discussed under AO2.

Students accepting the claim may defend a particular non-reductive theory of the mind, e.g.

- The mind is not reducible, it is a distinct substance.
- Behaviourism: the mind is not reducible to the brain but a way of speaking about actual and potential behaviour.
- The mind is not reducible because it is part of a theory (folk-psychology) which is false (eliminativism).
- Functionalism could feature as a form of non-reductive physicalism: mental states depend upon and are realised by brains, and are functional properties which are not ontologically reducible.
- Mental states are token identical with brain states, but to talk about the mind is to refer to the same physical events under a different description. A dualism of predicates rather than properties (anomalous monism).

- Biological naturalism. Mental properties are caused by brains of sufficient complexity, but are not ontologically reducible to them.

Students arguing that the mind can be reduced to the brain may defend a particular reductive theory of the mind, e.g.:

- Identity theory (type-type or token-token versions). Mental states are ontologically reducible to brain states.
- Functionalism: the mind is not irreducible since mental properties are explicable in terms of the causal role played by physical states of the brain.

OR

02 Assess whether computers might one day be conscious. *(50 marks)*

AO1

The claims of A.I. are grounded in physicalism and functionalism. If, as physicalism maintains, consciousness is produced by the material arrangement of the nervous systems of particular organisms obeying the laws of physics and chemistry, then there is no principled reason why a conscious machine could not be built. And according to functionalism a purely functional description of the operations of a human being is sufficient to account for consciousness. Such a description makes no ontological commitment to the kind of material of which it is made, so organic brains are not logically necessary for consciousness. So there is nothing in principle to prevent the construction of an elaborate machine which would be functionally isomorphic with a human being, and which would, therefore, be conscious.

A behaviourist account of mind would also be committed to saying that a machine that could *act* like a human being would have a *mind* like a human being.

The Turing Test and linguistic competence as the criterion for the possession of beliefs and other intentional states by an artificial intelligence. If a computer could converse with a human being in such a way that the human being could not tell the difference between conversing with the computer and conversing with another human being, then *ipso facto* the computer is minded.

The analogy between computer *hardware* and the brain, and *software* and the mental. Machine functionalism and the mind as a machine table operating on the hardware of the brain. Even if computers are not yet sufficiently complex to count as conscious, by writing a sophisticated enough software package for a sufficiently powerful digital computer it could be made to display the relevant functional economy to become minded.

There may be references to artificial intelligences from cinema, such as Hal from *2001: A Space Odyssey*, replicants in *Blade Runner*, or the robots in, *I Robot, A.I.* etc.

AO2

<u>Arguments for:</u>

- Parallels between the operations of computers and human minds may be adduced in support of the view. Computers have memory, process information, use languages, calculate, obey commands, follow rules and so forth. We speak of computers and other artefacts as possessing knowledge and understanding instructions. If mindedness is a matter of degree, then such machines already possess rudimentary consciousness. Problem solving machines, such as thermostats, may be said to have beliefs (McCarthy).

- The behaviour of many complex systems is best predicted and explained by adopting the intentional stance, and there is nothing more to their possession of intentional states (Dennett). So computers will be minded if and when it becomes useful to interpret them as intentional systems. [Counter that such uses of intentional terms are metaphorical. That blurring the distinction between genuine intentional states and non-intentional mechanical processes undermines A.I.'s claims to understand what is distinctive about minds.]

- Arguments against identifying minds with brains: the multiple realisability of mental states, the apparent chauvinism of denying the possibility of conscious computers; appeal to our intuitions about the mindedness of machines upon which the plausibility of much science fiction depends.

- Arguments for materialism (e.g. appeal to the material origins of human beings, the impossibility of disembodied consciousness, problem of interaction) show that matter does, as a matter of fact, support consciousness. We currently have little idea of how it does so, and therefore have no basis for insisting that only organic brains can. So long as a computer were sufficiently complex there is no reason in principle why it might not be conscious. [Although 'sufficiently complex' is vague/simply synonymous with having consciousness and so cannot be appealed to as an independent reason for supporting computers could be conscious.]

- Strengths of functionalism: If minds are software programs this solves the mind body problem, allows mental states a causal role.

Arguments against:

Computers could not experience *qualia*

- Absent *qualia*: We can imagine complex (artificial) systems that instantiate the same functional economy as the human brain, but which we would not consider conscious. Expect thought experiments from the literature, Block's Chinese Nation, and Chinese Mind, Searle's system of wind and water pipes, Leibniz's mill. Similar points may be made via Jackson's Fred and Mary.
  [Responses, e.g. Chalmer's Fading *Qualia reductio*. (Assume a robot functionally isomorphic to a human being which were not conscious. If we were gradually to replace the human's neurons with silicon chips while maintaining the functional organisation throughout, until it became a copy of the robot, what would happen to the *qualia*? Either option, that they gradually fade or suddenly disappear, is implausible.)]

- Inverted *qualia*: it is conceivable that functionally isomorphic systems could make precisely the same colour discriminations and yet their qualitative experience could be the inverse of the other. So the phenomenological quality of conscious experience is not reducible to a particular functional state.
  [Responses, e.g. Chalmer's Dancing *Qualia reductio* to show that isomorphic systems would have the same qualitative experiences.]

Computers could not enjoy intentional states

- Searle's Chinese Room Argument: (We can imagine an English speaker shut in a room who is able to respond in an apparently intelligent manner to questions posed in Chinese, by using a manual of instructions. Inputs and outputs would be the same as for a Chinese speaker and so he would have passed the Turing Test. But it is evident that this person would have no understanding of the meanings of the answers given. So, passing the Turing Test does not show genuine semantic understanding, but mere rule following. Computational operations are not sufficient for understanding; a computer does not deal with *meanings* (semantics) but simply follows *rules* of syntax.

- The distinction between *intrinsic* and *as-if* intentionality. Certain processes can be spoken of as if they were intentional, but this is a mere figure of speech. Genuine intentionality is possessed only by creatures with organic brains.

Responses to the Chinese Room:

- The systems reply. The person in the room may not understand Chinese, but the whole system, person, manual, etc., does. Intentional states are ascribed to persons, not to brains or the subsystems that make intentionality possible. The Chinese sub-system does not understand in the sense that the English one does, so why use the term 'understanding'? [Searle's response that the person could internalise the whole system by memorising the manual, symbols, and still not understand.)
- Students may discuss the robot reply, the combinatio reply, the other minds reply, the many mansions reply as well as Searle's response to these.
- Searle's thought experiment evokes an overly simplistic mechanism to make the idea of its being conscious counterintuitive. However, the fact that it is counterintuitive, doesn't mean it would not be conscious. Any mechanism that would succeed in the Turing Test would require a high level of processing power outstripping any current computer and a multilayered programme sophisticated enough to pass the Turing Test would indeed possess 'intrinsic' intentionality (Dennett).
- The Chinese Room doesn't possess intrinsic intentionality and neither does anything else. The only kind of intentionality is of the 'as-if' kind/ there is no difference in kind between intrinsic and as-if intentionality, but rather of degree of complexity (Dennett).
- Consciousness as a biological phenomenon. Organisms need to be able to recognise their survival needs and employ this information to act appropriately within its environment. The brain operates to regulate the bodily systems and must be able to distinguish the self from the world. This is the basis of consciousness. This capacity may need to evolve suggesting it may be impossible to recreate consciousness artificially.
- It would be impossible to discover that the brain were a digital computer since the manipulation of symbols or syntax is not directly observable in natural phenomena, but rather is supplied by us as an interpretation of the phenomena. At the level of physiological description all that can be discovered are causal relations (Searle).
- If evolution is required then this introduces a teleological function into consciousness. Artificial intelligences are not oriented vis-a-vis the world as human brains (typically) are. Differences between different functionalist approaches and the extent of liberalism/chauvinism these lead to.
- The possibility that conscious experience depends on the intrinsic biochemical properties of brain matter, so that metal and silicon could never produce consciousness.
- Discussion of twin earth examples separating intentionality from its functional role (externalism). If these aren't convincing then this weakens the case against A.I.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments and students should form a reasoned judgement about whether it is possible for computers to be conscious. Possible judgements include:

- Minds are incorporeal and so are associated contingently with organic brains. So there is no prospect of building an artificial intelligence (unless God decided to give them minds).
- Organic brains are, as a matter of fact, necessary for consciousness, so no computer could be conscious.
- A computer could conceivably be built which could precisely mimic human consciousness, but would still not be conscious.
- The brain operates differently to a digital computer (e.g. parallel rather than sequential processing), so a computer cannot be conscious. Input – output not sufficient for understanding.
- Although possible in principle for a computer to be conscious, in practice the level of complexity of its program and/or power of its processing make it beyond us.

- If no system of formal symbol manipulation can possess consciousness, this doesn't mean no machine could (we are such machines), so long as the artificial mechanism could duplicate what goes on in brains.
- A computer could be conscious once it is sufficiently complex.
- Computers, and perhaps even simpler systems, are already conscious.

Theme: Political Philosophy

EITHER

03 To what extent is any state an instrument of oppression? *(50 marks)*

AO1

The view that the state is an instrument of oppression is likely to be identified as Marxist and/or anarchist. But the question concerns the degree to which the state is oppressive and so liberal or libertarian critiques of the role of the state and how far its power can legitimately extend are also relevant. An appropriate knowledge base may be located in any of these.

Anarchist critiques of the state
The use of coercion by the state against the individual is illegitimate. Proudhon's 'To be governed is to be watched, inspected, spied upon, etc.' The state is by its nature authoritarian; it employs centralised power structures; it claims a monopoly on legitimate violence; and uses violence to compel individuals to accept its jurisdiction and to conform to obligations it unilaterally imposes.

The state is the cause of, rather than the solution to, competitive and antisocial behaviour. Human beings are naturally free, equal, co-operative and sympathetic. Social organisation can operate by non-coercive voluntary means.

Marxist critique of the modern state
The superstructural features of the state, its legal and political institutions, social consciousness, religion, morality, etc., serve the interest of the dominant class and reinforce oppressive power structures. So the law does not reflect natural justice, and the state is not a neutral umpire, or a reflection of the wisdom of the past. Liberal and conservative ideological justifications of the state reflect class interests.

The idea of oppression might be linked to exploitation: The capitalist system, supported by the power of the state, exploits the workers by extracting profit by paying less in wages than the value of their labour; and/or to alienation: Genuine freedom is won through authentic community relations with others, yet the capitalist state alienates workers from the means of production and the products of their labour, and from any sense of community or ownership over their working lives.

Liberal critiques of state power
The role of the state should be limited to protecting natural rights to life, liberty and property (Locke). The state as a neutral umpire. Beyond this state power becomes oppressive. E.g. the welfare liberal state and redistributive taxation limit negative freedoms and so are oppressive. The state is oppressive when it legislates within the private sphere (Mill), or when it is concerned with our moral improvement, or adopts a paternalistic concern for citizens welfare (the nanny state), or over regulates the economy, or when it outlaws freely chosen economic transactions (planned economies). The Liberty (or Harm) principle as distinguishing oppressive from non-oppressive uses of state power.

Attempts to define the state may figure, most probably Weber's: the state claims a monopoly of legitimate violence. States guarantee security, claim universal jurisdiction over a particular territory, are characterised by centralised governments, etc.

The oppressed condition of mankind might be contrasted with accounts of a liberated life without the state, e.g. communism, public ownership of the means of production, the freedom to develop one's self through freely chosen labour, a community of equals. Positive versions of the state of nature, e.g. Rousseau, forms of anarchism, e.g. humans organising themselves informally, and voluntarily adopting co-operative behaviour, conforming to a shared morality, etc.

AO2

Students may draw on some of the following points for discussion:

Arguments for the view that the state is oppressive:

- Reliance on state laws undermines individuals' capacity for self-government. Only in the absence of external laws can individuals be genuinely autonomous (Kropotkin). The 'principle of private judgement': that individuals must determine their duties for themselves (Godwin). We each have a duty to act according to an autonomous assessment of what is right, rather than on the basis of coercion. Since state authority undermines genuine moral autonomy it cannot be legitimate.

- The greatest good can only be achieved if each person develops their moral sense so that they are able to employ their own private judgement concerning what would bring about the greatest good. But this cannot happen under government (Godwin).

- The sovereignty of the individual over their own person and property is inviolable. The state has no business interfering in the freely chosen actions of individuals. We do not ask to be under the jurisdiction of the state and so have no duty to obey its laws.

- The exercise of political power offends against our natural rights: We all have a natural and equal right to freedom, so no one can be justly subordinated to another's authority without their consent. Since no state can obtain the consent of all citizens its use of power must be illegitimate and oppressive.

Attacks on the nature of the state itself

- The use of coercion by the state goes beyond what is needed to ensure good order. Its laws are excessive and punitive. They interfere in the private lives of citizens.

- The state is the cause rather than the solution to social ills by encouraging acquisitive behaviour and social competitiveness (e.g. Rousseau). The state creates crime, rather than being a solution to it. Power corrupts, so states encourage corruption. They criminalise private affairs (homosexuality, drug use).

- States are expensive to run and inefficient and so serve only to impoverish ordinary citizens. Big government as inefficient. The machinery of state power is deployed to serve the interests of powerful elites, e.g. property laws which protect the interests of those who own the means of production. States function to maintain inequalities and protect wealth and privilege, e.g. the lavish lifestyles of state apparatchiks, the corrupt use of taxpayers' money, e.g. parliamentary expenses.

- States promote national values in order to promote social cohesion and uniformity and in so doing oppress minorities. They invoke internal and external threats as pretext for erosion of civil liberties.

- States are the principal cause of wars which are destructive and oppress the ordinary citizen and soldier alike. Wars are not conducted in the interests of the individual, but of a privileged class.

- As a matter of historical fact, states gain their power over territories through force, (colonisation, invasion) and not with the consent of the governed.

- The state is not necessary: The work of coordinating social goods and protection, etc. can be conducted through voluntary organisations, informal agreements. Examples of cooperative, self-organising/cooperative behaviours which don't involve coercion, e.g. from the animal kingdom (insect colonies), the free market. Examples of systems which avoid oppressive centralised government, e.g. within international relations, primitive societies, communes, anarchism during the Spanish civil war.

Arguments against the view:

- Human nature is naturally egoistic and so without laws human society would descend into a war of every one against every one. The fact that we take precautions against theft and aggression perpetrated by strangers even when we enjoy the protection of the state, shows that we are naturally and rightfully distrustful of others. So the state is needed to protect the individual from crime against person or property and maintain security (Hobbes).

- Anarchy would give free rein to individuals to exploit each other and so the state is necessary to the realisation of individual liberty. The night-watchman state would emerge out of anarchy via the free competition between protection services (Nozick). A neutral umpire is needed to adjudicate in disputes.

- States are legitimate if they protect natural rights to life, liberty and subsistence. So a minimal or liberal state is not oppressive.

- Political authority is necessary to develop positive freedoms through e.g. education, healthcare provision. States make possible the fruits of co-operation (infrastructure, art, etc.). State authority protects individuals from economic exploitation and extremes of poverty.

- People's private judgements concerning what is for the greatest good are unreliable and so they need to be guided by the law. It is unrealistic to suppose people can be brought by their use of reason to act for the good and to respect others.

- Instrumentalism: State authority is legitimate since it enables individuals more fully to comply with the duties they already accept by providing laws. Individuals' own assessments of what would be the right action are unreliable and so compliance with the law is the best way properly to fulfill one's duties (Raz). So the state can serve the individual, rather than oppress him or her.

- State authority can be legitimised by consent and the social contract. The state does not oppress if the individual has (actually/tacitly/hypothetically) consented to its authority. The state as a means to ensure security. [Problems with consent, e.g. we can't be bound by the consent of our forefathers, Hume's ship: given the costs of moving we cannot regard staying as tantamount to consent, etc.]

- The tragedy of the commons/ prisoner's dilemma: individual decisions do not optimise social utility without some external constraint. The state is needed to fulfil this role.

- Legitimate states democracies protect us from oppression e.g. by preventing tyranny.

- The alternatives, anarchism, communism, have shown themselves to be unworkable in practice.

- Rousseau and identification of personal and the general will, so that laws do not oppress but liberate.

- Insofar as the state reflects the wisdom of the past it is not oppressive. Liberties are the product of a particular society's inheritance.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments which can be employed to support a range of positions.

- At one end students may agree that that any state will function as an instrument of oppression.

- Or they may argue that some states are oppressive (e.g. tyrannies, religious oligarchies), but others (e.g. modern liberal democracies) are not. States whose laws we are not independently required by morality to obey are oppressive. States that respect and defend human rights are not oppressive. States whose governments are accountable to the people, or serve the general will, or the good of all, are not oppressive.

- States oppress some individuals and minorities (e.g. women, the proletariat, certain religious or ethnic groups), but not others. Democratic states tyrannise minorities.

- Some functions of the state are oppressive (e.g. those that offend against our natural rights, interfere in the private sphere, attempt to change behaviour, e.g. through taxation, aggressive policing, surveillance, laws concerned with national security, conscription, propaganda, economic regulation, etc.), but others are not (e.g. protection from fraud and theft and violence; welfare and education provision, etc.).

- Alternatively they may argue that the state functions, at least in part, to liberate. e.g. taxation as allowing for healthcare and welfare provision, and universal education and so opening up opportunities.

- All states may be oppressive, but they are a necessary evil. The alternative would be worse.

- The state may legitimately restrict individual liberty in order to prevent encroachment on other individuals' liberty. This is not oppressive.

- Students might recommend some form of anarchistic or communist society: e.g. one in which human beings will develop the necessary level of moral awareness that they are ready to live cooperatively. So state oppression is not necessary.

- They might argue that all actual states are instruments of oppression, but hold out the possibility of non-oppressive states in the future.

- Problems understanding what Rousseau by the general will: that the idea is vague.

OR

04 Evaluate the view that no war can ever be just. *(50 marks)*

AO1

The view is likely to be identified with pacifism and the view that the evils of war are so severe, that no attempt to justify it can succeed.

Pacificism
The evils of war will always outweigh any supposed benefits that come from it. War is intrinsically unjust because it violates basic rights, such as the right to life. Non-violent alternatives to settling disputes as recommended by e.g. Tolstoy, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, (civil disobedience, general strikes) might figure.

Since the view rejects just war theory it is likely that students will approach the question by examining the case for just war.

Just war theory
The distinction between *jus ad bellum* (what justifies resort to war), *jus in bello* (how warfare can justly be conducted), *jus post bellum* (how justly to conduct the peace settlement).

Students may spell out the conditions considered necessary for a war to be just:

Jus ad bellum:

- Just cause: the decision to go to war must be made for the right reason, e.g. self-defence, resistance to aggression, in defence of innocents' rights, or states' rights, etc.
- Right intention: there must be no ulterior motive, such as acquisition of land or resources.
- Prospect of success: there must be a realistic chance of realising the aims of the war.
- The decision to go to war must be made by a legitimate authority and with a public declaration.
- Proportionality: More evil for all those affected must not result than the good to be achieved by realising the just cause.
- Last resort: All other avenues short of war, such as negotiated settlements, economic sanctions, must be fully explored.

Jus in bellum

- Force must not exceed that necessary to achieve the war's aims.
- Weapons prohibited by international law must not be deployed.
- Methods must not be used which are 'evil in themselves' (ethnic cleansing, mass rape).
- Non-combatants must not be targeted.
- Prisoners of war must be well treated.
- Reprisals should not be conducted in response to breaking *jus in bellum* rules.
- States must respect the rights of their own citizens when at war.

Just post bellum:

- The settlement should not be vengeful, must be proportionate, must reinstate the rights of those whose rights were infringed by the aggression, ensure justice for war criminals, etc.

Reference may be made to The United Nations Charter and The Hague and Geneva Conventions.

Attempts to define war may figure: 'a contention by force' (Cicero), 'the continuation of policy by other means' (Clausewitz). War as the violent attempt to resolve disputes about governance over some territory, in order to determine who should hold power, the system of government and social organisation, the religion or ideology to adhere to, who should hold the wealth, etc.

Realism

If the view is taken to affirm that war is an evil, the issue concerns whether it is nonetheless justifiable in certain circumstances. However, it might also be identified with realism and the claim that the category of justice doesn't apply to war, so that no war can be just or unjust. Descriptive realism: international affairs, as a matter of fact, are not conducted according to moral principles. Prescriptive realism, states are prudentially obliged to pursue their own self-interest so that considerations of justice in war are unworkable.

AO2

Arguments to show that resort to war can be just:

- Just cause: states are equal and independent and so have the right to national self-defence. The duty not to kill is not absolute, since one is justified in using force to defend oneself (or other innocents). In the same way it is justified for states to defend themselves, or to use force in defence of citizens of another state in order to protect them from their own or another government's aggression.

- Consequentialist arguments: The benefits of prosecuting a war may outweigh the evils of not doing so, e.g. a short sharp war to overcome a tyrant bent on aggressive expansion.

- A state may be justified in going to war if it is deprived by a neighbour of essential resources, e.g. by the building of a dam to prevent water flowing from a neighbour's territory.

Arguments to show a war can be fought justly:

- War is hell, but the responsibility lies with the aggressor. So any means are justified to bring the war to a swift end.

- Collateral damage is acceptable if not directly intended and an inevitable side effect of a war conducted with just cause. The doctrine of double effect.
  [Response that such considerations will not convince for those suffering the collateral damage.]

- Wars which adhere to the war convention (*jus in bellum*) are just.

Critiques of pacifism

- Pacifism is idealistic. Ought implies can, and given the current state of international relations pacifist responses to aggression are unworkable, e.g. because pacifism rewards and encourages aggression. Pacifist means of resisting aggression (such as civil disobedience) are impractical, e.g. because they are dependent on the aggressor maintaining a sense of justice and will not work against a ruthless invader.

- Clean hands: pacifists protect their moral integrity at expense of the real life demands of an emergency situation. Pacifists accept the benefits of security won through war, without accepting the burdens.

Arguments for the view that no war can ever be just:

- The criterion of not targeting non-combatants (innocents) cannot be met by (modern) warfare, But innocent lives cannot be justly sacrificed for any end. So no war can be just.

- Turning the other cheek avoids compounding the evil. Even self-defence involves transgressing the aggressor's human rights.

- The right intentions criterion cannot be met, since in practice, motives are never pure.

- The proportionality criterion cannot be met since it is never possible to have the necessary degree of certainty about a war's outcomes. Warfare is not discriminating enough to avoid extensive casualties of innocents, and so the means are too great an evil to justify any purported good ends.

- Rejection of the claim that soldiers are legitimate targets of aggression during war: Soldiers are often conscripted. Volunteers may be under economic or social and propaganda pressures to sign up.

- While military means may be justified in self defence, in practice this falls short of justifying a declaration of full scale war.

- Pacifist means of achieving political ends might be explored, such as international sanctions, civil disobedience.

- The just war criteria are complex and impossible to apply objectively so that disagreement is inevitable over particular cases and no war can be safely determined to be just or unjust. Thus the question is unanswerable.

Those exploring the case for realism may examine some of the following points:

- Arguments for descriptive realism: If moral concepts cannot be applied to international relations and foreign policy then it is an error to condemn war as unjust.
    - The notion of justice doesn't apply to war since morality operates within the state and not in the international arena. States are motivated exclusively by considerations of national interest.
    - States are not persons and so cannot be expected to operate by principles which matter within states.
- Arguments for prescriptive realism: A just war is not a realistic option.
    - It is unrealistic to expect states to behave morally given the anarchic nature of the international arena.
    - To defend the rights and interests of its citizens the state cannot afford to approach international affairs in a way other than in terms of its national interest.
    - It is foolish to pursue a moral policy in international affairs, since others will exploit any weakness.

- Arguments against realism:
    - It is people who decide to go to and prosecute a war, so it is not possible to demarcate the legitimate arena for morality;
    - In practice military decisions always have a moral as well as strategic dimension;

- If moral principles don't apply does this imply any methods can be deployed in war?
- Citizens would not support a government that had no 'ethical dimension' to its foreign policy.
- Realism leads to a general scepticism about morality.

Students are likely to draw upon historical illustrations to develop their case and effective use of examples should be rewarded. However, it is possible to access the full range of marks without such examples.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments which can be employed to support a range of positions.

- At one end, students might argue that the justice or injustice of war does not arise. War is akin to a natural evil, so the application of moral concepts, such as justice, to international relations commits a category mistake. International affairs proceed according to principles of power and national security.
- Similarly it could be argued that all wars are justified by pragmatic rather than moral considerations, and this is the only kind of justification that it is possible to give.
- Justice is the interest of the stronger, so all wars are just.

- Alternatively, students will attempt to specify those cases where war can be justified while accepting that not all war is, e.g. war is justified in self-defence, to resist aggression, to achieve a just peace. Wars in which soldiers volunteer and no civilians are killed may be just.

- Or they may agree with the quotation and argue that no war is just.
  - The evils of war are too great for any justification to work, peaceful means of resolution will always represent the lesser evil.
  - In principle a war could be justified, e.g. by the just war criteria, but in practice no war ever is.
- International relations are in a 'war system' and so the evil of war will only be overcome by adopting international institutions which outlaw the use of violence to resolve disputes.
- May be reference to the objects of declarations of war. They apparently need not by any nation states in particular, e.g. war on terror.
- May reject realism. States have moral obligations and duties and so they are in the moral arena and so justice does apply.

Theme: Epistemology and metaphysics

EITHER

05 Critically discuss the realist view of belief. *(50 marks)*

AO1
The realist view regards beliefs as real entities existing in the mind or brain. Because they are real, beliefs can enter into causal relations with other mental states (sensations, desires, etc.) and actions. They are typically caused by perception and when someone learns a new fact, the belief is stored in the mind.

Students are likely to give some background detail to the standard dual component picture of beliefs. A belief has propositional *content* which is expressible in a statement, and an *attitude* affirming the truth of this content. Alternatively beliefs might be described as possessing an *intentional* component and a *causal* component which influences action. Hume's liveliness criterion as what distinguishes beliefs from other ideas and means they come to guide behaviour. Believing that p expresses a relation between believer and proposition. Beliefs have mind to world direction of fit (Searle).

We may be said to be introspectively aware of these beliefs and their contents, so that beliefs are *ideas* or conscious inner episodes (e.g. Descartes, Hume), although realism is not committed to one being continually conscious of one's beliefs, so long as they can be recalled.

Realism might also be characterised as holding that beliefs are part of the physical structure of the brain which explains how they come to be caused by perception and in turn dispose us to certain behaviours.

Fodor's language of thought. Beliefs must have a sentential structure somehow encoded in the brain in order that they can possess propositional content.

Realism is likely to be contrasted with instrumentalism and the claim that talk of beliefs is a way of speaking, but that there is no such real ontological category or kind.

AO2
Students may draw on some of the following points for discussion:

<u>Arguments for realism:</u>

- We are directly aware of beliefs through introspection, so they must be real.
- The predictive success and explanatory power of (folk) psychological theories that are committed to the existence of beliefs counts in favour of their real existence. The best explanation is that these theoretical entities pick out real features of our psychology.
- Beliefs are the part causes of actions, (e.g. the belief that it is raining, along with the desire to remain dry, causing one to pick up the umbrella). Only if they are real things can beliefs be involved in causal stories of this sort.

Arguments against:

- Students may question the phenomenological evidence. Is one really conscious of a belief? Even accepting that we appear to be, introspection may not be a reliable guide to the reality of the contents of the mind.

- Verificationist or behaviourist inspired arguments: How would we know someone had a belief if it were just in their head? Criteria for correct belief ascription must be public and so behaviour is constitutive of belief. Examples of how others may have a better view of my beliefs than I do may figure to show that they are not in the head.

- We can conceive of creatures with different internal constitutions to ourselves, whose behavioural dispositions match our own and to whom we would ascribe beliefs. The underlying cause of a belief-disposition is not part of the meaning of 'belief' since very different underlying structures are possible. So beliefs must be to do with behaviour not internal states.

- We can believe without having anything consciously before the mind. Beliefs can be dormant or unconscious. So to say that someone possesses a belief is not to affirm the existence of a real entity in the conscious mind. [Response that realism is not committed to being aware of beliefs, only that they are stored in the mind, ready for recall.] Other beliefs are implicit (e.g. the belief that zebras don't wear pyjamas) and so cannot be present in the mind. [Realist response that beliefs must be systematic and productive (Fodor).]

- If beliefs were merely in the head they would be subjective, and yet beliefs make claims to objectivity. Someone can only be interpreted as possessing beliefs because of their adherence to normative constraints of rationality which cannot be physical entities in the brain.

- Belief is not isolable from a network of beliefs. We ascribe beliefs holistically. So there cannot be any real entity in the mind or brain which is a particular belief.

- Mental states cannot have any intrinsic feature which enables them to represent independently of how they are caused, and so of the wider context in which they occur. If a belief were identifiable with some representation in the mind, we would still need to be able to act appropriately in accordance with the representation. Representations are necessarily connected to their referents, and so the content of beliefs is not determined by what happens within the head. (Putnam: brains in vats, twin earth, etc.).

- Eliminativism: Talk of belief is a *façon de parler*, but does not cleave to real entities. The explanatory power of positing beliefs, doesn't demonstrate their reality. Beliefs (and other propositional attitudes) can be eliminated from a mature neuroscience (Churchland, Stich). [Although 'mature' has to mean more than whatever eliminates mental states.]

- You can't discover unconscious sentences in the head- they can only be known when used (Searle).

Alternative accounts are also likely to figure. However, these should not merely be juxtaposed to realism, but employed to raise critical points about realism.

Instrumentalism

- To talk of someone's beliefs signifies their ability to do certain things. To believe that p, is to be disposed to act in certain ways, typically to affirm p if asked. If beliefs are dispositions they need not be determined by any specific thing in the brain.
- Dispositionalism: e.g. Ryle's dispositional analysis of belief. A belief is not a particular mental state which causes behaviour, but a way of talking about behaviour and can be analysed into hypothetical propositions which sum up past behaviour in a law like way and are used to make predictions about future behaviour. Beliefs as 'inference tickets', ways of inferring future behaviour or of forming hypotheses about persons. Because dispositions are behaviour patterns, people do not possess them as real states of themselves, but rather display them through what they do in various situations. Beliefs are not 'ghostly inner episodes' with causal powers or 'occult causes and effects'.

Arguments against the dispositional analysis:

- Dispositions are still grounded in structural features of the brain and so are still real.
- The difficulty of specifying what someone would normally do if they have a belief. Different people sharing the same belief may act differently depending on their other states of mind making the analysis impossible to complete without reintroducing beliefs.
- It is conceivable that someone hold a belief without manifesting any behaviour e.g. what would it mean to say that a person was prepared to die for their beliefs.
- Instrumentalism ignores the common sense view that beliefs cause behaviour and puts the cart before the horse. There is more to believing that p than being disposed to behave in certain ways.]

Interpretationism:

- Dennett and the intentional stance: Belief ascription functions to predict and explain the complex behaviour of human beings. The beliefs we ascribe are those we suppose a rational agent ought to have given their situation. We ascribe them holistically and so it is not the case that individual beliefs will have specific analyses in terms of sensory stimuli and behavioural outputs, nor in terms of neural structures. If belief ascription succeeds in explaining and predicting the behaviour of any system, then, *ipso facto* it has beliefs. The predictive pay off makes it worthwhile to talk in terms of belief, but they are not real. Ascribing intentional states is like 'equator'; no ontological commitment is necessary. Instead the question should be does the intentional stance work in here?
- [Objection that Dennett is committed to saying that sufficiently complex machines best dealt with by the intentional stance possess genuine beliefs which is counter intuitive.]

- Quine and radical translation. More than one possible interpretation of the utterances of a speaker is possible which is consistent with their behaviour and the context. If the ascription of beliefs is underdetermined by the evidence, then it is indeterminate what beliefs someone holds. Thus they are not real entities.

- Davidson and the principle of charity. Radical interpretation is only possible by ascribing rationality and beliefs like our own. Talk about beliefs is part of making sense of others as rational agents and involves no ontological commitment to their real existence. Beliefs are not discoverable by looking at what goes on in someone's head, but are a way of making comprehensible their behaviour so that they can be communicated with.

AO3
Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments which can be used to support a range of positions.

- At one end students may affirm that beliefs are indeed real features possessed by persons and they are locatable within the mind or brain.
- At the other they may argue for an instrumentalist position whereby beliefs are not real entities, but theoretical postulates useful for predicting human behaviour, or manners of interpretation.
- Alternatively, they may defend a version of realism, which sees beliefs as outside the head (Putnam).

OR

06 Assess whether phenomenalism succeeds in overcoming scepticism about the physical world. (*50 marks)*

AO1

- Scepticism about the physical world arises from the observation that we are only directly aware of the way the world appears, and thus judgements about the nature of the physical world may be in error. Sceptical arguments about perception may figure, e.g. illusions, hallucinations, dreaming, brains in vats, etc.
- Phenomenalism responds to such scepticism by attempting to bridge the gap between appearance and reality.
- It is an anti-realist theory of perception, that is, it argues that physical objects are mind-dependent. Physical objects do not cause sense data, rather sense data constitute physical objects. Physical objects are clusters of both actual sense-data and the possible ones which have potential to be perceived. So objects exist when unperceived so long as they would be perceived were someone in the right situation: objects are 'permanent possibilities of sensation' (Mill).
- This view may be characterised as dealing with the problems of idealism (e.g. the intermittent existence of objects) without recourse to God.
- Non-veridical perception does not occur, *pace* the realist, when a current perception fails accurately to represent a transcendent reality, but when it fails to cohere with the rest of experience.
- Linguistic phenomenalism (Ayer): Propositions about physical objects are equivalent to propositions about actual and potential sense-data, so that talk about objects can be translated into talk about sense-data without loss of meaning using hypothetical statements. Such statements are arrived at by inductive generalisation from past regularities in experience.

AO2

<u>Arguments to show how phenomenalism succeeds in overcoming sceptici</u>

- The veil of perception problem. Representative realism leads to scepticism by distinguishing between the way objects appear and the way they are. I can only be certain of my own sense data, but can never directly access the external world. Therefore, knowledge of reality would be impossible. Phenomenalism closes the gap and defeats scepticism by analysing physical objects in terms of experience.

- If, as the representative realist claims, we cannot have experience of material reality, all talk about it must be empty of empirical content. By reducing talk of physical objects to talk about experience, phenomenalism shows how we can talk meaningfully about the physical world.

- The representative realist conception of matter is contradictory. If matter is genuinely beyond experience, then we cannot frame an idea of it.

- Representative realism leads to solipsism. If I only have direct and certain access to my own sense data, then my reality would appear to be distinct from everyone else's. The referents of terms in my language would be different from those in other people's.

- If sense data were not the basis for learning the language of physical objects it would be impossible to learn, since the referents of its terms would not enter into our experience.

- Ayer and the verification principle. A sentence is factually significant and meaningful iff it can be verified by experience. Claims about the existence of unobservable material objects cannot be verified and so are empty of factual significance.

<u>Arguments against phenomenalism</u>

- Phenomenalism cannot offer an *explanation* of either the occurrence or the regularity of perceptual experience nor for the uniformity of experiences for different perceivers.. There is no explanation of what makes the hypothetical statements about potential sense data true. Here representative realism has the advantage of positing matter as the ground and cause of sense-data.
- [Phenomenalist response: it is by appeal to past regularities in experience that we can make judgements about what we are likely to perceive. Regularities in past experience provide the evidential basis for making hypothetical claims about possible experience.]

- Phenomenalism seems to imply that hypothetical statements about sense data have causal powers, but this is absurd.

- Statements about sense data do not logically entail statements about physical objects and vice versa. The problem of meaning/logical equivalence.

- How would Ayer translate statements about the nature of the universe prior to the existence of sentient creatures when there were no sense data?

- Phenomenalism confuses the experiential basis for judging that there is an object existing unperceived, with the cause of the experience. Regular patterns of experience don't constitute an object's existence unperceived. It is the independent existence of the object which produces the regularities.
- [Response: representative realists have no better explanation of the regularities of experience since there is no reason to suppose matter ought to produce them. Appeal to the regular and predictable causal properties of matter is no better than appeal to the regular and predictable patterns of experience.]

- Criticisms of the verification principle. It fails its own test for meaningfulness since it cannot be verified by experience; it is perfectly meaningful to suppose there exist or have existed entities and events that lie beyond possible experience (e.g. from the distant past, or in distant galaxies).

- Hypothetical statements state what an observer would perceive in a particular situation. But this situation needs itself to be characterisable in phenomenal terms. To do this,

another observer needs to be invoked thus reintroducing reference to physical objects, and we have an infinite regress. Thus the translation of physical object talk into talk of actual and potential sense data cannot be completed.

- Phenomenalism leads to solipsism since to talk about others is to talk about actual and possible sense data occurring in my sensory field (C.M. Joad).

- Arguments to question the incorrigibility of sense data.

  - We can make mistakes about what we are immediately perceiving, e.g. mistaking a smell.
  - [Response that this involves being unsure of how to name and categorise the experience, but no uncertainty can be present with respect to what it is like here and now.]

  - The raw sense data need to be categorised in order for them to enter into meaningful experience. Without such categorisation we have only James' 'blooming, buzzing confusion' or Kant's blind intuitions. But categorisation presupposes the possibility of miscategorisation, and so of making errors about one's sense data. Sense data just are and so cannot provide an incorrigible ground for knowledge.

  - Sense data can be indeterminate, e.g. one can be uncertain of the number of notes heard in a chord, or number of sides seen on a polygon.

  - Sense data can be corrected in the light of new evidence, e.g. by higher level beliefs about the physical world, e.g. correcting what you thought a soup smelled like in light of what you find has been put into it.

  - Duck-rabbit type examples to show that the idea of a preconceptual given is a myth. The way we perceive sense data is influenced by our expectations and existing conceptual framework or conceptual schemes.
    [Response that the possibility of ambiguous perception presupposes unambiguous perception.]

- The private language argument. Phenomenalism requires that we be able to identify and reidentify privately occurring sense data within our experience. This would require being able to institute a private language for naming (categorising) any particular sense datum. But since such a language would not have any publicly verifiable criteria for correct and incorrect usage, there can be no difference between correctly recognising and reidentifying a sensation and seeming to recognise it. So identifying sense experiences requires a public language.

- The problem of induction might be explored in order to cast doubt on the use of inductive generalisations when constructing hypothetical statements concerning potential sense data.

Better responses will not simply present arguments for and/or against, but demonstrate awareness of how arguments on one side respond to arguments on the other. Such responses will attempt to develop a critical line through consideration of different positions.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments and students should come to a reasoned judgement concerning whether or not phenomenalism succeeds in defeating scepticism.

- Those arguing that phenomenalism is successful are likely to stress the intractability of sceptical arguments about the physical world. By contrast sense data are incorrigible and immediately known. If genuine knowledge of the world is possible, it must be possible to move deductively from claims about these sense data to physical object claims.

- Alternatively students may argue that the problems faced by phenomenalism mean it is not a satisfactory solution. Objective enquiry involves the recognition that what exists outstrips our experience. Scepticism is, therefore, an inevitable aspect of the representative realist enterprise. The phenomenalist attempt to escape such scepticism is made with too high a price.

- Students may also offer an alternative solution to scepticism about the physical world, such as mitigated scepticism, transcendental arguments, or claim that the starting point for scepticism is unintelligible, (Kant, Wittgenstein). So the phenomenalist 'solution' is not needed.

Theme: Moral Philosophy

EITHER

07 'Moral judgements do not describe reality.' Assess this claim with reference to **either** emotivism **or** prescriptivism**.** *(50 marks)*

AO1

The view claims that moral judgements do not perform a descriptive function. This should be identified as an anti-realist position. Terms of moral approval or censure (good-evil, just-unjust, etc.) do not refer to any real properties of the world. While propositions about facts *describe* the way the world is, e.g. the propositions of empirical science, and so may be true or false; there is no moral reality for moral judgements to describe. Hence moral judgements do not admit of truth and falsehood, they are not objective and are not objects of knowledge (non-cognitivism).

Since moral judgements don't describe any moral reality, they have some other function and one of the given alternatives should be explored.

- Emotivism: Moral judgements are expressions of feeling about human actions and do not make any assertions about them. They are not informative. Apparently descriptive statements of value are in reality logically equivalent to exclamations. They attempt to influence others' behaviour and persuade others to one's own attitude. The distinction between the factual content and expressive value of moral judgements.

- Prescriptivism: Moral judgements do not describe reality they are exhortations to action equivalent to issuing commands, or advice. Moral imperatives are universal: to say something is wrong is to say that anyone in a relevantly similar situation ought not to do it. Moral judgements override non-universal imperatives, such as aesthetic ones.

AO2

Students may draw on some of the following points for discussion.

General arguments for the claim that moral judgements are not descriptive:

- Humean considerations: Empirical investigation cannot discover any fact of the matter corresponding to our moral concepts. A complete scientific account of reality would not include terms of moral approval or disapproval. Hume's law: no factual description of an action can entail a value judgement concerning it, the is-ought gap.

- The open question argument: Any attempt to define 'good' in terms of facts leaves open the question as to whether the facts really are good. So no reductive analysis of good to any set of facts can be completed and 'good' is indefinable. Therefore moral judgements do not describe natural facts.

- The naturalistic fallacy: Naturalistic attempts to define the good are fallacious. If an action has the natural property N, which the naturalist claims is equivalent to its being good, the question remains open as to whether it really is good for an action to have the property N. So 'good' cannot be descriptive of any set of natural facts (Moore). Descriptive features cannot mean the same as 'good' since otherwise we couldn't commend anything for having those features. If 'good tomato' means 'red and juicy tomato' then it would be empty to say that a red and juicy tomato is good (Hare).

- Logical positivism: Moral judgements do not admit of empirical test or verification while judgements of *facts* do. Whereas facts can be verified by experiment, and be *measured*, values cannot. Facts are objective, and values radically subjective. [Although note that Ayer rejects the view that 'This is good' means the same as 'approve of this' as it is not self-contradictory to approve of something bad. Moral judgements are expressions.]

- Ayer and the verification principle. Meaningful utterances must be factually significant and so must describe reality. But we cannot analyse moral terms into natural facts, and so they cannot be descriptive.

- Moral judgements motivate action, but if they merely described facts, it would be unclear why this should be the case. If, however, they perform a non-descriptive function (to prescribe action or express emotion) then this connection is explained.

- The argument from queerness: If moral judgements describe a moral reality, then there would exist entities, qualities or relations of a queer sort, and a faculty of moral perception radically unlike any other faculty.

- The relativity of moral judgements (e.g. across different cultures) suggests they are not objective and not determined by the facts and so not descriptive of any moral reality.

- We are free to choose our values. There is nothing in the nature of things which makes them intrinsically valuable (existentialism).

General arguments for the view that moral judgements are descriptive:

- The analogy with secondary qualities: Vice and virtue are not facts in the world, but concern our feelings about the facts (Hume). So moral judgements describe our feelings and normal human observers recognise the facts as entailing certain demands on action.

- Moral obligations reflect facts about social institutions and one's culture. It follows from the fact of having made a promise that you ought to keep it (Searle). Moral judgements describe norms of conduct.

- If moral judgements did not describe facts, then they would be irredeemably subjective and relative. This leads to nihilism.

- The fact that reasoned argument is possible in ethics shows that there is something real that we are arguing about. So moral judgements must be descriptive of some moral reality.

- Moral terms have a descriptive meaning relating to our reasons for action. So they can be descriptive and motivating.

<u>Arguments specific to *emotivism*</u>

- If moral judgements were mere expressions of attitude, then there would be no basis for moral disagreement. And yet, moral disagreement appears genuine.
  Response: Any genuine disagreement must concern the facts. As long as the fundamental values are shared we can have rational discussion over the facts and so come to an agreement. Nonetheless, if there is fundamental disagreement over values, then there is no rational basis for continuing the dispute. But this implication might be

considered a strength of emotivism in that it captures the fact that moral arguments do founder over fundamental disagreements of attitude.

- Moral discourse doesn't necessarily involve being emotionally excited.
  Response that emotivism is not claiming I am currently feeling an emotion, but rather expressing approval.

- Ayer's admission that not all disputes are expressible as a contradiction may be used against him. If all factual disagreements are so expressible then this conceals moral disagreements there can be.

- Nonetheless it may be urged that the logic of moral discourse is very different from that of expressing preferences. Proper moral deliberation needs to be impartial and so cannot be influenced by one's personal passions and preferences. Feelings are not universalisable.

- Emotivism fails to distinguish moral discourse from other attempts to change behaviour such as threatening, advertising or bribing. Emotivism cannot explain why we condemn people for inconsistency and hypocrisy.

- Moral discourse is about more than feelings precisely because it concerns how we ought to act. While we can agree to differ over matters of (subjective) aesthetic judgements, moral judgements and actions impact on how we and others live our lives and so have greater practical urgency.

- The military commend 'charge!' is non-assertive and evokes feelings and action, yet it is not a moral judgement.

- Moral discourse does not always involve the attempt to persuade others to one's point of view.

- Problems with the verification principle: it fails its own test for meaningfulness, it excludes too much of our ordinary discourse to the realm of meaninglessness, etc.

- Problems with the radical separation between the factual content and expressive quality of a moral judgement. It suggests we could value anything, but moral judgements are determined by (supervene on) natural facts. Moreover, we cannot make a value neutral description of facts, since our values determine in part how the facts are viewed.

- Frege-Geach: moral statements appear to function the same as descriptive statements in that they can be meaningfully negated, can be put into modus ponens, etc.

<u>Arguments specific to Prescriptivism</u>

- While moral judgements do not describe reality, because they are universal they are nonetheless amenable to rational defence. Moral discussion is possible over whether someone's judgements and the principles implied by them are consistent. So prescriptivism has the advantage of making clear the connection between moral discourse and action.

- The content of moral judgements is not specified by prescriptivism, but universal and consistently held principles need not be what we normally consider to be moral. There is nothing inconsistent with adopting self-interested principles. Thus the formal element of a moral judgement is not sufficient to delimit the proper realm of moral discourse and we seem able to choose our morals. Thus prescriptivism may descend into relativism.

- Each situation is unique and each person an individual, so moral judgements cannot be universal, e.g. if I have a calling (Sartre).

- Difficulties concerned with how to resolve conflicts of duties.

Better responses will not simply present arguments for and/or against the view, but demonstrate awareness of how arguments on one side respond to arguments on the other. Such responses will attempt to develop a critical line through consideration of different positions.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments and students should reach a judgement about whether moral judgements describe a moral reality.

- Students might support the view and may go on to endorse **either** emotivism **or** prescriptivism as providing an adequate account of the true nature of moral discourse.

- They may also support the view while rejecting emotivism or prescriptivism and endorse another non-cognitivist approach, such as relativism, nihilism or error theory.

- Alternatively, they may reject the view. Some of those rejecting the view are likely to go on to endorse some form of realism which sees moral judgements as descriptive of facts (although this is not a requirement of the question and focus should be maintained on the view itself):

    - Naturalism: moral terms are equivalent in meaning to non-moral terms, e.g. goodness means ‘conducive to producing the greatest happiness’.

    - Virtue ethics: natural facts about the proper functioning of human beings mean that human flourishing is to be achieved through developing a virtuous character.

    - It is a matter of objective *fact* what our moral duties are: e.g. Platonism: the good can be known through reasoned investigation. The good as a real if non-empirical reality which can be described more or less approximately.

    - Divine command theory: moral judgements are descriptions of God’s commandments.

OR

08 Assess whether a good way to approach a moral difficulty is to consider which action would be most virtuous. (*50 marks)*

AO1

Students need to show an understanding of virtue theory and its practical application in moral decision making.

- Virtue ethics recommends the cultivation of virtuous character traits or dispositions. Those with the proper qualities of character will possess the proper motivations and feelings as well as the practical wisdom to make appropriate moral decisions in a range of specific circumstances.

- Developing a virtuous character allows one to flourish as a human being (*eudemonia*) and involves insight into what is good for us qua human beings. Practical wisdom does not consist of a set of rules that could be taught but must be developed through practice. Aristotle's analogy with developing a skill, e.g. learning to play a musical instrument.

- We are social animals, and assessment of what constitutes a virtuous life cannot be made in isolation from the cultural and social context in which it is lived.

- Aristotle's doctrine of the mean: that the virtuous response will be one that avoids the extremes, and will be appropriate to the situation. Making the appropriate decisions as acting 'at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right motive, and in the right way.'

- Virtue ethics is likely to be contrasted with deontological and consequentialist approaches.

AO2

Students are likely to draw on some of the following points for discussion. Note that the focus of the question is on whether virtue ethics provides good guidance when faced with a moral difficulty and students need to keep sight of this when discussing the merits and drawbacks of virtue ethics.

<u>Strengths of virtue theory:</u>

- Those defending the theory are likely to emphasise the particularity of real life moral difficulties and so the need for a flexible approach. Each situation needs to be judged on its merits.

- Virtue theory is not concerned with developing a calculus by which to resolve moral problems and so is sensitive to the need to make wise choices in the light of all the factors bearing on a situation. Expect illustrations of how deontological or utilitarian approaches may be overly rigid and formulaic to appreciate the nuances of a situation and so lead us astray. Moral response is rarely a matter of either-or, and the golden mean recognises the wise response must be appropriate to the situation.

- Practical wisdom must be more important to making moral decisions than any decision making procedure such as offered by deontologists or utilitarians, since the application of such a procedure still requires practical wisdom.

- Moral problems are not treated in isolation from the entirety of a person's ethical life and so virtue ethics is true to the concrete experience of confronting life's decisions.

- There really are universal human goods which all who reflect on our nature and condition will discover, such as health, companionship, etc.

- Virtue ethics recognises the importance of the social context in which moral deliberation takes place. This allows it to be flexible about what makes for a virtuous individual, but also recognises the central role played by upbringing and education to our moral development.

- Virtue ethics recognises that people have an emotional investment in how they live their lives and gives this its proper place in our moral deliberations. Feeling the appropriate emotions is important to being a rounded moral agent.

- Virtue ethics appreciates our intuition that someone who possesses appropriate emotions and motivations is morally praiseworthy, contrary to the view that what matters is acting according to duty regardless of one's feelings.

<u>Limitations of virtue theory in helping to resolve a moral problem</u>

- Virtue theories may be accused of requiring commitment to the view that human beings possess an essential nature determining the proper virtues. Critiques of Aristotle's teleological account of human nature may figure. Yet, we need not suppose what is morally approved of is universal; it may change with culture or personal preference.

- Virtue theory commits the naturalistic fallacy. Just because our nature determines that we flourish by living a certain life, doesn't mean this is the right way to live.

- Even if there is an essential human nature, knowing what it is remains problematic.
  [Response that ethics cannot be divorced from natural facts about human beings.]

- In some circumstances we may need the precision of rules or principles (as given by deontology or consequentialist approaches) to guide decision making. Since virtue ethics provides no fixed principles it is vague and impractical, e.g. appeal to the mean as unhelpful: what is too much or too little? This can mean virtue ethicists appeal to the prejudices of their culture, rather than revealing universal moral truths. Without rules virtue ethics' approach to decision making is liable to lead to inconsistency.
  [Response that our language of virtues and vices gives ample guidance. Appeal to V rules (Anscombe)]

- How will conflicts between the demands of different virtues be resolved?
  [Response that the deontology has the same difficulty.]

- A virtuous person need not be one who flourishes. Examples of how acting morally need not lead to the good life may figure.
  [Response that cultivating the virtues is necessary for flourishing, but not sufficient. One may be unlucky.]

- Virtue theory is a form of egoism since it recommends behaviour that benefits the cultivation of my character. But genuine moral action is not concerned with my interests, but is motivated by duty/ one that leads to good consequences.
  [Response that possessing a virtue is to be motivated appropriately, and so not merely to cultivate character.]

- If the virtues depend on the social context then this may lead to cultural relativism. Yet moral values are universal.
  [Response that the problem of relativism also affects other approaches.]

- A virtuous person is defined as one who develops the proper virtues, and the proper virtues are defined as those cultivated in a virtuous person. So virtue ethics fails to provide a non-circular account of the virtues.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments and students should make a judgement on whether virtue ethics represents a good way to approach a moral problem.

- Students may argue that virtue ethics provides a good approach, or that it does not, or offer a summary of its drawbacks and advantages, so that it is judged to be good to some degree.

- It is likely that some assessment of the alternatives, consequentialism or deontology, will figure, so that students may make range of assessments from concluding that it is good, but not as good as consequentialism/deontology, bad, but not as bad as consequentialism/deontology, etc.

- It may be argued that virtue ethics does not pretend to offer a decision making procedure, and so that it is a mistake to expect it to provide us with a mechanism for resolving moral difficulties.

Theme: Philosophy of Religion

EITHER

09 Assess the view that all talk of God is meaningless. *(50 marks)*

AO1

The view that talk of God is meaningless is likely to be identified with verificationism.

Logical positivism and the view that knowledge must be grounded in experience. Language is only meaningful if it is factually significant; if it makes a claim about the way the world is. The principle of verification states that a statement is meaningful only if it is either analytic, or in principle provable as true or false on the basis of experience. So a meaningful proposition must make positive predictions about how our experience would be if it were true.

Matters of existence cannot be established by conceptual analysis *a priori*. Existence cannot be part of the definition of anything, so 'God exists' is not analytic. And since God is supposed to be transcendent, neither can His existence be verified through experience. Therefore it is meaningless, rather than false, to claim God exists, as it is to claim he does not exist.

Other talk about God (God is good, God created the universe, God loves us like a father loves his children, etc.) is equally meaningless because it makes no empirically testable predictions.

Falsificationism may also figure in explanations of the view in the question. Factually significant statements are those that can, in principle, be falsified by empirical observation.

AO2

Students may draw on some of the following points for discussion:

<u>Arguments against the claim that talk of God is meaningless.</u>

- It might be argued that true propositions concerning God, such as 'God is good', and 'God exists', might be considered analytic since the predicates are part of the essence of our idea of God. So such propositions are meaningful.
  [Response: Analytic statements are meaningful to the extent that they inform us about the definitions of our terms but are factually insignificant. So if it were conceded that 'God exists' is analytic and meaningful, it would still tell us nothing about what exists.]

- It might be argued that some talk about God is meaningful because it does make testable predictions, e.g. that he designed living creatures, or created the universe. It may be that biology and physics are able to disprove these claims, so they are meaningful. The problem of evil also suggests the existence of a good creator God is incompatible with the empirical data. Talk of God is an hypothesis or argument to the best explanation and so is meaningful.

- Eschatological verification: Hick's parable of the two travellers on the road to the Celestial City. While it may not be possible to verify talk of God in this life, if there is an afterlife then such talk will be verified by experience after death. [Discussions of whether personal identity can survive physical death may figure, but would need to be reasonably brief to maintain focus.]

- God provides a fundamental reason for why there is anything at all meaningful explanation of the universe.

- Experiential verification of God in this life, e.g. during near death experiences, show that talk of God is indeed factually significant.
  [Response that such experiences are not scientifically verifiable because not repeatable or public.]

Criticisms of the verification principle

- The principle accepts an overly restrictive conception of meaningfulness. It outlaws much that is important in everyday talk, e.g. moral and aesthetic discourse.

- Even scientific statements cannot be established because of the problem of induction.
  [Ayer's response that the probability of such statements can be established, and so are meaningful according to this weaker version of the verifiability principle.]

- The verification principle fails its own test for meaningfulness, since it is neither analytic nor verifiable by experience.

Defence of the claim that talk of God is meaningless

- Falsificationism could figure as a response to these problems: For a sentence to be meaningful there must be empirically specifiable states of affairs which would demonstrate its falsehood. Flew's version of the parable of the invisible gardener. Theists' retreat from those claims that have been falsified by scientific advances mean that belief in God is unfalsifiable and suffers 'death by a thousand qualifications'.

Reponses to falsificationism

- Hare's paranoid student and *blicks*. Core beliefs may be unfalsifiable, but still play an important role in one's life. Religious talk is meaningful because it shapes one's entire belief system. Hick and 'seeing as': faith as a way of interpreting experience.

- Mitchell's trials of faith. Believers are often brought by experience to doubt their beliefs showing that they are sensitive to the evidence and so meaningful.

- Plantinga's objection to Flew. What counts against an assertion is part of the meaning of the negation of that assertion. But this can lead to absurdity (Socrates example).

Non-cognitivist arguments against the claim that talk of God is meaningless

- Wittgenstein: What makes an utterance meaningful, is not (only) that it is factually significant, so it is an error to judge religious language as though it were poor science. Confusions arise when the criteria appropriate to one language are applied in another, Winch: science and religion have their own tests for meaningfulness. Talk of God is not factual and makes no truth claims. The view that 'truth' and 'falsity' are integral to a form of life. Rather it involves an expression of attitude and commitment to a way of life. It is meaningful to those immersed in the form of life of which it is a part when it follows the rules of the language game.
  [Response: Are all language games on a par? The overlap problem: Are they completely separate and distinct? How are factual claims made within religious discourse to be understood?]

- Religious language is not descriptive but meaningful because it is expressive of attitude. Wisdom's parable of the invisible gardener to show that the believer's commitment to religious talk reflects a difference of attitude to life.

- Braithwaite, religious language as prescriptive rather than descriptive. It expresses commitment to certain moral principles and rules of conduct.

- Winch's view that religion has its own tests for significance but do they have parity with science?

- Religious language as performative (Evans).

- The response that such non-cognitivism about religious language doesn't sit easily with most believers' realist commitments. 'God exists' makes a real ontological commitment to the existence of God.

Other arguments against the claim that talk of God is meaningless

- The *via negativa* Maimonedes (Crombie). While we cannot directly describe the true nature of God in language because he is beyond human comprehension, we can nonetheless meaningfully indicate the reference range of God negatively.

- Religious language as analogical (Aquinas), symbolic (Tillich), or mythic (Bultmann) and so meaningful.

- The true function of religious language may be best understood from the perspective of social science. The true meaning of talk of God is, therefore, not literal and descriptive, but serves functions of social control, or provides psychological comfort, etc.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments which should be employed to support a judgement about whether talk of God is ever meaningful. A range of positions is possible.

- At one end some students embracing verificationism or falsificationism are likely to conclude that all talk of God is meaningless.

- Alternatively they may allow some talk of God to be meaningful, e.g. analytic statements; or where it enters into experience eschatologically, or in near death experiences; or where it can be supported by philosophical argument, e.g. in proofs of this existence; where it allows for trials of faith.

- Or it may be urged that while the descriptive aspect of religious talk is empty, it also has another meaningful aspect, e.g. a performative, prescriptive or expressive function.

- They may argue that where it is meaningful it is false because it can be refuted by science.

- Students rejecting both the verification principle and falsificationism may claim that talk of God is meaningful and may go on to defend a non-cognitivist theory of meaning: language games, religious language as expressive, performative, prescriptive, etc.

OR

10 'Even though there is not enough evidence to establish God's existence, it is still more rational to choose to believe there is a God, than to believe there is not.' Discuss.

(50 marks)

AO1

The question concerns pragmatic arguments for belief in God's existence. It is rational to believe because this will best satisfy our desires or enable us to reach our goals. The quotation implicitly contrasts such arguments with evidentialism, the view we should proportion beliefs to the evidence, or that it is wrong to believe on insufficient evidence (Clifford), and so belief in God is not rational until well supported by evidence.

Voluntarism, and the view that there is an epistemic distance between the creation and God, so there is a need to choose to make a leap of faith in order to believe.

The arguments most likely to figure are Pascal's wager and James' will to believe.

- Pascal's wager: I may have no rational basis for belief in God, but so long as there is some chance He does I am faced with the forced choice of either to believe or to accept agnosticism or atheism. If I believe I stand either to live this finite life in mistaken faith, or, if there is a God, to win eternal life. However, if I choose not to believe, while I stand a chance of gaining a more pleasurable but finite life, I risk eternal damnation. Given that the infinite loss that comes with wagering against God plus the infinite gain that comes with wagering for Him, outweigh any finite gain or loss, I have compelling pragmatic reasons (it is rational) to choose belief in God.

- James and the will to believe: the avoidance of error is not necessarily the most rational strategy if it could mean not coming to know a truth. It can be rational to believe on the basis of insufficient evidence when faced with a genuine option that is living, forced and momentous. Agnosticism is not a genuine option. It is reasonable for the will and emotions to influence belief and to take the risk of being mistaken, e.g. when forming friendships. So where the evidence is limited, it is rational to allow for a leap of faith. Evidence may be forthcoming only after having taken this step.

- Aquinas and the merits of faith as opposed to acts of scientific knowing.

Other pragmatic arguments may figure, such as:

- Tennant and the analogy with scientific method: belief in God as an hypothesis which requires an act of will to see it through, and finally verifies God's existence through the transformation of the believer's life.

- Moral arguments: Belief in God as necessary to avoid a descent into moral nihilism. We are more likely to act morally and so improve our condition if we believe in a moral order with a divine sanction. So it is rational to believe.

- Belief in God is a great consolation to many. Belief in a godless universe with no afterlife or redemption will render life empty of purpose which will lead to misery and despair. So it is rational to believe.

AO2

Students may draw on some of the following points for discussion:

In defence of pragmatic arguments:

- It can be rational to choose to believe what we have no evidence for if, for example, we knew that holding the belief would lead to some good. Examples may figure to illustrate this, such as being faced with torture if one doesn't renounce heliocentrism, taking a pill to induce a belief which will save the world.

- Commitment to faith enables the possibility of religious experience and this is the best evidence for God's existence. (James)

Responses to Pascal:

- Belief is not subject to the will. If beliefs were voluntary we could believe whatever we choose. However, beliefs aim at the truth, and so we can only believe a proposition we have reason to believe is true. So even if we have good pragmatic reasons to believe in God, without reason to believe it is true that God exists, we cannot believe.
  [Response: Pascal is not claiming we can choose to believe, but that gambling on belief involves taking the first step on the road to belief. By adopting the lifestyle of the believer we will develop the appropriate habits and dispositions which will make us open to belief.]

- The same argument could be formulated for other deities, and so we would be compelled to believe in many gods. But this would mean being inconsistent in our beliefs.

- By choosing to believe without reason, we may be losing out on living a rational life, which counts against the option of believing.

- Moreover, a good God wouldn't ask us to turn our backs on reason, and so we may actually forego our chances of eternal life by taking this option. The wager is a cynical and amoral reason for belief (appeal to self-interest is an inappropriate motive), and so God is unlikely to reward us for believing on this basis. We must act the good life and believe in God for appropriate moral and evidential reasons, not for personal reward.

- The wager doesn't represent a genuine option since it presupposes a specific religious perspective according to which those who do not believe will be damned, but the saved may be chosen in some other way, e.g. predestination, by our moral character, good deeds, etc. (James).

- There may be so little chance of God's existence that even the finite loss of living a pious life is not worth the gamble.

- Reason doesn't require us to believe what might be best for our future well being. So belief might be pragmatic, but not rational.

Responses to James

- It may not be unreasonable to make the leap of faith, but why should it be regarded as more reasonable than unbelief? [Responses that James doesn't say it's more reasonable, when there's insufficient evidence we may choose the option which is most congenial.]

- His approach may be accused of licensing wishful thinking.

- Is it a forced choice? The possibility of agnosticism.

Arguments to show beliefs can be voluntary:

- We are able to adopt a lifestyle of religious commitment. Such a lifestyle may be the basis for cultivating belief in God, so it may be possible to bring ourselves to believe indirectly.

- People believe what fits in with their prejudices, e.g. they believe that their football team is the best even when the evidence tells against such a belief. So beliefs can be voluntary.
  [Response that even in these cases, the people will claim there is evidence for their belief. It would be patently irrational to believe in full knowledge that the evidence counts against the belief.]

- Objections to the moral arguments that claim we can be moral without belief in God.

- Arguments against the utility of belief in God may figure, e.g. it leads to superstition and so thwarts scientific understanding; leads to intolerance and persecution (Hume). Nietzsche's claims about it producing a slave morality. It encourages psychological immaturity (Freud). It involves avoiding responsibility for making moral decisions for ourselves (Sartre).

- Other fideist positions may figure, although care will need to be taken to ensure focus remains on the issue of choosing to believe.
  - E.g. Aquinas: faith supporting understanding. Reason gives us compelling arguments for God's existence. However the limitations of our faculties mean we also require an element of faith to come to accept revealed truths. This is voluntary.
  - Non-cognitivist accounts of belief, e.g. as immersing oneself in a form of life.

- Aquinas and the difficulty of accepting that God exists on God's authority (circularity). Dilemma of faith.

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AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments which should be employed to support a judgement. A range of positions is possible.

- Students may question the terms of the quotation and argue that there is good evidence to establish God's existence, e.g. on the basis of the cosmological argument or the argument from religious experience.

- It could be argued that there is adequate evidence for God's existence, but revealed truths nonetheless must be willingly accepted when they go beyond what can be established by natural theology (Aquinas).

- If they accept that God's existence cannot be established by natural theology, they may go on to defend atheism or agnosticism on evidentialist grounds: we must proportion belief to the evidence; it is impossible to believe at will.

- Students may endorse the quotation and agree that it would be prudent to believe, but nonetheless argue that it is not possible because we cannot will to believe what we don't have reason to believe.

- Fideism: The evidence doesn't establish God's existence but we are justified in believing on the basis of faith. Religious belief is basic and so not chosen (Plantinga).

- Faith as belief in the face of the absence of evidence. The leap of faith made on the strength of the absurd. Faith requires proper commitment and this can only be made by embracing the impossibility of rational belief (Kierkegaard). 'I believe because it is absurd' (Tertullian).

- Alternatively the pragmatic arguments for the rationality of belief discussed may be used to defend the view in the quotation. It is rational to induce a belief in oneself if it will lead to some good.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE GRID

A2 Assessment Objective	**Marks allocated by Assessment Objective**
AO1	15
AO2	15
AO3	20
Total	**50**