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Philosophy PHIL3

(Specification 2170)

Unit 3: Key Themes in Philosophy

Final

Mark Scheme

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A-level Philosophy Unit 3 **Generic mark scheme**

AO1: Knowledge and understanding – demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant issues arising in the themes or texts selected for study.

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.	
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.	
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.	
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.	
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.	
	0 marks
No relevant philosophical knowledge.	

AO2: Interpretation, analysis and application – interpret and analyse philosophical argument, applying relevant points and examples

Level 5	**13–15 marks**
A range of points are selected to advance discussion. Points are 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.	
Level 4	**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.	
Level 3	**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.	
Level 2	**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.	
Level 1	**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.	
	0 marks
No relevant philosophical points.	

AO3: Assessment and evaluation – assess arguments and counter-arguments. Construct and evaluate arguments in order to form reasoned judgements.

Level 5 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 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 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.
Level 3 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 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.
Level 1 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 insights are presented.

A-level 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 candidates 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 candidates' responses ought to cover and examiners should refer to the Generic mark scheme when awarding marks.

Section A: Philosophy of mind

0 1 Give a critical account of the view that the mind can be reduced to behaviour.

(50 marks)

AO1

The view in question should be identified with logical behaviourism. The mind is nothing over and above a way of talking about publically observable human behaviour. Mental state terms can be translated without remainder into behavioural terms.

Hard behaviourism and the attempt to reduce the mind to actual bodily movements, psychology to physics (Hempel).

Soft behaviourism and Ryle's dispositional analysis (or translation) of mental terms into behavioural terms. The use of counterfactuals: to desire beer is (roughly) to drink one *if* one were available. Dispositions as 'inference tickets': hypotheses about persons' likely behaviour based on their past behaviour.

The view involves the denial that the mind is a kind of substance, whether material or immaterial, and so is likely to be contrasted with dualism and the identity theory. Ryle's rejection of the 'official doctrine': the Cartesian mind as a private inner theatre into which each of us has privileged access. Talk of internal episodes misconstrues the 'logical grammar' (Wittgenstein) of psychological discourse or commits a category mistake (Ryle). The contrast between analytical and ontological reduction.

There is a conceptual rather than a causal link between mind and behaviour so that it is an error to suppose that mental states cause our behaviour. A disposition is not the cause of an action, but constitutive of it. Bravery doesn't cause one to act bravely, rather acting bravely constitutes being brave.

Psychological behaviourism may also figure as a way of dealing with the difficulty of introspective data being unverifiable (Skinner).

AO2

Candidates are likely to consider a range of strengths and weaknesses of both hard and/or soft behaviourism, for example:

Arguments in favour of behaviourism:

- The verificationist argument: Immaterial minds are unverifiable, so talk about them is not meaningful.
- Wittgensteinian arguments concerning importance of behaviour to self-ascription might figure (although he wouldn't have argued that mind can be reduced to behaviour):
    - In order to learn to ascribe mental state terms we must use publicly observable criteria, in other words, overt behaviour. Therefore the meanings of such terms must be exhausted by such criteria.
    - The object-designation model of meaning as the source of confusion about the nature of the mind. The beetle in the box analogy to show that the meaning of mental state terms cannot derive from any private object. Self-ascription of mental state terms as avowals rather than descriptions, eg self-ascribing a pain as a replacement for pain behaviour.
- Behaviourism is more scientifically respectable than dualism. It makes minds like other objects of scientific study in that they can be observed. It does away with non-scientific commitment to immaterial substances, homunculi and the idea of the agent of action as a locus of free will not bound by causal laws.
- Behaviourism does away with many of the difficulties associated with Cartesian dualism, in particular the problem of interaction and problem of other minds.
- Ockham's razor: behaviourism is more parsimonious than dualism.
- Arguments against introspection as a source of self-knowledge. We can make mistakes about our own mental states. Introspection leads to the problem of infinite regress.
- Dualist (and physicalist) accounts commit a category mistake in regarding the mind as a kind of thing and mental states as inner events with casual influence over action.

Arguments against behaviourism

- Behaviourism misconstrues mental causation. Mental states cause and explain our behaviour, they are not constituted by it. This point might be linked to functionalism, which may be considered an improvement insofar as it allows a causal role for mental states.
- Behaviourism seems to conflict with the asymmetry between my knowledge of my own mind and my knowledge of other minds. It seems to imply that others may know my mental states as well as, or better than, I know them myself and that I should know others' minds as well as, if not better, than my own. Searle's joke. [Defence that I normally know myself better because I am best placed to observe my behaviour, but that there are situations where others do indeed know me better, eg when I'm 'in denial' or when my facial expression betrays an emotion].
- The subjective dimensions of the mental, the first person view point, *qualia* and intentionality, cannot be accounted for in terms of what is publicly observable. Behaviourism contradicts the evidence of introspection by which we are immediately aware of a private realm.

- Common sense objections (pain killing drugs, peeling onions).
- Mind cannot be constituted by behaviour because there is more in the mind than is manifested in behaviour, eg day-dreams, fleeting sensations. We are capable of disguising our mental states; perfect actors could simulate a mental state without really possessing it which suggests they are distinct from behaviour. Putnam's Super Spartans. Behaviourless minds: Coma victims may well have experiences, eg the desire to move, suggesting experience can continue with no behavioural manifestation. [Behaviourist response that the desire to move is analysable as being disposed to move if able; limitation analysis and response]
- Philosophical zombies (which behave as normal human beings but have no consciousness) are conceivable, so mind cannot be analytically reducible to behaviour.
- The impossibility of completing the hard behaviourist's reduction to 'colourless' descriptions of bodily movements, of psychology to physics. The same type behaviour or action can be realised by different tokens of bodily movements which constitute such an action. The same mental state will have an infinite number of different possible behavioural analyses.
- Impossibility of completing reduction where objects and practices are socially defined (eg buying a ticket).
- The intentional circle: What behaviour any particular behavioural disposition issues in depends on other mental states. My 'wanting a pint of bitter' would only entail my 'drinking a pint of bitter if it were placed before me' if I didn't believe I had to drive later, if I didn't think it was poisoned, etc. But to repair each conditional in this way by adding in the relevant qualification is to reintroduce a series of mental terms into the analysis and so the task of translating psychological terms into behavioural ones cannot be completed.
- Candidates may discuss how far Ryle intended to analyse the inner workings of the mind away, such as Dr Johnson's unrecorded 'daydreams and silent babblings'.

AO3

The central issue concerns whether or not the mind can be reduced to behaviour and candidates should make a clear, reasoned judgement on this based on the considerations discussed under AO2.

Candidates may reject behaviourism or accept it, or they may embrace one version of behaviourism while rejecting another.

Alternatively they may argue that some mental states are amenable to a behaviourist reduction, while others are not.

It is likely that candidates rejecting behaviourism will recommend some other theoretical position, such as dualism, or functionalism. However, credit can only be given for such judgements if explanations and/or arguments are given as to why the failures of behaviourism might lead us to the alternative. Extended discussions of alternative views which lose sight of the task of evaluating behaviourism should be considered tangential.

0 2 Assess the view that it is a mistake to suppose that the mind interacts with the body.

(50 marks)

AO1

The claim denies the common sense/folk psychological belief that mental states, such as acts of volition, sensations, reasons, desires and beliefs cause behaviour and action; and that states of the body and brain, eg those caused by the impact of the world on our sense organs, damage to the body etc, produce sensations in the mind. Candidates may give examples of such apparent causal influence.

There is a range of theories of mind that deny such mind-body interaction and candidates are likely to select some of the following for discussion: parallelism, occasionalism, epiphenomenalism, behaviourism, eliminativism. However candidates who interpret the question as an invitation to give a discussion of just one of these theories risk being partial. The better responses should keep focus on the issue itself.

Candidates are likely to see the view as hostile to Cartesianism in particular, and the claim that an immaterial substance can causally interact with a material one. However, again, responses focusing on the problems with Cartesian dualism should be considered partial, given the range of theories studied for this module.

AO2

Some candidates will focus on dualist interactionism and so explore reasons for being sceptical about the possibility of an immaterial mind having a causal influence on the material body:

- The failure of dualism to explain mental causation. Immaterial substances have no spatial location, mass, or motion, so no way of affecting material substances. For two substances to causally interact they must have common properties, eg extension. The means of transaction between inner and outer cannot be known either by introspection nor public observation (Ryle). Descartes' conjecture concerning the pineal gland and animal spirits as failing to address the difficulty.
- The physical universe is *causally closed*, so it is not possible for something non-physical to have a causal impact on the physical. Causal closure implies behaviour is over-determined.
- The claims of the interactionist appear to contravene the law of the conservation of energy because the mind must introduce energy into the physical universe from without in order to exert a real influence on it.
- The homunculus fallacy: the difficulty of supposing the mind to be an agent acting upon the body and receiving sense data from it. The threat of infinite regress.
- General sceptical arguments about the nature of causation may figure. Hume's arguments that we cannot discover causal relations *a priori* or *a posteriori*.
- Ryle's critique of the Cartesian myth of the 'ghost in the machine'.
- Behaviourism: the problem of mental causation as a pseudo-problem to be dissolved by conceptual analysis. The mind is not an entity with causal powers.

Reasons for supposing the mind does indeed causally affect the body.

- Descartes' response to the problem of interaction. 'Animal spirits' convey the mind's influence to the body and vice versa via the pineal gland.
- Appeals to everyday experience of my own case. It is the pain I experience which causes me to curse, the decision to answer this question which causes me to write this essay. The self-evidence of embodiment; interaction as a basic belief.

- Appeals to common sense or folk psychology. The ordinary view has much to recommend it, eg because it is successful at predicting and explaining behaviour, because it has endured.
- Hume's analysis of causation might be used to argue that constant conjunction is all we need to establish causal connection, and therefore experience shows that mind does have a causal influence on the body.
- Partners in crime: no account of causation between two distinct things is clear, so mind/body causation has no special case to answer.

Arguments may be drawn from theories studied which assert mind-body interactions.

- Reductive materialist accounts of the mind. Identity theory: if the mind is the brain, then it is clear that it influences the body. Neuroscientific evidence of the brain controlling behaviour.
- Functionalism: mental states are to be defined by their causal role mediating inputs and outputs, so necessarily they interact with the body.
- Anomalous monism: Mental states supervene upon the physical brain; reasons are the causes of actions. Mental states cause actions, albeit only under their physical descriptions.
- Biological naturalism: We cannot reduce mental states, nor eliminate them, nor can they be immaterial. Rather the mind is a higher order property emerging from the micro features of the brain and so has a causal influence on our bodies and behaviour.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments and candidates should form a reasoned judgement about whether or not the mind and body interact. Candidates may go on to embrace a particular theoretical position (although this is not a requirement of the question):

If rejecting the idea that the mind interacts with the body they may recommend:

- Dualist positions: parallelism: the appearance of a direct causal relationship is an illusion.
- An epiphenomenalist position: that the mental is caused by the physical, but has no reciprocal causal influence. The mind as a by-product. We are 'conscious automata'.
- Materialist positions: eliminativism (folk psychological concepts don't pick out real features of human beings, and if there are not mental states they can have no influence on our actions); behaviourism, (mental states are constituted by behaviour, they are not the cause of behaviour).

Alternatively, those claiming that the mind and body interact may recommend some form of interactionism, either interactionist substance dualism, or a materialist account: identity theory functionalism, anomalous monism or biological naturalism.

Section B: Political Philosophy

0 3 'Human nature is such that political authority is necessary.' Evaluate this claim.

(50 marks)

AO1

The quotation assumes a pessimistic analysis of human nature and candidates may develop this in different ways. Most likely it will be identified with conservatism. Left to their own devices humans are governed by base instincts rather than a moral sense, they are tainted by original sin, they seek 'power after power' (Hobbes); they are dependent and seek security in the familiar; their capacity for reason is limited.

Candidates may also interpret the quotation as referring to a liberal view of human nature as self-seeking and essentially egoistic. (More positive characteristics may also figure: humans are capable of reason and self-development; they are naturally free and equal; they possess an innate moral sense, autonomy, a capacity for sympathy, although it is largely despite these rather than because of them that political authority is deemed necessary).

From its view of human nature, the quotation infers the need for political authority. This is likely to be recognised as a conservative view: authority is needed for the benefit of individuals who cannot govern themselves (paternalism). Because they are morally imperfect, they need the deterrent of the law backed up by force. Because they are non-rational they need the security of traditional institutions. Humans are by nature social and society is naturally hierarchical, the organic state.

However, candidates may also interpret the quotation as a liberal view: political authority as a necessary evil required to ensure stability and the rule of law, the state acting as a neutral umpire between competing individuals.

Candidates may point out that a normative conclusion is being inferred from a descriptive premise.

Candidates are likely to discuss social contract accounts of why political authority is necessary. Hobbes' three 'principal causes of quarrel' in our nature – competition, diffidence and glory - whence the 'war of every man against every man' and the need for each to submit to a sovereign authority. Locke: we have certain natural (God given) rights, and the state is needed to defend these. We give up our right to retribution in return for impartial state justice.

AO2

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

Arguments against the view:

Candidates may question the claim made by disputing the (assumed) pessimistic account of human nature:

- The social contract as not sufficiently critical in its account of human nature. Hobbes/Locke as projecting flaws produced by socialisation (acquisitiveness, competitiveness) into the state of nature (Rousseau).
- Since our observation of human nature is necessarily of humans subject to authority we cannot know what it would be like without authority and so cannot judge that it requires authority. This may be linked to the claim that the concept of human nature is unhelpful or meaningless. If 'existence precedes essence' (Sartre) then we cannot deduce what kinds of political organisation are possible by reflection on human nature.

- Human beings are naturally free, equal, cooperative, sympathetic, social and/or moral. Their evolutionary success depends on the capacity for 'mutual aid' (Kropotkin).
- The fact-value gap: the inference made in the quotation is not valid since it moves from a descriptive premise to a normative conclusion.

Anarchist/libertarian arguments:

- Human nature is such that the individual flourishes by developing their own moral sense independently of political authority. State authority undermines genuine moral autonomy (Kropotkin). The 'principle of private judgement' (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 accept its authority.
- 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.
- The state uses violence to compel individuals to accept its jurisdiction and to conform to obligations it unilaterally imposes. So its authority is illegitimate and never necessary.
- Examples of self-organising/cooperative behaviours which don't involve submission to political authority, eg from the animal kingdom (insect colonies), the free market, within international relations, primitive societies, communes, anarchism during the Spanish Civil War.

Marxist/socialist arguments:

- What is considered 'natural' reflects the ideology of the ruling class, so the view that humans are competitive and self-seeking, or security seeking and morally corrupt, reflect the ideology of the bourgeoisie (liberalism) or the aristocracy (conservatism). Human nature is malleable and determined by its social situation or by its relation to the means of production, and so cannot be treated as a given from which judgements about how they can live may be inferred. With common ownership of property, political authority will be unnecessary.
- State power protects class interest and privilege. Liberal and conservative ideological justifications of political authority reflect class interests and so do not establish its necessity.

Arguments for the view:

- Conservative arguments: Man is a social animal (Aristotle) and the individual depends upon the state if he or she is to flourish. History shows that human nature is not perfectible, but requires the clear guidance of traditional authority. Humans are naturally unequal, so hierarchy is natural and thus individuals must submit to authority in order to preserve good order. The organic metaphor as showing that social instability will follow if humans do not accept traditional political authorities.

- Liberal arguments: Empirical evidence appears to show that human beings are naturally self-seeking, acquisitive, competitive, etc. Political authority is necessary to protect and maximise the natural rights to freedom and security through defence against violence, theft and fraud. Human beings can only flourish if provided with the means via the welfare state (education, health care provision). A neutral umpire is needed to adjudicate in disputes. Political authority makes possible the fruits of co-operation (infrastructure, art, etc).
- People's private judgements concerning what is for the greatest good are unreliable and so they need to be guided by the law. The tragedy of the commons, prisoner's dilemma: individual decisions do not optimise social utility without some external guidance. So submission to authority is needed.
- Candidates may appeal to actual human societies to argue that they all exhibit authoritarian structures and so this is natural or necessary. The alternatives, anarchism, communism, have shown themselves to be unworkable in practice. So political authority is necessary.

AO3

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

- Candidates may argue that human nature cannot be known, or that there is no such thing as an essential or fixed human nature, and conclude that we cannot draw any inference about what's necessary and what isn't for us.
- They may argue for a positive account of human nature which allows us to live without submitting to political authority and hold out the possibility of a communist or anarchist utopia.
- Alternatively, they may say that political authority is desirable because of the social benefits it affords us, although alternatives are still possible.
- Or they may agree with the quotation and defend a liberal or conservative account of the need for political authority.

0 4 Assess whether nations have rights.

(50 marks)

AO1

Candidates may offer a definition of a nation, eg a nation as a group of people united by a common national identity, based on a shared tradition, culture, language, system of belief, and/or geographical region, etc. Membership is normally considered to be non-voluntary. Members of a nation feel closely bound together and share a collective understanding. They have special reciprocal obligations to other members of the nation. They possess a national character and may define themselves (in part) in terms of their national identity.

The nation may be contrasted with the state: a political union with a government claiming authority over a certain territory. The nation-state as the coincidence of the two.

If a nation has rights, they are held by the nation as a group and are not the rights of the individual members. In the same way duties that arise from a nation's rights are owed to the nation as a group, and not to the individuals that constitute it. The principal right thought to be possessed by nations is the right to self-determination (to become nation-states), although others may figure, such as the right to non-interference to protect and preserve the national culture or language.

A nation's rights could be grounded in will (choice, agency) or interest. Thus if a nation can make autonomous choices then it could be accorded rights. Alternatively, if a nation could be shown to possess interests as a group, then it could be said to have rights.

A nation's rights may be considered moral or legal. For a nation to have legal rights, it would have to be accorded the status of a nation by some international body, such as the UN. But if they are moral, such rights could precede any such recognition.

AO2

Arguments for:

A necessary condition of being a group which can bear rights would be having the required degree of unity and identity. It cannot be a mere aggregate of individuals.

Arguments that nations possess such unity and identity:

- Nations are more than a mere aggregate of individuals since the members feel a special sense of unity and national identity, a shared history, culture, land, etc which binds them together.
- Nations are more than mere aggregates because a nation is an entity which is distinct from and not reducible to its members. This is shown by the fact that a nation's identity is preserved while the membership changes, eg across the generations.
- To have rights a nation must have interests which are not reducible to the sum of the interests of the members. And nations do have such interests, eg the right to self-determination. A nation's right to self-determination cannot be the product of its members' rights to self-determination since an individual's right concerns only how to live his or her own life, and cannot concern how other members of the nation should live theirs.
- Interest theories of rights: if a group has interests then it has rights. Since nations can be treated unjustly or justly, qua group of people, then they have rights.
- If rights are legal, then any nation accorded rights by an international body will have rights. This may mean that a people can only have rights once they have international recognition.

Candidates may also argue that a necessary condition of a nation's having rights is to have a moral status over and above that of its members. Will theory suggests that to be a moral agent (or person) a nation must be capable of making decisions and so acquiring responsibilities and duties. So can nations be moral agents? Candidates may argue that states with formal decision making structures (such as constitutions, elections, parliaments, governments, etc) which are capable of intentional action and making choices for which they can meaningfully be held responsible, are moral agents and so possess rights (French).

Other arguments:

- Appeals to the moral imperative to grant a people certain rights. For example an oppressed minority's claims to the right to self-government or preservation of its culture may appear morally compelling. Specific examples may figure.
- If the democratic will of a group is to govern itself, then it has a *prima facie* right to do so.
- If the international arena is a Hobbesian state of nature, then states have the natural right to self-preservation.
- According a nation rights may have benefits for the members. If a nation's right to defend its culture and govern itself is upheld this will promote, eg a more harmonious society, one which is more egalitarian, one which is capable of defending its citizens against foreign military aggression, or against the forces of global capital.
- The view that a nation's rights are held in common by the members rather than by the group as a distinct ontological category (Raz).

Arguments against:

Groups are not distinct ontological entities from their memberships. A nation is an artificial category, not a natural kind with any genuine integrity. Contrasts between the genuine unity possessed by human persons and a nation may be used to show that nations cannot possess the necessary unity to be rights bearers.

The international arena is a Hobbesian state of nature, so moral discourse cannot be meaningfully applied to (nations and) states.

Nations cannot have rights since only individual human beings possess genuine moral agency, and a nation is nothing over and above the individuals that make it up. The 'choices' made by nations are always in the last analysis the choices of human agents. Moreover it is human beings who are the proper objects of moral concern since they are sentient (and can suffer), which a nation is not (and cannot). So rights must be possessed by individual members of the nation, not the nation as such.

Rights to be meaningful would have to be enforceable.

Only human agents are intrinsically valuable as ends in themselves. So groups can only be of instrumental value to human agents.

Will or choice theories of rights: Nations can only have rights if they have the formal institutional structures to be moral agents and so can make collective decisions/choices. So not all nations, only nation states, have rights.

The idea of a 'natural right' as 'nonsense on stilts': rights can only exist if there is a legal framework to uphold them. So nations have rights just if international law recognises such rights.

Worries about where ascription of rights will lead:

- The problem that some nation's rights will conflict with others, eg the right to self-determination over a particular territory.
- If we accord nations rights, they may be able to hold rights against their members, but then how do we resolve conflicts with individual (human) rights? According nations rights may undermine human rights. If membership is non-voluntary can it be just for the nation to hold rights over the individual? Should individual's rights be sacrificed to the rights of the nation, eg sacrificing one's life for the sake of the nation's right to self-determination? Can a notion appeal to its right of freedom from external interference while it abuses its citizens' human right?
- Candidates may question how a nation can impose duties upon its members when other groups do not. Do my duties as a Muslim trump my duties as an Englishman?

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 candidates may agree that any group of people that has the necessary unity and sense of national identity to be recognised as a nation has certain rights, eg to self-determination.
- Alternatively, they may argue that only certain nations possess rights, since alongside a degree of unity, there needs to be some further factor, eg recognition by an international body, possession of established governmental institutions which allow the nation to make choices.
- They may argue that there is no metaphysical fact of the matter, but that it is up to us to decide (on pragmatic or utilitarian grounds) whether we will accord nations rights.
- At the other end they may argue that no nation can have rights.

Section C: Epistemology and metaphysics

0 5 'The claim that universals exist independently of particulars creates more problems than it solves.' Discuss.

(50 marks)

AO1

The question is about the problem of universals and candidates are likely to begin by explaining the meaning of the key terms and the nature of the problem. Particulars are individual things, they are unique and unrepeatable and exist in a specific place and time (eg this pen, this desk). Universals are the qualities possessed by different particulars. They are the referents of general terms. They are what particulars have in common, and are repeatable (the many desks are instances of the universal 'desk').

The problem concerns how we are to make sense of relations of similarity between particulars. What is the ontological status of universals? And how are they related to particulars?

The claim in the question is most naturally identified with an extreme realism about universals (such as found in Plato): the view that the universal exists over and above the particulars that instantiate it. Universals are therefore independent of the mind (*pace* conceptualism) and are not reducible to relations of resemblance between particulars (*pace* nominalism). (Note, however, that it is possible for candidates to see the claim as compatible with conceptualism, insofar as it treats universals as dependent on the mind rather than particulars. Moreover, more moderate forms of realism deny that universals exist independently of particulars, eg Aristotle).

Particular versions of extreme realism may figure, most likely Plato's theory of forms in which the One (universal or form) is said to 'participate in' the Many (particulars) while having independent existence. Forms occupy an immaterial realm which is eternal, immutable and more real than the physical realm where things 'wander in change and decay'.

The question asks candidates to consider the problems that are created and solved by postulating the independent existence of universals, and stronger responses will maintain focus on this issue.

AO2

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

Problems solved by postulating the independent existence of universals:

- A universal is not augmented or diminished by the destruction or creation of a particular in which it is instantiated, nor do we destroy a universal by destroying the whole class of particulars which instantiate it.
- Experience shows unequivocally that particulars can be qualitatively identical. For them to share qualities they must have something in common which is independent of the particulars (Plato).
- Universals solve problems in the theory of knowledge. Particulars are subject to change and so cannot be the proper objects of knowledge. If knowledge is possible it must be of what is unchanging, ie of universals, and so they must be real (Plato).
- Without appeal to the independent existence of universals with which we are acquainted we have no means of accounting for our ability to recognise particulars (Plato). Universals must be postulated in order to make sense of the uniform nature of human experience.
- Universals must be objectively real since otherwise there could be no such things as natural kind terms which denote mind independent features of the world. There must be real commonality in nature, otherwise general claims could not be true. Candidates could refer to the successes of the sciences in support of this view.
- Russell's point that there has to be at least one universal, viz resemblance.

- Universals must exist independently of particulars, since otherwise there would be nothing for general terms to refer to. But in that case we would not be able to speak meaningfully about them, which we clearly can.

Problems created by postulating the independent existence of universals:

- The problem of universals can be solved without postulating independently existing universals and the reification of universals overpopulates our ontology: Ockham's razor. This point is linked to alternative solutions - conceptualism and/or nominalism are more ontologically parsimonious – but focus should be maintained on the problems with extreme realism.
- Universals, unlike particulars, are queer sorts of entity. They are singular and yet present in many particulars at the same time (are repeatable). They are not material. They are knowable yet not perceived by the senses. So postulating the independent existence of universals is problematic for a common sense or empiricist view that what is real must exist in space and time and that what is known must be observable.
- Theories that treat universals as dependent on particulars often say that the universal is physically located in the same place as the particulars that instantiate it. But it does not make sense to say that one universal is 'wholly present' in more than one place at the same time. Candidates may refer to Plato's discussion of a sail spread out over an area (*Parmenides*). But if they are not physically located the realist has a problem explaining how they can enter into causal relations with material things. Also if they are not physically located they surely cannot interact with our sense organs leading to the further problem of how we can come to know them.
- It is a mistake to suppose we need to postulate a real entity as the referent of general terms in order for them to be meaningful. Meaning as use. There are no necessary and sufficient conditions for the correct application of any general term to a particular, eg 'game' (Wittgenstein).
- 'Nature makes no leaps' so that our concepts do not 'carve nature at the joints'. Any system of classification is arbitrary or imposed by mind.
- The third man argument.
- If universals exist independently of particulars, then we need to explain what makes it the case that a universal is instantiated by *these* particulars rather than others. But introducing a relation of 'instantiation' that ties universals to particulars does not explain this, since the relation of instantiation is itself a universal, and so we need to explain how instantiation itself is instantiated by things it ties together; introducing a further relation, instantiation, which leads to regress (Bradley).

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments and candidates should attempt to form a judgement on whether or not extreme realism creates more problems than it solves.

Some candidates are likely to interpret the question as requiring a weighing up of the problems created and solved and so lead them to conclude that on balance there are either: more problems solved than created, or more created than solved, or about even.

Others will try to form a judgement on whether or not universals have independent existence. Those supporting extreme realism may go on to argue that it is reasonable to postulate the existence of universals because they provide the best explanation of relationships of resemblance between particulars. Some candidates may contrast the success of extreme realism in this regard to the alternatives, although this is not a requirement of the question and focus on the view expressed in the question should be maintained.

Some candidates rejecting extreme realism are also likely to recommend an alternative account of universals, although, again, this is not a requirement of the question and discussions of alternatives need to maintain focus.

The principal alternatives are:

- Aristotelian (strong) realism: universals are real, but do not have existence independent of particulars. They exist in several particulars at once, but are nothing over and above the qualities of particulars.
- Conceptualism: Universals don't exist independently of particulars, rather they are ways of categorising experience which we impose upon reality.
- Nominalism: Universals are nothing over and above the relations of resemblance that obtain between particulars.

0 6 'Sceptical arguments show that knowledge is impossible.' Assess this claim.

(50 marks)

AO1

Candidates may begin to address the question by investigating the concept of knowledge and so introduce the tripartite analysis: knowledge as justified true belief.

However the focus of the discussion should be on scepticism about the possibility of knowledge. Sceptical arguments typically try to show that we cannot know that some sceptical scenario is false, and since knowledge (in some domain or more generally) relies on it being false, that we cannot have knowledge. Candidates may discuss scepticism in general, but most likely they will select from the range of sceptical arguments studied. The most pertinent to the question will be those which lead to global scepticism, scepticism about the possibility of knowledge as such, however local sceptical arguments raising doubts about the possibility of knowledge within a particular domain are also relevant.

[It is possible that some candidates may interpret the question as concerned with the possibility of 'objective and absolute knowledge' and so discussion of arguments for relativism should be credited. Knowledge claims are conditional; they are relative to systems of beliefs, conceptual schemes, paradigms, cultures, biological heritage etc. However, relativism is not the same as scepticism so such responses risk losing focus on the question].

AO2

The sceptical arguments most likely to figure:

- Candidates focusing on scepticism about the senses are likely to emphasise the difficulty of moving from appearance to reality, from immediate sense-data to knowledge of the physical world. Illusions, time lag, hallucinations, dreaming, should figure. Scepticism about the possibility of knowledge of the very existence of the physical world, most likely Descartes' evil demon, or the brain-in-a-vat scenario, is also likely to feature. Also possible are discussions of Humean scepticism about knowledge of causal relations, of the past (Russell), or of the future.
- A related consideration is that if we are only ever directly aware of the contents of our own minds, then we cannot have access to external criteria for knowledge.
- The infinite regress of justification.
- If knowledge is justified true belief, what counts as sufficient justification? Whether certainty is necessary for knowledge. If we define justification in such a way as to prevent the possibility of being mistaken, then knowledge may well be impossible.
- Defeasibility: It is always possible for the justification of any belief to be defeated by facts unknown to the subject. But if we can never know we are properly justified in holding a belief, then this may be taken to imply that knowledge is impossible.
- The physical world is too unstable to be the object of genuine knowledge (Plato).

Arguments to overcome scepticism:

- Problems with moving from local to global scepticism. Certain sceptical scenarios may be argued to rely on knowledge they claim to doubt and so are self-defeating.
- Specific arguments to meet the brain-in-a-vat scenario, (eg Putnam, the meaning of the claim to be a brain in a vat would be empty because it would fail to refer to anything; the whole scenario is empty since it makes no practical difference/cannot be verified/falsified); infinite regress problem against BiV scenarios).
- Radical scepticism relies on an overly strict definition of knowledge, eg infallibilism requires that we eliminate the possibility of error. If this demand is seen as unreasonable an alternative account of what constitutes knowledge might be defended.
- While knowledge is indeed impossible of reality we can have knowledge of appearances. Phenomenalism closes the gap between appearance and reality and defeats scepticism.
- Arguments from common sense: certain claims, such as those about externally existing physical objects (eg Moore's hands) are epistemically basic. It makes no sense to doubt such beliefs. Alternatively it could be argued it only makes sense to call knowledge what can be doubted (Wittgenstein).
- Even if it is possible to doubt certain beliefs, this doesn't mean that they are *doubtworthy*. In the absence of good reason to doubt them we are justified in calling them 'knowledge'.
- Arguments from ordinary language: 'knowledge' gets its meaning from its use in everyday linguistic contexts and there are criteria which we use to determine the correct use. The sceptical use of the word takes it from this context and so misuses the word.
- Mitigated scepticism and the view that although radical scepticism shows knowledge is strictly speaking impossible, instinct is a more powerful basis for belief than reason.
- Transcendental arguments: what are the conditions of possibility for the sceptic's argument to be intelligible? Kantian arguments about the conditions of possibility for objective experience being the positing of an external reality.
- Knowledge is possible in certain domains and so defeats global scepticism, eg knowledge of one's own conscious states or sense data, of mathematics or a priori truths, of the forms, of my own existence as a thinking thing, of the basic propositions of common sense.

Arguments for relativism may figure, eg:

- Different societies make different knowledge claims and there is no way of adjudicating between them. Therefore these claims are equally valid and knowledge is not absolute.
- Knowledge of reality requires conceptual organisation, but no conceptual scheme describes reality as it is, or 'carves nature at the joints', and so knowledge is relative to our conceptual scheme. There may be discussion of Kuhnian paradigms.
- If knowledge is justified true belief, and standards of justification are internal to cultures, or language games, then there can be no objective standards to knowledge. [counter that this is paradoxical]
- Nietzschean perspectivism: our values determine how we interpret the world; the very idea of objective knowledge as an expression of the will to power.
- Responses to relativism may also be explored, eg that scientific progress involves convergence on the truth; that there are objective criteria for justification of knowledge claims; that knowledge claims presuppose objectivity.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments and candidates should come to a reasoned judgement concerning whether or not knowledge is possible in general.

Alternatively, they may argue that knowledge is possible in certain domains, eg mathematics, or of the contents of one's own mind, but not in others, eg of the future, or of the physical world.

Candidates may point out that to deny that knowledge is possible raises the question of the status of this denial. Is it known or not? If not, then it may not be a worthwhile judgement, if it is, then at least one thing is known and it is false.

Candidates 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).

Candidates may distinguish propositional from practical knowledge and knowledge by acquaintance and may argue that the latter are possible, while the former is not.

Section D: Moral philosophy

0 7 Assess the view that it is possible to have knowledge of moral truths.

(50 marks)

AO1

The view expressed is a cognitivist position and candidates are likely to begin by outlining what this entails. Moral judgements express beliefs or propositions and so admit of truth and falsehood. Moral discourse is objective.

This view is likely to be associated with realism: the idea that moral judgements concern a moral reality and so that there exist moral facts. Moral judgements refer to such facts and are true just when they accurately describe them.

The view may be further explored through discussion of particular cognitivist theories, such as Platonic realism, naturalism (utilitarianism, virtue ethics), Kantian ethics, intuitionism, the view that moral judgements concern relational properties, (divine command and natural law ethics could also figure).

It is possible for candidates to see the view as consistent with subjectivism insofar as moral judgements are seen to describe people's attitudes and so can be known.

The view can usefully be contrasted with non-cognitivism and the claim that moral statements do not express propositions, eg because they are expressions of attitude or exclamations.

AO2

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

Arguments for the view:

- We experience morality as something that is binding and objective (eg through our feelings of conscience and duty). The best explanation for this is that there exists an objective basis for moral prescriptions and that it is possible to know what these prescriptions are.
- Candidates might appeal to our certainty about the wrongness of certain actions. Such conviction is best explained if we do indeed know that they are wrong.
- They might also appeal to the near universal assent to certain moral judgements found across different cultures and eras. This is best explained if moral judgements are items of knowledge.
- Moral argument presupposes a commitment to the possibility that our moral opinions can converge on the truth, which suggests that moral discourse is objective.
- If there were no moral facts and no possibility of knowledge in morality, then we would be able to choose to value whatever we wanted. However, there are natural constraints upon what we can meaningfully value qua human beings.
- Moral judgements have a descriptive meaning relating to our reasons for action.
  So there can be a fact of the matter about whether some state of affairs represents a moral reason for a human being to act in a certain way. If morals are relational properties in this way, then moral judgements do admit of truth or falsehood and so are, in principle, knowable.
- The analogy with secondary qualities may be used to defend cognitivism. If humans are so constituted as to value certain aspects of the world, then these values are knowable as facts about human beings.

Particular accounts of how moral knowledge can be attained are likely to be explored:

- Plato's forms. We can investigate the essential nature of moral ideas by *a priori* reflection (the dialectic).
- Kant's view that we can discover our moral duties through the use of practical reason.
- Virtue ethics: Reflection on human nature gives practical knowledge of how to live.
- Hedonism/utilitarianism: The fact that human beings universally recognise pleasure or happiness as the ultimate goal of all action, shows that maximising happiness must be the ultimate good we ought to aim at.
- Cultural relativism: morals judgements are expressions of culturally determined values. These can be discovered by empirical investigation and so are knowable.
- Moral judgements are expressions of our feelings of sympathy for others. Knowledge of how humans feel is possible.

Arguments against the view:

Candidates may attack realism, although more focused answers will be clear about the implication of any arguments for cognitivism and the fact that moral knowledge appears to presuppose the existence of moral facts.

- Moral opinions motivate us to act in certain ways. But this means they must be necessarily connected to our desires. But in this case moral propositions must be to do with how we want the world to be, not with how it is, and so do not admit of truth and falsehood. Thus moral propositions are non-cognitive.
- The argument from queerness: Moral cognitivism is committed to a faculty of moral perception radically unlike any other faculty.
- Humean considerations: Empirical investigation cannot discover any fact of the matter corresponding to our moral judgements. Hume's law: no factual description of an action can entail a value judgement concerning it, the is-ought gap.
- Logical positivism: Moral judgements do not to admit of empirical test or *verification* so moral judgements are meaningless and not candidates for truth or falsehood.
- The open question argument and the naturalistic fallacy: Naturalistic attempts 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 terms do not describe natural facts and so moral judgements cannot be true or false.
- The relativity of moral judgements (eg across different cultures) suggests they are not objective and not determined by the facts and so not knowable.
- Moral judgements are expressions of our freely chosen values. There is nothing in the nature of things which can determine them and make them true, and so they are not items of knowledge.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments and candidates should reach a judgement about whether we can have knowledge of moral truths.

They may argue that moral judgements admit of truth and falsehood and that they can be known. Different accounts of how we can acquire such knowledge may be defended (Plato, Kant, naturalism, intuitionism, that they are relational properties, cultural relativism, etc).

They may argue that moral judgements admit of truth or falsehood, but still are not knowable since weighing up the reasons is never conclusive.

At the other end they may argue that moral knowledge is not possible. This may lead them to defend an anti-realist position such as emotivism, prescriptivism, or error theory.

0 8 Discuss a moral problem of your choice and consider how one or more of the ethical theories you have studied might resolve it.

(50 marks)

AO1

Candidates should demonstrate understanding of a particular moral problem, issue or dilemma. The issue to be discussed is open, but credit should be given for the level of detail of the problem candidates are able to draw on.

They are also asked to discuss one or more ethical theories, and it is expected that candidates will employ utilitarianism, deontology and/or virtue theory, and marks should be awarded for the level of understanding of the theory or theories shown and of their application to the moral problem.

- 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. Practical wisdom does not consist of a set of rules that could be taught but must be developed through practice.
- Utilitarianism recommends acting in such a way as to maximise aggregate happiness. Act and rule versions may figure. The right action as what maximises the satisfaction of preferences.
- Deontology recommends following one's duty. Different accounts of how we discover our duties might be explored, most likely Kant although contract theory, natural law, Ross's prima facie duties could also figure.

AO2

Material candidates may draw on is extensive and will depend on the nature of the problem selected for discussion. AO2 marks should be awarded according to the level of philosophical detail in the discussion of the moral problem and the normative theories employed, and examiners should, as always, refer to the generic mark scheme when awarding marks.

Candidates can access the full range of marks whether they elect to discuss one, two or three moral theories.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion and candidates should try to reach a resolution of the problem.

Note that the question doesn't require candidates to make a judgement about the merits of the moral theory or theories they discuss. Nonetheless, AO3 marks can be awarded for evaluative points made concerning the theories and how effective they are.

Section E: Philosophy of religion

0 9 Assess the claim that it is irrational to believe in God on the basis of faith alone.

(50 marks)

AO1

The nature of faith might be explored. Faith as a kind of trust or confidence in God. Candidates might contrast belief *in* God with the belief *that* God exists, with the former associated with faith. Faith involves belief which is not based on proof. It is a type of belief involving the acceptance of revealed truth which cannot be established by reason (Aquinas).

Candidates might explore the distinction between natural theology, discovering religious truths through reason and experience, and revealed theology, as the route of faith which accepts on insufficient evidence.

The claim may be identified with evidentialism: the view that we should only believe what we have good evidence for believing (Clifford). Insofar as faith goes beyond the evidence it must be irrational.

Evidentialism may be contrasted with fideism, the view that faith is the proper route to religious belief.

AO2

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

Defences of the claim:

- Defences of evidentialism: Hume's assertion that the wise man proportions his beliefs to the evidence. Empiricist, scientistic, verificationist or falsificationist considerations: genuine knowledge must be grounded in experience; religious belief is not factually significant and so irrational.
- Psychological and or social-scientific accounts of religious belief formation may figure to show that they are irrational.
- Arguments against pragmatic arguments, such as Pascal's wager, eg that faith of this sort would not be accepted by God as genuine; objections to doxastic voluntarism: we cannot choose our beliefs; the many other possible religious beliefs we ought also to choose.
- Kierkegaard could be used in defence: the leap of faith in the face of the absurd. Faith is indeed irrational, but it is also necessary for us to have a passionate commitment to God.
- Flew's version of the Parable of the Invisible Gardener or Hare's Lunatic Student may be used to show that faith flies in the face of reason. Insane *bliks*, while meaningful, have no empirical grounding and so are irrational.
- Aquinas' view that belief in the existence of God cannot be an article of faith since faith involves accepting divinely revealed truths and so presupposes the existence of God. So God's existence is demonstrable.
- Aquinas at the merit of faith since it is not determined by its object.

Arguments against the claim:

- Reason and experience alone cannot lead us to full knowledge of God's nature, and thus faith in revealed truths is necessary for *salvific* knowledge of Him (Aquinas). It is reasonable to accept certain revealed truths on faith.
- The arguments for the existence of God (natural theology) fail, so faith is needed to bridge the epistemic gap.

- Pragmatic arguments: Pascal: reason cannot determine the issue either way. Faith in God is prudential and so rational. The wager. It may be rational to live a religious life as this provides other pragmatic benefits in terms of personal fulfilment, positive commitment to an ethical life. Without a belief in God moral nihilism may follow.
- Reformed epistemology: Not all beliefs can be based on further beliefs, so some must be properly basic. Religious belief as basic in this sense, the product of the proper functioning of the human mind (Plantinga).
- 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.
- Faith as a response to an ultimate question and no more rational/irrational than the alternative.
- Plantinga's reductio of Flew's falsificationism.
- Religious belief as an attitude of trust and commitment. Belief in God as committing one's life to him. Kierkegaard's leap of faith could also figure as a criticism of the claim.
- Kant's moral argument and the claim that God's existence is a postulate of practical rather than of pure reason. A traditional proof of God is impossible, so making room for faith.
- Anti-realist approaches to the question of religious belief are also likely to figure. Belief-in need not be irrational if it is not a matter of commitment to the independent existence of a transcendent being. It is not irrational to hold on to such religious beliefs (*bliks*) on faith if they figure one's entire belief system.
- Faith as an interpretive act, the apprehension of divine presence within experience. The religious interpretation is on a par with all interpretations of reality and so is rational (Hick).
- Wittgenstein inspired arguments: Faith is part of the religious form of life and is the belief in terms of which one's experience is constituted. It is not irrational (but non-rational) to have faith since canons of (scientific) rationality don't apply.
- There are no universal standards of rationality, rather they are internal to a culture or discourse. So scientific and religious languages are incommensurable and on their own terms religious claims are rational (Winch).
- Disanalogy between religious beliefs as basic and beliefs about eg physical objects because former are not universal. Even if they are basic to a system of beliefs doesn't mean the whole system can't be rejected.
- No possible test to determine whether a naturalistic or divine explanation of experiences. Not competing hypothesis.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments which should be employed to support a judgement about whether it is irrational to believe on the basis of faith. A range of positions is possible.

- At one end they might support extreme fideism. The only way to acquire religious belief is by faith. Faith is irrational, but nonetheless proper. Tertullian's claim that the resurrection is impossible and so certain. Reason as a barrier to religious belief.
- They might defend a form of Wittgensteinian fideism, according to which the religious form of life is legitimate on its own terms. It may not be possible to give epistemic justification for religious belief, but this misses the true purpose which is concerned with commitment or passion.
- A more moderate fideism might be defended according to which it is rational to believe on faith alone, eg because reason cannot establish the truth. Faith is supported by, but goes beyond, reason (Aquinas).
- Candidates may argue that it is indeed irrational to believe on the basis of faith alone, but go on to argue that it is also unnecessary, since natural theology gives us sufficient evidence for religious belief.
- It is rational to believe on insufficient evidence if the choice is living, forced and momentous (James).
- Alternatively, they may argue that it is irrational to believe on the basis of faith alone, most likely on evidentialist grounds, and go on to reject religious belief.

1 0 'To experience God is to know he exists.' Assess this claim.

(50 marks)

AO1

The question concerns the argument from religious experience to the existence of God. The quotation is most naturally interpreted as focused on the first person version of the argument; and the claim that religious experience provides the subject of experience with knowledge. This might be unpacked in various ways:

- My own experience provides a direct, non-inferential proof of God's existence.
- Experience of X equates to (or is a sufficient basis for) knowledge of X.
- Swinburne's Principle of Credulity: we should suppose our experiences to be veridical unless we have good reason to suppose they are not.
- It is impossible to doubt the veracity of an experience of God.
- The first person experience of God is self-authenticating, if you have one you know it is genuine.
- The religious life involves an immediate and indubitable awareness of the presence of God.
- Belief in God as basic.

The nature of religious experience itself might be explored (eg via Swinburne's 5 types; James' transient, ineffable, noetic, passive; or Otto's 'numinous', *mysterium tremendum*, and *mysterium fascinas*), mystical experience of union with God; spiritual awakening; ecstasy; near death experience, etc. Focus though should remain on experience of God, which could involve a singular experience of a transcendent reality, an awareness of his presence in the works of nature, or an on-going sense of God guiding one's life.

Candidates might also discuss the 3rd person version of the argument (Others have related their experiences of God. We have no reason to doubt their testimony. Therefore God exists) and Swinburne's Principle of Testimony (that we should suppose the testimony of others to be trustworthy unless we have good reason to suppose it is not).

AO2

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

In support of the view given in the quotation:

- Experience is an important source of knowledge concerning the existence of things so experience of God gives us a strong *prima facie* reason to believe he exists. Religious experience tells us that God exists in an analogous way to sense experience telling us that physical objects exist (HP Owen). Just because our experiences can be deceptive doesn't mean we should suppose it is in the case of religious experiences. Swinburne's Principle of Credulity; empiricist (all beliefs are grounded in experience); or positivist (scientific knowledge is based in observation) considerations might be invoked in support of this argument. Religious experiences are widespread and similar between people and so corroborate each other.
- Because they are often life-changing it is evident that religious experiences appear genuine to those having them. Also religious experiences often lead people to live better lives. Their good effects suggest they are genuinely from God. Hallucinations don't affect people's lives in the same way.

- If it is conceded that religious experiences often occur to people in unusual physical states, this doesn't establish that they are not veridical. To see the whole of Paris you need to go up the Eiffel Tower (Davies), and in the same way to experience God, you may need to be in an unusual physical state.
- While it is true that people from different religions describe their experiences of the divine differently, this doesn't show that there isn't some core experience which is the same for all (Otto). Or it may be that there is one God but that people interpret him in terms of their own perspective, heritage and religious background (the analogy of the blind feeling an elephant).
- Religious experience is self-authenticating and so to have one is sufficient to attain subjective certainty of God's existence. Such certainty might be said to equate to knowledge.
- Anti-realist approaches to the question of God's existence are also likely to figure. Religious experience as part of the religious form of life. Seeing the world in terms of basic religious beliefs (*bliks*) or attitudes constitute one's experience as experience of God (seeing as). So knowing God is equivalent to experiencing the world and living life in a religious way.
- The epistemic distance between the knower and the world means there is a 'cognitive freedom' in the way we interpret everyday experience. The believer's recognition of God in the world as a voluntary act of interpretation (Hick).
- Naturalistic explanations don't 'explain away' religious experiences. Candidates might question the scientific credentials of such explanations. What laws of nature are they based upon? Do they afford predictive power? Do they assume religious experience is delusory in order to then suggest an alternative?

Arguments against the claim that experience of God equates to knowledge of God:

- Sceptical arguments about the veracity of the senses may be invoked to argue that human experience generally is unreliable, although the mere possibility of error is no reason to regard religious experience as particularly unreliable.
- But the point can be developed that religious experiences appear particularly prone to sceptical attack, since they are preternatural. Naturalistic explanations for them are likely to be explored, eg that religious experiences often happen when in an unusual physical state, (eg Christ not eating in the desert). Expect references to mystical practices (self-flagellation, starvation); temporal lobe epilepsy; the 'God spot'; Pursinger's experiments; shamanism, ecstatic trances, to suggest religious experiences are not veridical.
- The difficulty of distinguishing a veridical experience from a dream or hallucination. To say that God has spoken to you in a dream is no more than to say you dreamed God spoke to you.
- Psychological explanations of religious experiences, such as wish fulfilment, might also figure. The need for security in a hostile world leads us to search for a father figure and so the experience of God is a projection (Freud). It may be argued that religious experiences tend to happen to religious people who have a desire to believe they are genuine. If such explanations can be given of religious experience and belief, then there is no reason to suppose they are veridical.
- Experience of an incorporeal, atemporal, transcendent being cannot be like other experiences which are confined to this world and as such claims about such experiences should be treated with caution. Indeed, perhaps it is incoherent to speak of 'experiencing' here. Given that experience of God must be radically unlike experiencing anything else, how are we to recognise it as an experience of God? Experience of a transcendent God being logically impossible.
- Religious experiences are not independently verifiable. They cannot be repeated and don't admit of independent checks. If it is not possible to conduct experiments to establish their authenticity they are not scientifically respectable. The verification principle or falsificationism might be used to argue that claims to have experienced God are meaningless.

- The fact that religious experiences are supposed to establish the existence of the God of a particular revealed religion can be used against their veracity. People from different religions have different gods revealed to them. Not all these experiences can be genuine since each religion denies the truth of the other. But if there is no reason to prefer one religion's experiences over the others', the veracity of all religious experiences must be equally doubtful (Hume).
- The explanation of differences between the experiences of different religious traditions that they interpret the same divine reality differently, may be criticised. For this involves making a conjecture that God can be presented differently. There is an interpretation that gets between us and the experience of God and so changes the logic of the argument from experience.
- Martin's response to Swinburne's principle of credulity that the absence of God in the atheist experience provides a strong *prima facie* basis for the claim that God doesn't exist.
- The claim that religious experiences are self-authenticating is viciously circular.

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.

- At one end candidates may support the view expressed in the quotation that religious experience provides the subject of experience with knowledge of God.
- Experience of God is to do with a form of life. For the believer such experience constitutes knowledge.
- Candidates might question whether the scientific point of view is appropriate here. Even if no one else is persuaded, from the first person perspective at least such an experience will make you believe, even if it can never provide scientifically testable evidence. Such belief could still be considered knowledge.
- Alternatively, they may accept that the subject of experience will be certain of the existence of God, but argue that this subjective certainty is not equivalent to knowledge. Knowledge might be said to require objective justification of some kind.
- Candidates might explore the problem of moving from individual testimony concerning experiences of God to making knowledge claims. While those who have had religious experiences may be convinced, the rest of us cannot know he exists.
- Candidates may argue that one's experience can only ever be of the appearance of God, and since we cannot know that such experiences are veridical (or have good reasons to suppose they are not) we cannot have knowledge of God in this way.

Assessment objective grid

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