Exam Practice: Answers

Section 1: The Metaphysics of God

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Question 1
Answers might include some of the following points:
- ‘God is supremely good’ can be taken to refer to the theological claim that, according to religious texts within monotheistic religions, God is all loving and omnibenevolent.
- ‘God is supremely good’ could also mean that God is perfect. In this sense – emphasised by Aquinas working within an Aristotelian tradition – God has no flaws or deficiencies and contains all perfections (including omnipotence, omniscience, immutability etc.).
- ‘God is supremely good’ could also mean that God is morally good, incapable of sin or of evil, and is the source of all goodness, establishing the moral law.

Question 2
Answers might include some of the following points:
- Non-cognitivism rejects the position that religious language expresses beliefs about that world that are true or false – so for a non-cognitivist there are no truth conditions attached to religious language.
- Non-cognitivism rejects cognitivism, i.e. the claim that religious sentences are meaningful only insofar as they are propositions or statements which express our beliefs about the world.
- Instead, non-cognitivism views religious language, such as ‘God loves the world’ as having a different function – for example as the expression of a ‘blik’ (Flew) or as a way of seeing the world (Wittgenstein).

Question 3
- A theodicy is an explanation or justification of why so much pain and suffering exists within a world created by an all-loving, omniscient, omnipotent God.
- Hick’s soul-making theodicy comes from the tradition of St Irenaeus and views a world of pain and suffering as a good thing: as a world in which humans are free to develop as spiritual beings, their souls can be strengthened and they work towards an understanding of God and the world. If the world was free from pain and suffering then humans would not have the opportunity to grow as moral and spiritual beings.
- So a world containing pain and suffering is better than a world without any, and this explains why an all-loving, omniscient and omnipotent God created a world with pain and suffering in.

Question 4
- The fallacy of composition is the fallacy that because every member of a group has a particular quality, then the group as a whole has a property. But this does not follow – as Russell points out, just because every member of the human species has a mother, it doesn’t follow that there is a mother of the whole human species.
- Cosmological arguments commit this fallacy when they move from the premise that every event has a cause to the conclusion that there must be a cause of the whole series of events.
- Just because a group of events share the property of ‘having a cause’ it doesn’t mean that the group as a whole also has the property of ‘having a cause’.

Question 5
The answer might include some of the following points:
• A deductive argument is one in which the truth of the premises, and the valid structure of the argument, guarantee the truth of the conclusion.
• For example: If all humans are mortal, and I am a human, then I am mortal.
• In a deductive argument the conclusion cannot go beyond the material already contained in the premises.
• An inductive argument is one in which the truth of the premises, at best, lead to a conclusion that is probably true. For example, when examining a finite number of cases (every raven I have seen is black) and drawing a conclusion about all cases (that all ravens are black); or when looking back at the past (the sun has always risen) to draw a conclusion about the future (the sun will rise tomorrow).
• In an inductive argument the conclusion includes material (e.g. about the future) that goes beyond what’s contained in the premises.

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Question 1
• Logical positivism puts forward the view that part of the work of philosophy is to restrict its discussions to only what is meaningful, and to identify and root out the parts of philosophical discourse which are meaningless or nonsense.
• Ayer developed a tool, the verification principle, to help determine what is meaningful and what is not meaningful. He argued that a claim was meaningful if it was synthetically true or false (it could be either verified or falsified by experience), or if it was analytically true (true by definition or by the meanings of the words).
• When applied to religious language, including claims such as ‘God loves the world’, the verification principle indicates that such statements are not analytically true (we cannot determine whether this claim is true simply by analysing the meanings of the terms). But nor are such statements synthetically true – we cannot verify the existence of God because God is a ‘transcendent being’, a being beyond experience.
• A logical positivist like Ayer concluded that religious statements are pseudo-statements – they look like ordinary statements but actually they are meaningless.

Question 2
• The Euthyphro dilemma presents problems for the claim that God is omnibenevolent, or supremely good.
• The two horns of the dilemma emerge when we ask ‘what makes God’s commands good?’:
  o Are God’s commands good just because they come from God? In which case everything that God commands will be good, by definition.
  o Are God’s commands good because they conform to an external moral source? In which case what God commands will be good insofar as they conform to that external source.
• Whichever horn of the dilemma that believers grasp presents a problem for their belief.
• If they grasp the first horn, then God might command horrific, terrible things (in the Old Testament God appears to tell his followers on some occasions to commit infanticide or even genocide) and those things would be good just because God commanded them.
• But in this case we cannot make sense of God’s goodness – it does not seem to be coherent to say that God is supremely good if on this interpretation such counter-intuitive commands are good.
• However believers grasp the second horn, then this places the ultimate moral authority beyond God, and means that we can by-pass God if we wish to be moral. It is this moral authority that is supremely good, not God.
• Thus in the second case as well it does not make sense to say that God is supremely good.
• So the Euthryphro dilemma undermines the coherence of God, by undermining the coherence of one of God’s essential attributes, namely God’s omnibenevolence.

**Question 3**

• Gaunilo was a contemporary of St Anselm’s and put forward an argument that highlights the possible flaws in the logic of Anselm’s ontological proof.
• Anselm’s proof hinges on his definition of God as the greatest conceivable being, and concludes that such a being must exist in reality.
• Gaunilo uses the same structure of Anselm’s argument to show that, if Anselm’s is right, we can prove the existence of other things, for example Perfect Islands:
  P1 We can imagine the greatest conceivable island.
  P2 It is greater for such an island to exist in reality, as well as in the imagination.
  C Therefore such an island, because it is the greatest, must exist in reality as well as in the imagination.
• This argument is problematic as we do not know if such a perfect island exists. So the conclusion is not true, we cannot prove the existence of such an island simply by deduction; we need to actually go out to find it to get evidence that it exists.
• If the conclusion to Gaunilo’s perfect island example isn’t true then his argument is invalid.
• But the logical form of Gaunilo’s argument appears to be identical to that of Anselm’s argument, and therefore this strongly points to the invalidity of Anselm’s argument too.

**Question 4**

• Descartes argues that his continuing existence (together with the idea of a perfect being) is enough to prove there is a God.
• Descartes examines the different possible causes for his continued existence and concludes that this can only be God.
• Formally, his argument might be summarised as follows:
  P1 The cause of my existence as a thinking thing must be
    a) myself,
    b) I have always existed,
    c) my parents, or
    d) God.
  P2 I cannot have caused myself to exist for then I would have created myself perfect. So a) is ruled out.
  P3 Neither have I always existed, for then I would be aware of this. So b) is ruled out.
  P4 My parents may be the cause of my physical existence, but not of me as a thinking mind. So c) is ruled out.
  C (By elimination) the cause of my continued existence must be God.

**Question 5**

An answer may cover some of the following points:

• Plantinga’s Free Will Defence is his response, as a theist, to the problem of evil, i.e. the problem of why there is so much pain and suffering in a world created by a supremely-good, omnipotent, omniscient being.
• Atheists, like Mackie, have argued that it is inconsistent to believe both 1) that there exists a God who is omnipotent, omniscient, supremely good and the creator and 2) that evil exists. Given that evil (in the form of pain and suffering) definitely exists, Mackie concludes that 1) must be rejected. However, Plantinga wished to demonstrate that there was no inconsistency in holding both beliefs – and in this sense his argument is a ‘Defence’ (showing there is no
inconsistency) rather than a Theodicy (which is a justification or explanation of why God permits the existence of evil).

- Plantinga, following in the tradition of Augustine, located the source of pain and suffering in human free will. It is important to theists, including Plantinga, that God gave humans the freedom to choose – but in doing so humans sometimes choose to do bad things, which causes pain and suffering.

- Atheists, like Mackie and Flew, also argued that an omnipotent God could have created a world in which humans had free will, but they always choose to do good, and never to cause pain or suffering.

- Plantinga’s argument hinges on showing that it would not be possible for God to create any world whatsoever. For example, it is not possible for God to have created a world in which humans freely choose never to cause any pain or suffering and only choose to do good.

- Plantinga’s Free Will Defence might be summarised as follows:
  P1 A world in which some beings (e.g. humans) have free will is a greater good than a world in which nothing has free will
  P2 God (omnipotent etc.) can create humans with free will.
  P3 God cannot cause a being with free will to do only what is morally right / never to do what is morally wrong
  C Therefore God can’t create a world in which a) humans have free will and b) they never cause pain or suffering.

- Plantinga doesn’t need to show that his conclusion (C) is definitely true, only that it is a logical possibility. In which case he has achieved what he set out to do, namely to show that the existence of God is compatible with/not inconsistent with, the existence of pain and suffering.

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Question 1
EXAM TIP: There are two main approaches to structuring ‘Compare and Contrast A and B’ type essays. The first approach is very simple:
1. Introduction
2. Identify and analyse the similarities between A and B
3. Identify and analyse the differences between A and B
4. Conclusion

The second approach is more complex, but shows you have a very good grasp of the material:
1. Introduction: identify the key elements that A and B consist of
2. Examine element 1 – analyse the similarities and differences between A and B
3. Examine element 2 – analyse the similarities and differences between A and B
4. Examine element 3 – analyse the similarities and differences between A and B
5. Examine element 4 – analyse the similarities and differences between A and B
6. Conclusion
Here’s an example of how you might take the second approach to this question below, and candidates may want to include some of the following points in their answers:

Introduction
- Flew emphasised the importance of the possibility of falsification in his analysis of language, and in particular religious language.
- Flew argued that for a sentence like ‘there is a gardener’ or ‘God loves the world’ to be meaningful it has to be a genuine assertion about the world (Flew is a cognitivist about religious
language). And for such sentences to be genuine assertions the person making them must be able to picture what the world would be like if those claims were false.

- In other words, Flew is arguing that religious language must be falsifiable if it is to be meaningful. The challenge to believers is Flew’s conclusion that believers never accept that their claims are falsifiable, and so their claims are meaningless.
- Mitchell and Hare responded to Flew’s challenge in different ways.
- But it is important to note that both Mitchell and Hare are responding from their perspectives as religious believers.
- The different elements of their response to Flew may be identified as follows: 1) Format (parables); 2) Underpinning theory (cognitivism, non-cognitivism); 3) Content and conclusion.

Element 1: The Format of the response
- As the starting point of the University Debate/Symposium Flew had used a parable (of the invisible gardener) to illustrate his attack on religious language, and persuade the audience of his position.
- Both Hare and Mitchell formatted their response in the same way – using parables to illustrate their arguments.
- Mitchell uses the parable of the Partisan, which tells the story of a resistance fighter in a war who believes that a Stranger is on his side, but sometimes appears to see that the Stranger is working for the enemy. The Partisan faces a difficult choice about what to believe, but he retains his belief, even though there is evidence which appears to falsify it.
- Hare also uses a parable in his response – the parable of the paranoid student. In this parable a student struggling with mental ill health starts to believe that his university tutors want to murder him. He holds on to this belief despite efforts by everyone around him to show that he is wrong (i.e. despite their attempts to falsify his belief).

Element 2: Underpinning linguistic theory
- Flew’s underpinning linguistic approach to religious utterances is that of cognitivism – most critically religious sentences are meaningful if they are falsifiable.
- Mitchell also takes Flew’s cognitivist approach, and uses his parable as part of his argument to show that Flew is right in one respect (we should expect religious utterances to be falsifiable if they are to be meaningful) but wrong in the most important respect (religious utterances ARE falsifiable and do represent genuine beliefs about the world, even if those beliefs are held onto in the light of conflicting evidence).
- Hare takes a different approach, closer to non-cognitivism. He uses his parable of the paranoid student to show how we all have blicks, underpinning foundational beliefs about the world, which cannot be falsified but which we can meaningfully express in language. Religious beliefs are a type of blick – they cannot be falsified but they are still meaningful.

Element 3: Content and conclusion
- Both Mitchell and Hare, through the content of their parables, come to differing conclusions about religious utterances – both compared to each other and compared to Flew.
- Flew concludes that religious utterances very much appear to express views held by believers which they will never, ever, give up – they are unfalsifiable. What they say is meaningless.
- Mitchell’s parable (of the Stranger/Partisan) shows how someone might hold a belief, whilst seeing evidence against it and being very much troubled by evidence against it (they may have a ‘crisis of faith’).
During this crisis they recognise their belief can be falsified, and understand what the world would be like for it to be falsified. But in the end they hold onto their original belief – they think that after all it hasn’t been falsified. For Mitchell what they say is still meaningful.

In contrast Hare’s parable shows how we all have beliefs (‘bliks’) that cannot be falsified, because they underpin all our other beliefs. So religious utterances are unfalsifiable – but this doesn’t make them meaningless.

**Question 2**
Answers may include some of the following points:

- Within a theistic tradition, the concept of God contains all perfections (including supreme goodness, omniscience, omnipotence etc.).
- We can define something as coherent if it generates no inconsistencies or has no internal contradictions – something is incoherent if it leads to inconsistencies/contradictions, or contains essential elements which lead to inconsistencies or contradictions.
- God’s omnipotence can be defined in broad terms as ‘having the power to do anything’ or in more narrow terms as ‘having the power to do anything which is logically possible, and which doesn’t undermine God’s other perfections’.
- The paradox of the stone is an example of a general type of problem for theistic accounts of an omnipotent God, namely: ‘can an omnipotent God use its powers to do something that limits its powers’. If God can’t use its powers to do this, then God is not omnipotent; if God can use its powers to do this, then God’s powers will be limited and God is not omnipotent.
- These types of paradoxes appear to reveal inconsistencies/contradictions within the concept of omnipotence.
- The paradox of the stone specifically poses this problem: Can God create a stone so heavy that God cannot lift it: 1) If the answer is ‘Yes’, then God cannot lift a stone, and so is not omnipotent; 2) If the answer is ‘No’, then there is something that God cannot do (create such a stone), and so God is not omnipotent.
- The concept of God is coherent insofar as it contains no internal contradictions, or upon close analysis it generates no inconsistencies.
- So a close analysis of the concept of omnipotence, tested by the paradox of the stone, appears to reveal that it is not coherent, which in turn undermines the concept of God. Since God contains within it the concept of omnipotence (itself incoherent) then the concept of God is also incoherent – according to our definition of coherence given above.

**Question 3**
- Cosmological arguments ask the question ‘why is there something (a universe), rather than nothing?’ and they conclude that the existence of God provides an explanation.
- Specifically, cosmological arguments from contingency raise the issue of how it is possible for the universe (and everything in it) to exist if it is contingent, i.e. dependent upon something else for its existence.
- Aquinas’ third way is one of the most significant arguments from contingency within the Western theistic tradition.
  - Aquinas begins with the observation that things in the world are contingent, they are impermanent, they come into existence and pass out of existence.
  - Aquinas notes that things that are contingent at some point didn’t exist – so it’s possible that if everything is contingent then at some point nothing existed.
  - It’s not possible for something to come from nothing (everything must have a cause – this is known as the causal principle). So if at some point nothing existed then there would be nothing now – which is clearly false.
Therefore there must be something that exists which isn’t contingent – whose existence is permanent, and necessary, i.e. dependent on nothing else for its existence.

This necessary being is God.

• So Aquinas is arguing that it’s not possible for everything in the universe, and the universe, to exist as contingent beings. His argument aims to demonstrate that contingent beings are dependent for their existence on something else – and this something else cannot itself be contingent, it must have a necessary existence.

• The necessary being of Aquinas’ conclusion is independent, depending on nothing for its existence. It is this being, whom Aquinas says we call God, which sustains and brings about all contingent beings in the universe.

Question 4
Responses may focus on Hume or on Ayer, or you may want to discuss both but in less detail:

Introduction
• The ontological argument is unique amongst the arguments for the existence of God, as it aims to prove by deduction that God exists, based on premises that can be known \( a \ priori \) and with an \( a \ priori \) conclusion. So if it succeeds its defendants think it has shown that God’s existence is certain.

• A version of the ontological argument based might take the following form (based on Descartes):

  \[\begin{align*}
  P_1 & \quad \text{God is the greatest conceivable being, containing all perfections.} \\
  P_2 & \quad \text{Existence is a perfection.} \\
  C & \quad \text{Therefore God (containing all perfections) must exist.}
  \end{align*}\]

• The ontological argument is vulnerable to objections made by empiricists, because empiricists like Hume and Ayer argue that we can’t prove the existence of anything without empirical evidence. Yet the ontological argument claims to prove the existence of God with no empirical evidence whatsoever, but just based on our understanding of the meaning of key terms like ‘God’ and ‘Perfection’.

• So it is the \( a \ priori \) approach of the ontological argument that makes it vulnerable to the empiricism of Hume and Ayer.

Hume’s objections
• Hume makes a distinction between two types of things that we know: matters of fact (which we know through experience – in modern terms ‘synthetic truths’) and relations of ideas (\( a \ priori \) knowledge, which we know through analysing those ideas and their connections – in modern terms ‘analytic truths’). This is Hume’s Fork. The ontological argument appears to fall into the category of ‘relations of ideas’.

• Hume provides us with a test of whether something is \( a \ priori \): deny it, i.e. say it isn’t true, and see if you’ve arrived at a contradiction. If you have a contradiction then the claim was \( a \ priori \). For example, ‘A triangle does not have three sides’ is a contradiction, so ‘A triangle has three sides’ is known \( a \ priori \).

• When we apply Hume’s test to claims about things that exist, we never arrive at a contradiction: ‘Aliens do not exist’ is not a contradiction (so ‘Aliens exist’ cannot be known \( a \ priori \)).

• Hume argues that there is no being whose opposite implies a contradiction – not even God: saying ‘God does not exist’ is not contradictory, and so ‘God exists’ cannot be \( a \ priori \) according to Hume.

Ayer’s objections
• Ayer was influenced by Hume, and his ‘verification principle’ (VP) is a version of Hume’s fork but applied to language and meaning, rather than to knowledge.
• According to Ayer’s verification principle, our claims are meaningful either because they are true by definition (a priori, analytic truths, tautologies), or because they are verifiable (synthetic truths).
• Ayer acknowledges that a priori claims are logically certain – but only because they are tautologies.
• If you combine a set of a priori claims together (which is what the ontological argument attempts to do) you are actually combining tautologies together. And combining tautologies only leads to further tautologies – it yields no further information, tells us nothing about what may or may not exist, and nothing about whether God may exist or not. And so ‘God exists’ cannot be a priori according to Ayer.

Conclusion
• If Hume is correct, then the conclusion of the ontological argument cannot be known a priori. The issue of God’s existence is a matter of fact, only proven through empirical evidence, and the ontological argument fails.
• If Ayer is correct, then the ontological argument also fails. Nothing at all can be demonstrated as existing simply on the basis of a priori claims – and therefore there is no possibility of proving deductively the existence of God.

Question 5
EXAM TIP: As with ‘Compare and contrast’ questions, there are different approaches to structuring ‘similarities and differences’ type questions:
1. Introduction; Part A – Similarities; Part B – Differences; Conclusion
2. Introduction; Theme 1 (similarities, differences); Theme 2 (similarities, differences), Theme 3 etc.; Conclusion

Below is an example of how the second approach could be taken, with points that could be included:

Introduction
• Both Paley’s and Swinburne’s arguments aim to persuade us that God exists on the basis of specific features of the universe, in particular that the universe contains clear evidence that it has been designed.
• When looking at similarities and differences between their respective arguments we need to consider the following: a) the structure of their arguments; b) the content of their arguments; c) the conclusion of their arguments.

Theme 1: Comparing the structure
• Swinburne is very clear that his design argument contains within it an argument from analogy.
• The crux of Swinburne’s argument is that the temporal regularities (or regularities of succession) that we see in nature are like those we observe as a result of free rational agency (the actions of humans).
• Swinburne concludes that the best explanation for regularities of succession that we see in nature is that they were brought about by a free rational agent of immense power, intelligence and freedom – i.e. God.
• In contrast, Paley’s watchmaker argument is not, straightforwardly, an argument from analogy. His book Natural Theology is full of analogies between the natural world and the world of machines, and so overall Paley does take an analogical approach. But Paley’s argument at the start of the book is not a straightforward analogy.
• Paley aims to show that any object that has certain features (consisting of parts that work together, towards a specific purpose) can be explained in terms of design. The universe has these features, so the universe can be best explained in terms of a supernatural designer, God.
• So although Swinburne and Paley adopt a different argument structure, both their arguments point towards the conclusion that a supernatural agent is the best explanation for the phenomena they’re trying to explain.

Theme 2: Comparing the content
• Paley and Swinburne both aim to construct their argument on the basis of evidence of design – order and regularity – that they see in the universe.
• Swinburne helpfully distinguishes between two types of order/regularity: 1) spatial order (or regularity of co-presence) which is the way objects fit together in space (e.g. the parts of an eagle’s eye); and 2) temporal order (or regularity of succession) which is the pattern of movement/change of objects over time (e.g. an apple falling from a tree).
• Paley and Swinburne focus on only one of these types of order.
• Paley draws on spatial order – arguing that only the existence of a Designer can explain how an eye works, or why peacocks have such extravagant tails, etc.
• In contrast to Paley, Swinburne focuses on temporal order (regularities of succession). This focus enables Swinburne to avoid the critical blow that Darwin and other biologists dealt to Paley’s argument (namely that spatial order can be explained by evolution without any reference to a supernatural being).
• For Swinburne regularities of succession can be explained either by the result of some natural law (like an apple falling from a tree) or by free rational agency (like a human throwing the ball) – and he concludes that natural laws can be best explained by the free rational agency of an immensely powerful and intelligent being.

Theme 3: Comparing the conclusions
• The most that Paley and Swinburne can conclude is that design in the universe (if there is any) must have been brought about by a being powerful enough to be brought about that design – they can’t go any further than that.
• They share the conclusion that the being who designed the order (whether spatial or temporal) in the universe must exist outside of the universe (is supernatural) and must have sufficient intelligence and power to be able to bring about order in the universe.
• But neither of Paley’s and Swinburne’s design arguments lead to the conclusion that God contains all the perfections – of omnipotence, of omniscience, supreme goodness etc.

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Question 1
Structure
In every essay you write you need to be clear about the conclusion that you will be arguing towards. Here are four possible conclusions that you might aim for in this particular essay (placed on a spectrum from a firm ‘yes’ drifting towards a definite ‘no’).

1. Yes, the criticisms (collectively or individually) are sufficient for us to conclude that the universe does not have a Designer.
2. Hume’s criticisms are sufficient for us to conclude that the design argument fails (i.e. they do not show that the universe has a Designer). This is subtly different from 1. (According to 2, the design argument fails, but that doesn’t mean we can conclude the universe doesn’t have a Designer, as there may be other arguments or other bits of evidence that we’ve missed.)
3. Hume’s criticisms are not sufficient to show that the universe does not have a Designer. But they are sufficient to show that the universe may not have a single Designer (there could be multiple designers) or that the Designer is not the perfect God that believers envisage. 

4. No, Hume’s criticisms are not sufficient to show that the universe does not have a Designer, and they do not enable us to conclude that the design argument fails.

One possible way of structuring your essay (below) is to take and assess each criticism in turn, in order to determine whether we can then conclude that the universe does not have a Designer.

EXAM TIP: The order in which you take the criticisms can really help you to structure your essay, so that it leads towards your conclusion. For example, if you want to argue that Hume’s criticism succeeds to some extent (either 1, 2 or 3, above) then you may want to start with what you think is the weakest criticism, and build up to the strongest of Hume’s criticism, as this final assessment will lead you neatly into the conclusion.

The structure of your paragraphs is also important. For example, at the end of your paragraphs you should include an assessment of whether Hume’s criticism succeeds or whether it fails.

Answers may include some of the following points.

A. Introduction
- Outline the design argument.
- Clarify the direction/position of your essay – which of the three conclusions above (or another conclusion you might have thought of) will you be arguing for?
- Outline your structure: e.g. that you’ll be examining each criticism in turn and assessing how far it supports your position.

B. Hume’s objections to arguments from analogy
- ‘Like effects have like causes’ wrote Hume, so if the universe has been designed like a machine has been designed then believers argue that there is a Designer of the universe. Hume argues that we can go even further with the analogy:
  - Machines are the product of trial-and-error, so perhaps many universes were ‘botched and bungled’ before this one was arrived at (not a conclusion that believers would subscribe to). Or perhaps this one is also a draft, before perfection is realised in a later version.
  - Machines are rarely the production of one individual – so perhaps there is a team of deities, each with their own special skill, who cooperated in designing this universe.
  - Even if their designs work perfectly, the designers themselves are flawed. They can be foolish and morally weak people. They are also mortal and die, even if their designs live on.
- Hume’s criticisms all undermine the conclusion that the Designer is God, in the way that God is usually conceived of (as omnipotent etc.).
- One issue counting against Hume here is that not all design arguments are arguments from analogy. Hume (through Cleanthes) puts forward one; there are aspects of analogue argument in Paley, and Swinburne definitely puts forward an argument from analogy.
- Swinburne accepts that his design argument is vulnerable to criticisms made against analogue arguments – his argument is only as strong as his analogy between the regularities of succession in human behaviour (e.g. the notes of a song) and the regularities of succession in nature.
• So a) Hume’s critical extension of the analogy only applies to a certain form of design argument (those from analogy), and b) the most Hume shows here is that the design argument cannot conclude the Designer is omnipotent, omniscient, supremely good etc.

C. Hume’s objection: There are lots of incidents of spatial disorder
• The design argument is based on regularities in the universe – including what Swinburne calls ‘spatial’ disorder, i.e. the way things fit together and work together.
• But Hume, through the voice of Philo, notes that our observations of the universe show just how much evil and disorder there is. And he also says that, compared to other universes, this one may be full of faults and imperfections. Hume concludes that if this evidence points towards a Designer then it is a Designer who lacks the resources or skills to create a more ordered universe (one who lacks the power or knowledge), or one who simply doesn’t care – perhaps even an ‘infant deity’.
• William Paley does not agree that evidence of disorder counts against the conclusion that a supernatural Designer designed the universe. It does not matter whether the watch we found on the heath works regularly or irregularly – either way it is evidence of design, as we’d still be able to observe the parts, working (mostly) together towards some purpose.
• Other philosophers, such as Plantinga and Hick, have worked hard to show that the existence of pain and suffering might appear to be a flaw in the construction of the universe, but actually is compatible with the existence of an all-powerful, supremely good, creator.
• So Hume’s criticism (which encompasses the problem of evil as an example of ‘spatial disorder’) does not lead to the conclusion that there is no Designer, and the most it can show is that there are potential flaws in the Designer (reflecting flaws in the design).

D. Hume’s objection: God is not the best or only explanation
• The design argument concludes that a supernatural Designer is the best explanation for the appearance of design in the universe. Hume through the voice of Philo, proposes alternative explanations for this appearance. For example:
  o Order/regularity in the universe could have emerged as a result of ‘vegetative’ or ‘generative processes’. This may have seemed a bizarre claim in Hume’s day, but now the best explanation of biological features within the universe are now held to be ‘vegetative’ process, namely evolution.
  o Order/regularity in the universe could be the result of random processes – referred to by Hume as the Epicurean hypothesis, after the Greek philosopher Epicurus. Order will emerge from chaos if there exists a finite number of particles in a finite space across an infinite amount of time. Again Hume may have been ahead of his time, anticipating aspects of modern cosmology.
• Swinburne argues that these alternative explanations only apply to ‘spatial order’ type design arguments (e.g. that of Paley) rather than to Swinburne’s ‘temporal order’ design argument. So neither the ‘vegetative process’ argument nor the Epicurean hypothesis successfully explain why there are physical laws of the universe.
• Moreover, Hume’s alternative explanations are only put forward as possibilities – and Hume provides little or no proof for them.
• So Hume’s criticism (that there are alternatives) only shows that the universe might not have a Designer rather than it does not have a Designer.

E. Hume’s objection: The design argument fails because it is an argument from a unique case
• This criticism goes to the heart of the inference from ‘there is order, regularity etc. in the universe’ to ‘there is a Designer’.
Hume, through the character of Philo, asks the rhetorical question 'have worlds been formed under your eye?' In other words, Hume is highlighting the lack of examples that proponents of the teleological argument have available to them to provide as evidence. They only have one example of a universe to examine, and they have zero examples of a universe being made or designed.

As an empiricist Hume would argue that this simply isn’t enough evidence to draw any conclusion about whether or not the universe has been designed.

Moreover, Hume is a radical empiricist. He argues elsewhere that even our ordinary concept of causation is just a matter of constant conjunction – the more we have experienced conjunction between two events, the more entitled we feel to infer that one caused the other. But in the case of the universe we cannot make any inference about the cause of the universe as we have never observed its origins.

Against Hume, 200 years later Swinburne argued that scientists often make inferences about the universe (e.g. that background cosmic radiation was the result of a Big Bang) even though it is a unique case.

So Swinburne defends the design argument by arguing that if scientists are able to make inferences on the basis of a unique case then theologians should also be able to.

However, Swinburne may be overstating his case. Scientists consider a huge range of observations and experiments (including the use of equipment like the Large Hadron Collider) to test and falsify, or verify, their theories.

So Hume’s empiricist approach raises a significant issue of doubt here, and Swinburne’s defence falls short. But that doesn’t mean we can conclude that the universe definitely does not have a Designer, it just shows that in its current form the design argument fails to show that the universe does have a Designer.

**F. Conclusion**

Answer the question and assess the collective impact of Hume’s criticisms:

- Hume’s various objections and conclusion, whether taken individually or collectively, do not lead us to the conclusion that the universe does not have a Designer.
- Instead Hume, mostly through the character of Philo, wishes to cast doubt on the conclusion of the design argument that there is a Designer who corresponds to most people’s idea of God.
- So what Hume’s arguments do show is that the design arguments do not succeed in their attempts to prove the existence of the God (omnipotent etc.) of the Philosophers, or the God of Abraham.
- But more than this, Hume’s empiricist attack on all design arguments shows that in their current form, and based on the current evidence (observations of only one universe, and not even of its origins) the design arguments fail to show that the universe has a designer.

**Question 2**

EXAM TIP: Consider spending 5 minutes or so, right at the beginning of the exam (after you’ve skimmed through the questions) writing down a skeleton answer/essay plan/mind map for the 25-mark questions, and getting all the points that you need to cover down on paper. Then go back and start with the 3-markers working through to the 5-markers etc. Time spent like this at the beginning of the exam, is an investment for you later in the exam. When you finally arrive at the 25-marker, you won’t be suddenly stressed by having to plan a new essay; you’ll already have an answer almost ready to go; and you will probably have thought of additional things that you can now add in. Happy days.

A response to this question might include:
A. Introduction
- Distinguish between two types of cosmological argument – from contingency and from causation – but both rest on our intuition that the universe requires an explanation – why is there something rather than nothing?
- Clarify that for the purposes of this essay you’ll only look at a causal cosmological argument.
- Pick and focus on just one cosmological argument – for example Aquinas’ second way. (In the run-up to the exam you could rewrite this practice essay a number of times picking on different cosmological arguments!)
- Clarify what you understand ‘proves’ to mean in this context – a sound deductive argument, i.e. one in which the premises are true, the structure is valid and hence the conclusion is true.
- Now you have a test which you can use within the structure of your essay:
  1. Are the premises of the argument true, and are any hidden assumptions also true?
  2. Is the formal structure valid, and free from fallacy?
  3. If the answer to both of the above is ‘yes’ then the conclusion should be true (this is worth double-checking though, just to make sure you haven’t made a mistake in 1 or 2).

B. Outline a causal cosmological argument
Aquinas argues that:

- P1 Every event has a cause – there is ‘an order of efficient causes’.
- P2 Nothing can be the cause of itself.
- P3 If the chain of cause and effect went back infinitely then there would be no first cause and, from P2, therefore nothing now.
- P4 Therefore the chain of cause and effect cannot go back infinitely.
- P5 Therefore there must be a first efficient cause, which is uncaused.
- C1 This first cause is God.

C. Are the premises of the argument true?
- **Premise 4** – Aquinas seems to be confusing a very long chain of events (which is finite) with an infinite chain of events. It’s true that a long chain of events needs a first cause (like a chain of hooks which must be attached to something) but an infinite chain needs no first cause.
- But the question remains, and this is the intuition underpinning the cosmological argument, even if there is an infinite series of events we can ask ‘why is there an infinite series of events?’
- Russell might respond to this question by saying ‘there just is’ – he doesn’t share the cosmological intuition that there must be an explanation for the universe.
- **Premise 1** – The causal principle is challenged by Hume who argues that we can only know things either because they are matters of fact or they are relations of ideas.
  - Is causation a matter of fact? For Hume – No. According to Hume when we properly analyse our concept of causation we find that it just describes our expectation that A will follow from B, because in the past we have seen B constantly conjoined with A. So asserting that ‘every event has a cause’ goes far beyond our experience and cannot be a matter of fact.
  - Is causation a relation of idea? For Hume – No. Hume has a test that tells us whether a knowledge claim is a relation between ideas: if we deny the claim do we end up with a contradiction? (e.g. ‘all bachelors are unmarried men’ when denied does lead to a contradiction). ‘Every event has a cause’ can be denied without contradiction (‘not all events have a cause’), and so it cannot be a relation of ideas.
  - Elizabeth Anscombe criticises Hume, arguing that we cannot really conceive of an event without any cause at all.
• But theoretical physicists can and do conceive of events without any cause at all - as Russell observes – within the theory of quantum mechanics there are events that are uncaused. So Anscombe’s defence falls short, and premise 1 looks vulnerable.

D. Is the structure valid and free from fallacy?
• There appears to be contraction between P2 and P5. Causal cosmological arguments argue on the one hand, that everything has a cause, and on the other hand that God doesn’t require a cause. Defenders of the cosmological argument could introduce the notion of God as a ‘necessary being’ at this point – the cosmological argument from contingency.
• A further structural criticism comes from Russell. He argues that the cosmological argument is guilty of the fallacy of composition. This fallacy applies to arguments of the following form: ‘Every individual member of a group has a particular property, X’, ‘The whole group is composed of these individuals’, ‘therefore the whole group also has this particular property X’.
• Russell highlights the absurdity of this form of argument as follows: ‘Every individual human being has a mother’, ‘the human species is composed of every individual human’, ‘therefore the human species has a mother’.
• Russell sees the cosmological argument as having the same form: ‘every individual event that has happened has a cause’, ‘the whole series of events is composed of every individual event’ ‘therefore the whole series has a cause’.
• So the structure of the cosmological argument may be fallacious, making it an invalid argument.

E. Conclusion
• So the cosmological argument (at least as presented by Aquinas in his 2nd Way) does not show that the universe has a first cause.
• Even if the premises were certainly true (which we’ve shown isn’t the case) and the logical form was valid (which it questionable), Aquinas isn’t entitled to conclude that a theistic God is the first cause. It could be a deistic god (i.e. a being who started the universe but has no subsequent involvement in it). And there’s no evidence within this argument that shows that such a God is omnipotent, omniscient or supremely good.
• The intuition that prompted the cosmological argument – why is there something rather than nothing? – isn’t experienced by all people. ‘The universe just is’ says Russell, and he’s happy with that.

Question 3
EXAM TIP A classic form of exam question asks ‘how successful’ an argument / theory is (or ‘to what extent’ and argument/theory succeeds). Responses to these types of questions fall into three broad categories:
• It is completely successful.
• It is partially successful.
• It is unsuccessful.

Again, you should decide at the planning stage (whilst drafting your essay plan/mind-map/skeleton essay etc.) which of these three approaches you’ll be taking.

Below is an example of how you might take the third approach.

EXAM TIP: Use questions as a way of structuring the main body of your essay. This can give clarity to your reasoning process, and will make clear the purpose of each of your paragraphs. This clarity can help persuade the examiner-reader that you’re a clear philosophical thinker.
A. Introduction
- Clarify whether you will be focusing on just one version of the ontological argument (e.g. Anselm’s) or more than one (e.g. Anselm’s and Malcolm’s).
- Outline the approach you’ll be taking in the essay – what will you be trying to show, what structure will your essay take? For example:
  a) an outline of Anselm’s primary argument;
  b) establishing criteria for a ‘successful argument’;
  c) assessing against each of these criteria whether Anselm’s argument is successful.

What is Anselm’s ontological argument?
- Anselm’s primary ontological argument takes this form:
  P1 God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived.
  P2 Even a fool can coherently conceive of God – so God exists in our understanding.
  P3 It is greater to exist in the understanding and in reality, not just in our understanding.
  C Therefore God must exist in reality (as well as in our understanding).
- The presentation of the argument in this form is as a deductive argument, based on premises (a definition of God, and an analysis of ‘greatest/greatness’) that are a priori. So if it is sound, i.e. if the premises are true and the structure is valid, then the conclusion must be true – and Anselm has shown that God exists.

What makes an argument successful?
What does ‘successful’ look like when applied to an argument for the existence of God. You could include here standard criteria (soundness, i.e. validity and truth) but also some broader criteria (as this will help make your essay less one-sided):
- Soundness: Successful deductive arguments have true premises, and are valid (free from structural flaws and fallacies).
- Robustness: Successful arguments are also ones that have stood the test of time, and their conclusions have survived scrutiny and criticisms.
- Insightfulness: Successful arguments are also ones that, together with their conclusions, give us a new way of understanding or looking at the world or at a concept.

Is the argument sound?
- In other words does it have true premises and is it valid?
- At first sight, although the argument may not ‘ring true’ (something Gaunilo explored), the premises don’t look obviously false. It is reasonable to define God in the way that Anselm defines God, and it is also reasonable to think of ‘existing in reality’ as greater than simply ‘existing in the understanding’.
- Gaunilo’s skill was in finding an argument with the same logical form, but with a conclusion that we would agree is not true. This should ring alarm bells for philosophers, as a flaw in an identically structured argument indicates a flaw in the original argument:
  P1 There is a lost island which is the most perfect of all islands (we can’t conceive of a more perfect one).
  P2 It is more perfect for the ‘most perfect island’ to exist in reality than simply in the understanding.
  P3 Therefore the most perfect island must exist.
- But the most perfect island might not exist (we have to actually go out and discover this) – therefore the conclusion does not follow from the premises.
- Because Anselm’s argument has the same logical form as Gaunilo’s argument, it also has a conclusion that does not follow from the premises.
Kant’s skill was in pinning down exactly what was wrong with the argument. Anselm (and others like Descartes) have been thinking of ‘exists’ as a property of God, something that a perfect God possesses. But, as Kant and Russell point out, existence is not a predicate. ‘There exists an omnipotent being’ means ‘there is a being in the world who is omnipotent’, and this requires further demonstration and evidence. And so the ontological argument (exemplified by Anselm’s version) is not sound, as there are flaws both in its premises and in its structure.

**Is the argument robust, having stood the test of time?**
- Not really. Gaunilo was quick to criticise it at the time, Schopenhauer called it a ‘conjuring trick’, Kant thought it was based on a complete misunderstanding of ‘existence’, as did Russell (and Russell’s analysis of existence has proved influential throughout the development of 20th Century analytical philosophy).
- The ontological argument is often seen as of logical/intellectual interest, rather than an argument to be used on the doorstep by believers trying to persuade non-believers of the existence of God. The cosmological and teleological argument seem much more successful for these purposes.
- However, the 20th Century philosopher Norman Malcolm did revive the argument believing he could identify in Anselm’s explanation a second version of Anselm’s ontological argument. But in general the ontological has not stood the test of time.

**Is the argument insightful?**
- What Malcolm saw in Anselm’s ontological argument was an insight that does throw light on what God means for Anselm, and other believers.
- Malcolm argued that God’s existence is necessary – and part of believers’ understanding of God is that God must exist. It was Anselm who brought this to the fore in his ontological argument.
- Although Malcolm’s argument is criticised for confusing logical necessity (tautologies) with ontological necessity, nonetheless his argument and his interpretation of Anselm reveals what it means to believe in God – it is belief in the existence of a being who must exist.

**Conclusion – overall is the argument successful?**
- If by successful we mean ‘insightful’ then yes, Malcolm’s interpretation of Anselm’s ontological argument is insightful, to believers and non-believers alike, as it helps clarify what the concept of God means to believers.
- But if by successful we mean ‘sound’ or ‘robust’ then no – the ontological argument appeared flawed right from its first appearance in Anselm’s work. However, critiquing the ontological argument led to an exploration of the concept of ‘being’ or ‘existence’ which has helped logicians since.

**EXAM TIP:** ‘If by X we mean Y then the answer is yes; but if by X we mean Z, then the answer is no’ can often be part of a strong, nuanced conclusion. It shows that you have understood the subtleties of the question, that you understand the importance of defining terms (‘X could be defined as Y’ or ‘X could be defined as Z’) in arriving at an answer to a question.

**Question 4**

**Introduction**
- The problem of natural evil is a specific version of the problem of evil, i.e. the problem which believers face in reconciling a) the existence of pain and suffering b) with the existence of God.
- In order to answer this question three key concepts need clarifying:
• ‘Entail’ – if A entails B then A is logically leads to B (and B is a logical consequence of A).
• ‘God’ in the context of this question is understood to mean the God of the philosophers (Anselm, Descartes etc.), i.e. a being who created the world, is omnipotent, omniscient, supremely good etc.
• So the question is ‘does the existence of natural evil logically lead to the conclusion that an omnipotent, omniscient etc. creator cannot exist?’

What is natural evil?
• The third concept that needs clarifying is ‘natural evil’, which is best understood when contrasted with moral evil.
• Moral evil is the pain and suffering brought about by humans, or beings with free will.
• This is in contrast to natural evil which is the pain and suffering that is the result of natural processes and physical laws. For example, earthquakes, tsunamis, diseases, gravity (causing a brick to fall on your foot) etc.

Does natural evil entail the non-existence of God?
• J.L. Mackie presents the problem of evil as a logical problem, which established two propositions as incompatible: a) the existence of evil; and b) the existence of God. One cannot exist if the other does exist.
• Mackie’s argument can be adapted along these lines to focus on natural evil:
  P1 God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and supremely good.
  P2 An all-powerful, all-knowing, supremely good being will eliminate evil (both natural and moral) completely.
  P3 Natural evil exists in the world.
  C Therefore either God is not all-powerful (and can’t prevent evil), or God is not all-knowing (and doesn’t know about evil) or God is not supremely good (and doesn’t care about the existence of evil).
• So, if this is a sound argument (i.e. the premises are true and the structure is valid), then the existence of natural evil does entail the conclusion that God (as defined above) cannot exist.

Is Mackie’s argument a sound argument?
• Are the premises true, and is the structure a valid one?
• Solutions, defences or theodicies, to the problem of evil as presented above tend to focus on Premise 2 as false. 
  Plantinga’s attack on premise 2
  • For example, Alvin Plantinga argues that a world in which evil exists but humans have free will is better than a world in which no evil exists and humans don’t have free will. So God does not eliminate evil, if it compromises the existence of human free will – so Premise 2 is false.
  • But Alvin Plantinga’s Free Will defence against this version of Mackie’s argument appears to fail – because we’re talking about natural evil here, not moral evil.
  • Plantinga has to cast back to St Augustine’s theodicy to get a defence against natural evil – natural evil is the responsibility of Satan, an angel who was given free will. So Plantinga’s account (of why natural evil is compatible with the existence of God) reduces to the Free Will defence – it’s better that God created angels with the freedom to do evil, than create a world with no free will.
  • Plantinga doesn’t have to show this is true, just that it’s possible that God’s existence is compatible with Natural evil, and that God will not definitively eliminate evil completely.
• Nonetheless an appeal to fallen angels, or to the devil, as part of a defence against the problem of evil seems obscure and irrelevant – it is not at all clear why the devil is responsible for Natural evil (for earthquakes or cancer)?
  o Hick’s attack on premise 2
• John Hick’s soul-making theodicy is more successful in explaining why Premise 2 is false.
• His overall argument, following St Ireneaus, is that God did not want to create a world in which humans were God’s pets – with nothing to learn, with every need met, and with no possibility of our souls growing or developing.
• A world in which there is pain and suffering, but in which humans have free will and can learn to develop spiritually and morally is a better world than one in which there is no free will, no pain and suffering, and no spiritual growth. So Premise 2 is false.
• Hick goes further with his theodicy and specifically considers why an omnipotent etc. God might permit natural evil to exist. Much natural evil is the result of the physical laws of the universe. If God intervened every time someone was about to be damaged as a result of natural physical laws (e.g. being hit by a car, falling from a wall, a knife slipping as you cut fruit, cancer or disease spreading), then humans would have no scientific knowledge. Miracles would be a constant and humans would not understand the physical laws.
• Hick’s argument, unlike Plantinga’s, is persuasive in showing that Premise 2 is false, and that an omnipotent etc. God need not eliminate natural evil as far as possible.

**Conclusion**
• So in answer to the question, no – the existence of natural evil does not entail that God cannot exist.
• But even if the logical problem fails, there is still the ‘evidential problem’ raised by natural evil (as highlighted by Rowe, with the example of the deer burning alive in a forest fire). There is simply too much pointless, horrific, natural evil in the world – more than is needed for us to learn science or grow spiritually.
• So although the existence of God may be logically compatible with the existence of evil – the atheist remains unconvinced that there is any reason to believe in a God that allows so much pain and suffering to happen.

**Question 5**
Indicative answers may include a selection from the following:

**Introduction**
• What’s the problem with religious language anyway? Give examples (e.g. ‘God is the father, the son and the holy ghost’).
• In order to understand whether religious claims are meaningless, we need to understand how language in general can be meaningless.
• Clarify that there are two approaches to understanding meaning:
  • cognitivist – sentences are meaningful insofar as they express beliefs about the world that are either true or false (truth apt/have truth conditions) – they are assertions, statements or propositions;
  • non-cognitivist accounts – reject cognitivism, and argue that there is more complexity to meaning, than simply the equation ‘meaningful language = propositional language’.
• Outline the structure of the essay – look at cognitivist answers to this question, assess some problems with cognitivism, look at non-cognitivist answers to this question.

**From a cognitivist perspective, are religious claims meaningless?**
Yes – Ayer
- Ayer’s verification principle aims to distinguish meaningful from meaningless claim (his target is metaphysics). Sentences are meaningful if they are genuine assertions – are capable of being shown to be true or false. The VP identifies two possible ways in which sentences can be true:
  - True by definition (tautologies/analytically true).
  - True by experience (can be verified, synthetically true).
- Religious statements are not true analytically or synthetically. They contain metaphysical terms (‘God’) which are transcendent, i.e. beyond experience, and according to Ayer religious statements are pseudo-statements – they appear to be about the world but they are not.
- The problem is that Ayer’s own VP (in both its strong and amended weak version) fails its own criteria.

No – Hick
- In response to Ayer, Hick accepts that religious sentences, to be meaningful, must be verifiable. But he argues that this means ‘verifiable in principle’.
- Hick’s parable of the celestial city describes two people on a journey together – sometimes they experience misfortune, sometimes good fortune. They disagree on the interpretation of these experiences (one believes they are travelling towards a celestial city, the other is a sceptic that such a city exists). But Hick argues that, at the end of their journey, one of them will be shown to be proven right.
- Hick aims to show that if it’s possible that there might be life after death, and if our personal identity survives our death then, in principle, the claim that there’s a God is verifiable. And so religious sentences, verifiable in principle, are meaningful.
- The problem for Hick depends on his defence of the retention of personal identity after death. But this a disputed claim in contemporary philosophy – the duplication of memories (which is perhaps the most that Hick can show, after the decomposition of our bodies) isn’t enough to preserve personal identity.

Yes – Flew
- Flew emphasised falsification (rather than verification) in determining whether something was a genuine assertion or not.
- Flew’s invisible gardener parable aims to show that religious sentences appear at first sight to be genuine assertions, but when tested (when falsification conditions are given), the sentences are amended or qualified in order to avoid being falsified. Flew calls this ‘death by a thousand qualifications’.
- For example, take the religious sentence ‘God loves us like a father loves his children’. Flew argues there are no examples (e.g. taken from the problem of evil) that the believer might accept as falsifying this claim. So this sentence, and other religious sentences, is meaningless.

No – Mitchell
- In response to Flew, Mitchell argues that the claims of believers can be falsified. He gives the example of the member of a resistance movement who puts his faith in a Stranger, someone he believes is on his side. The stranger sometimes acts against the resistance, which makes the partisan fighter doubt his belief – but he remains committed to his belief in spite of these doubts.
- Similarly, Mitchell says that the existence of pain and suffering (the problem of evil) does count against the believer’s claim that ‘God loves us’. Believers have moments of doubt, and can imagine being wrong, but remain committed to their belief. This means they can imagine conditions in which their belief is false, and religious sentences are meaningful, even on a cognitivist account.
Problems with Cognitivism

- Cognitivism, whether of the form defended by Ayer or Hick or Flew, draws strict limits as to what we define as ‘meaningful’, limits which extend only to propositions, belief statements that have truth conditions.
- This means that there are potentially whole areas of our language-use which are meaningless, including questioning, commanding, exclaiming, asking, wishing, praising, swearing, joking, thanking; and whole subjects which are also allegedly meaningless, including discussion of beauty, art, literature, values, poetry, ethics, metaphysics.
- Philosophical theories that stray too far from our intuitions, or common language use, need to be scrutinised. And cognitivism rules out as meaningless far too much of our language. Meaning is not just about truth/falsity it is also about communication, understanding, action, expression. Non-cognitivism understands this, and includes these areas of language under its umbrella of meaningfulness.
- So what do non-cognitivists have to say about religious language?

From a non-cognitivist perspective are religious claims meaningless?

No – Hare

- Hare, like Mitchell, rises to the challenge laid down by Flew, that religious language cannot be falsified and therefore is meaningless.
- Hare gives another parable, that of the paranoid student, who has an unshakeable belief that his university tutors are out to get him. Hare refers to this as a ‘blik’ and he argues that we all have blik, that is, foundational beliefs which we express in language, and which (because they are foundational) we won’t give up. Hare gives an example from Hume – that our belief in causation is a blik.
- So we all have unfalsifiable beliefs, and express these on occasion in language, but they are still meaningful. Religious sentences fall into this category – they are an expression of a ‘blik’. Hare’s concept of ‘bliks’ is sketchy, and it is hardly referred to at all elsewhere within philosophy. But Wittgenstein’s non-cognitivist approach was influential through the second half of the 20th Century.

No – Wittgenstein

- Wittgenstein rejected Ayer’s (and indeed his own earlier) theory of meaning that tied meaningfulness to truth/falsity.
- He argued that there are a multiplicity of language games, across all aspects of human life, which enabled communication and action, and which were meaningful. Wittgenstein argued that the meaning of a word lies in its use (not in whether it corresponds to some object in the world), and we need to avoid the mistake of confusing different language games – in which words had different uses.
- For example ‘I believe in the last judgement’ is not a scientific hypothesis like ‘I believe in global warming’ – for Wittgenstein these are both meaningful within their own specific language games.
- The problem with Wittgenstein, and Hare’s, approach is that it seems to de-couple religious belief from belief in a being, God, who is actually supposed to exist in reality. There is a danger, within non-cognitivism, that all language uses are seen as having equal weight/meaning (so talk of elves in Iceland could be seen as being as meaningful as talk of God’s existence).

Conclusion

- Cognitivism demands that meaningful statements be falsifiable or verifiable. Within a cognitivist account, despite the strict parameters of philosophers like Ayer and Flew, there do seem to be
conditions, albeit ‘in principle’, in which religious claims can be falsified (as described by Mitchell) and verified (as described by Hick).

- Non-cognitivism rejects the limiting conditions of meaning, and seeks alternative understanding of meaning, as an expression or as communication, or as action-guiding. Within this non-cognitivist account religious sentences are also meaningful (as expressions of blicks, according to Hare, and as part of a complex religious language game, according to Wittgenstein).
- So neither non-cognitivists nor cognitivists are successful in showing that religious sentences such as ‘God loves us’ or ‘God exists’ are meaningless.

Section 2: Metaphysics of Mind

Page viii: Three-mark questions

Question 1

- Intentionality is the quality of certain mental states (such as beliefs, desires, hopes, etc.) that directs them beyond themselves and towards objects or states of affairs/the world.
- The directedness or ‘aboutness’ of some mental states which gives minds the capacity to represent aspects of the world. Intentional states have a representational ‘content’: what they are about.
- Propositions and pictures may also be said to have intentionality in that they possess a representational content.

Question 2

- Ryle’s term for a mistake arising from a misunderstanding concerning how to employ a concept; the confusion of distinct logical categories, whereby a concept is allocated to a logical type to which it doesn’t belong.
- The error that arises when things of one kind are presented as if they were of a different kind.
- Descartes’ mistake of treating mind as though it were of the same logical category as body.

Question 3

The view that mental states are caused by the physical states of the brain, but that there is no reciprocal influence of mental states on the brain and body or on other mental states. Thus events in the body are completely determined by antecedent physical conditions and mental states are mere by-products/collateral products of physical processes.

Question 4

- Philosophical behaviourism is a theory about the meaning of our language of the mind. It claims that our talk of mental states is equivalent in meaning (and so can be analytically reduced to) talk of people’s behaviour and their dispositions to behave.
- Thus talk of mind does not involve reference to private internal states.

Question 5

- An ontological reduction is an explanation of one kind of phenomenon in terms of something more fundamental.
- If one phenomenon can be ontologically reduced to another, this means they are ultimately the same things under different descriptions.
- But it doesn’t mean that the terms used to refer to them have the same meanings and so doesn’t mean that the one can be analytically reduced to the other.

Page ix: Five-mark questions
Question 1

Defining key terms: A **substance** is the possessor of properties, the thing/object or stuff which underlies properties. A substance may be defined as something that can exist on its own, or which doesn’t depend on anything else. By contrast, **properties** depend upon a substance; they cannot exist on their own or float free. **Dualism** is the view that mind and body are radically different, that mental states/phenomena are irreducible to physical states/phenomena; that a complete physical account cannot explain consciousness/mind.

Substance dualism claims that human beings are composed of two ontologically distinct substances, mental substance and physical substance, whereas property dualism claims they are composed of one substance, physical substance, with two types of property, mental and physical.

Substance dualists claim that non-physical substances exist while property dualists claim only physical substance exists.

Property dualism sees mental states as properties of the brain, whereas substance dualism regards them as properties of an immaterial mind.

For substance dualism it is possible for minds to exist independently of bodies, whereas for property dualism the mind depends on the body.

They give different explanations for the irreducibility of talk about mental states, i.e. for the claim that a complete physical account of a human being is not sufficient to account for mentality. For property dualism this is because mental states emerge from the complex workings of the brain, whereas substance dualists explain this by appealing to non-physical substances.

Question 2

Different approaches are possible:

- Arnauld’s objection: If you are not familiar with the proof of Pythagoras’ theorem, it is possible for you to conceive of a right-angled triangle for which the area of the square on the hypotenuse is not equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides. But, this is not possible in reality/there is no possible world in which such triangles exist. So what we can conceive does not determine what is metaphysically possible and Descartes’ ability to conceive of his mind without the body doesn’t show that it is possible for the mind to exist without the body in reality.

- The masked man fallacy: if I meet someone wearing a mask I may not recognise him as my father. In this case it is conceivable that he is not my father. Suppose, though, that he is my father. If so, it is not metaphysically possible for the person not to be my father, since anyone must be identical with themselves. If he is my father it is necessary that he is my father and he would be my father in any possible world. So what I can conceive is not metaphysically possible. In the same way, Descartes’ idea of his mind may be incomplete. Introspection reveals the mind to be a realm of conscious experiences and I am unaware of the body as having any involvement in this. And yet, the fact that I am unaware of my body being responsible for consciousness doesn’t show that it isn’t in reality.

- Some necessary truths are not analytic: What is logically possible and so conceivable is not necessarily metaphysically possible, e.g. it is conceivable that water is not H\textsubscript{2}O because ‘Water is H\textsubscript{2}O’ is not analytically true. But, because water is, as a matter of fact, H\textsubscript{2}O there is no possible world in which water is not H\textsubscript{2}O. In the same way, while it is logically possible for minds to exist without bodies it doesn’t follow that it is metaphysically possible. I may be able to conceive of my mind independently of my body and yet if minds, as a matter of fact, depend on brains, then it may be metaphysically impossible for them to be separated.

Question 3
• If mental properties supervene on physical properties (of the brain), then there can be no difference in the mental without a difference in the physical. But at the same time a difference in the physical properties need not produce a difference in the mind. In other words, mental properties supervene on physical properties if a difference in brain properties is necessary but not sufficient for a difference in mental properties.

• The supervenience of mental properties on physical properties means the former depend on the latter; the physical properties ‘fix’ the mental properties.

• If mental properties supervene on the physical, it implies that it is impossible for any two beings with the same physical properties to differ mentally. So philosophical zombies would be impossible and any possible world which is physically identical to this one must have consciousness. This could be expressed by saying that once God had created the physical universe, he didn’t have any more to do in order to create consciousness.

• Examples of the supervenience relation from outside the philosophy of mind could include aesthetic properties of a painting supervening on the arrangement of paint on the canvass; moral properties supervening on physical properties.

**Question 4**

**P1** Eliminativism claims that mental states, such as beliefs, do not exist.

**P2** But if beliefs do not exist then it is not possible to believe that eliminative materialism is true.

**P3** And if the language used to articulate the theory doesn’t really express genuine beliefs then it is meaningless.

**C1** Thus, according to the eliminativist’s own view, it is not possible to believe and coherently articulate eliminativism.

**C2** Therefore eliminativism is self-refuting.

**Question 5**

• According to functionalism, mental states are reducible to the functional role they play mediating between environmental inputs, behavioural outputs and other mental states.

• This means that two functionally identical visual systems must instantiate identical colour experiences.

• But qualia have an intrinsic nature, the subjective ‘what it is like’ to experience them, which is independent of their functional role.

• So, it is conceivable for the functional economy of the visual systems of two people to be identical and yet for them to have inverted qualitative experiences of colour, e.g. you might perceive green when I perceive red.

• It follows that functionalism cannot account for the intrinsic qualitative nature of qualia.

**Page ix: Twelve-mark questions**

**Question 1**

Defining terms:

• A philosophical zombie is a physical duplicate of a normal human being which functions and behaves just like other human beings. However, it lacks the subjective point of view and qualia, so there would be nothing that it is like to be a zombie. Because the zombie is physically identical to other humans you would not be able to tell that it lacked consciousness. A zombie world is a physical duplicate of this world but where the human beings have no phenomenal consciousness.

• Property dualism is the view that mental states are irreducible properties of the brain and so opposes the physicalist claim that such mental states are reducible to the physical.
The philosophical zombies argument for property dualism:

P1 Physicalism claims that consciousness is ultimately physical in nature or supervenes on the physical.

C1 So any physical duplicate of a living human being must have phenomenal consciousness, and similarly any possible world which is identical to the actual world must contain consciousness. In other words, philosophical zombies/a zombie world are metaphysically impossible.

P2 But philosophical zombies are conceivable. We can conceive of a world which is physically identical to this one but in which there is no conscious experience (a zombie world).

P3 What is conceivable is metaphysically possible.

C2 Therefore a zombie world is metaphysically possible.

C3 Therefore mental states are not reducible to the physical and dualism is established.

The objection that what is conceivable may not be metaphysically possible:

- The objection questions Premise 3.
- Not all necessary truths are analytic and so they cannot be discovered a priori. Identity statements, such as ‘Water is H₂O’, have to be discovered a posteriori.
- This means it is possible to deny such truths without contradiction. ‘Water is not H₂O’ is not a contradiction in terms and so it is conceivable that water is not H₂O.
- However, given that we have discovered that water is H₂O, there is no possible world in which the stuff composed of H₂O molecules is not water. What is conceivable, therefore, need not be metaphysically possible.
- In the same way, we can conceive of physical duplicates of human beings without phenomenal consciousness. They are logically possible. But if phenomenal consciousness supervenes on the physical, then there can be no possible world in which the physical duplicates of human beings lack consciousness. So zombies are not metaphysically possible. And if they are not metaphysically possible, then physicalism is not refuted.
- So although dualism is perfectly conceivable, if physicalism is true, then dualism is not metaphysically possible. And whether or not physicalism is true can only be determined empirically.

**Question 2**

The knowledge argument:

- The argument begins with a thought experiment: Suppose there were a scientist, named Mary, who has been confined to a black and white room all her life and so has never seen colours. Despite her confinement she has learned all there is to know about the physical processes involved in colour vision, including what goes on neurologically. Suppose she leaves the room and sees colours for the first time. Would she learn something new?
- Jackson’s answer to the question is that she would: she would learn what it is like to see colour. This is not something she could have known before leaving the room, no matter how much she knew about the neurological basis for colour vision.
- So knowing everything that goes on physically when someone experiences colour vision doesn’t entail knowing everything about colour vision. Specifically it cannot tell you what it is like to have qualia. And so physicalism is false.

**Summary of the argument:**

P1 Mary knows everything there is to know about the physical processes involved in colour vision.

P2 But she learns something new when she experiences colour vision herself.

C1 Therefore there is more to know about colour vision than what is given in a complete physical account of it.

C2 So qualia are not reducible to the physical.
The ability knowledge response:
• The word ‘knowledge’ has different meanings. Propositional/factual knowledge is knowledge of facts and can be expressed in an indicative statement, e.g. knowing that ‘the cat is on the mat’. Ability knowledge is the knowledge of how to do things, e.g. knowing how to ride a bicycle.
• The knowledge argument is accused of equivocating on these two senses of ‘knowledge’.
• When Mary leaves the room, she acquires new abilities. For example, she now knows how to recognise ripe tomatoes by sight.
• But this new ability knowledge doesn’t mean she has learned any new facts about colour vision and so it is still true that she possessed all the propositional/factual knowledge before leaving the room.

Question 3
The conceptual interaction problem as given by Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia:
P1 Substance dualism regards mind and body as distinct substances with no properties in common. The mind is unextended, body extended.
C1 So, according to substance dualism, the mind has no surface.
P2 But it is inconceivable for two things to causally interact, unless their surfaces come into contact with each other.
C2 Therefore it is inconceivable for the mind to interact with the body.
P3 What is inconceivable is impossible.
C3 So mind–body interaction is impossible.

However, experience suggests that mind–body interaction does occur. So Elizabeth argues this reduces P1 to absurdity.

The empirical interaction problem:
• Physics is committed to the causal closure principle. This states that a complete causal explanation for the occurrence of every event in the universe can be given in terms of interactions with other physical events. In other words, physical events only have physical causes. If this principle is true, then it means that all events occurring in human bodies, such as our actions, must be explicable in terms of purely physical causes. And therefore there is no causal role for a non-physical mind to play.

In summary:
P1 (The causal closure principle) All physical events have purely physical causes.
P2 Human actions are physical events.
C1 So human actions have purely physical causes.
C2 So human actions do not have non-physical causes and dualist interactionism is false.

Another physical law can be employed to argue against interactionism: the law of the conservation of energy. The law states that in a closed system, such as the whole physical universe, energy cannot be created or destroyed, it merely changes its form. But in order for a non-physical mind to interact with the body, it would have to increase the amount of energy in the physical universe and this would break the law of the conservation of energy. So, rather than reject the law, we should reject interactionism.

Question 4
Philosophical behaviourism:
• Philosophical behaviourism is the view that a proper conceptual analysis of mental state concepts, such as beliefs, desires and sensations, can be shown to be identical in meaning to behavioural concepts. In other words, behaviourists claim the mind can be analytically reduced to behaviour.

• An analytic reduction concerns the meanings of the terms involved, and so a successful reduction can be conducted \textit{a priori} via conceptual analysis.

Hard behaviourism (Hempel):
• The view that we can translate all talk about mental states into observation statements about people’s physical states and behaviour. Thus, psychological concepts are, in the final analysis, reducible to the concepts of physics.

Soft behaviourism (Ryle):
• The dispositional analysis. Talk about mental states can be analysed in terms of hypothetical (if... then...) statements concerning what a person would do in various circumstances.

The circularity problem:
• Whether a mental state manifests itself in terms of specific behaviours depends on the other mental states the person has. For example, if S is thirsty, whether or not this leads her to drink a glass of water will depend on whether or not she believes it to be poisoned. If she does believe this, she won’t drink it even though she is thirsty.
• So a complete analysis of her thirst must reduce her beliefs concerning whether the water is poisoned to behaviour as well.
• However, the analysis of her belief about whether the water is poisoned, will have also to make reference to mental states, since how this belief manifests itself in behaviours depends in turn on the other mental states she has.
• It follows that we cannot complete the analysis without reintroducing mental state terms.
• The analysis is \textit{circular} because it reintroduces mental state concepts instead of reducing them to behavioural concepts. And so the behavioural analysis cannot be completed.

Question 5
Similarities:
• Both are compatible with physicalism and so need not make appeal to immaterial substances to explain the mind. MBTIT says the mind is the brain while functionalists (generally) regard the brain as the organ which realises mental states. And so both say that mental states supervene on the physical.
• Both see mental states as having a causal role to play within the interplay between sensory inputs, other mental states and behaviour. For example, the belief that it is raining is caused by my looking out of the window, causes me to feel disappointed, and also to fetch my umbrella.
• Both are reductive theories: MBTIT reduces mental states to brain states and functionalism reduces mental states to functional states.
• Both can be criticised for not being able to account for qualia. The conceivability of philosophical zombies and Jackson’s knowledge can be employed against them.
• Both could be contrasted with other positions in the philosophy of mind. They deny that mental states can be analytically reduced to behaviour and avoid problems facing behaviourism such as the circularity problem. They are both compatible with the claim that folk psychological concepts pick out real entities (pace eliminativism). Both deny that mental properties are non-physical or that non-physical substances exist and so are compatible with arguments for physicalism.

Differences:
• While MBTIT defines mental states in terms of what they are composed of, functionalism defines them in terms of what they do. Functional definitions involve saying what causal role something plays, e.g. pain is that mental state caused by damage to the body and which in turn causes one to avoid the source of pain etc., whereas for an identity theorist pain might be C-fibres firing.

• Functionalism is agnostic about what type of substance realises the functional economy of minds. If mental states are defined in terms of what they do, then the theory makes no commitment to the nature of the substance which realises the role. By contrast, MBTIT identifies mental states with physical states of the brain and so is committed to physicalism.

• MBTIT is chauvinistic about the types of being that can be minded. To have a particular type of mental state is to have a particular type of brain state, so creatures with different types of brain cannot share the same mental states as us. Brain states are not multiply realisable. By contrast, because functional roles can be instantiated in different ways, according to functionalism mental states are multiply realisable. This means that functionalism is liberal about what kinds of being may be minded. A different creature or a computer could still have the same types of mental states as us.

Page xii: Twenty-five-mark questions

Question 1

Introduction

A good approach for the introduction to a 25-mark essay is to:

i) outline what the question is asking/what the issue is

ii) State your judgement

iii) Give an overview of your line of argument.

For example:

The question concerns interactionism and the apparently obvious fact that mental states, such as beliefs, desires and sensations, cause actions, and that physical alterations in the body and sense organs cause sensations. On the face of it our immediate experience would seem to answer this question in the affirmative. For surely when I experience a pain, it is the excitation in the nerves that causes this pain and the pain in turn is what causes me to cry out; and the decision to answer this question is what is causing me to write these words. Such obvious facts seem incontrovertibly to be revealed in introspection and through our experience of ourselves as embodied beings. Despite being an article of common sense, however, it is problematic to make sense of just how such interaction can take place. It is particularly problematic for dualist theories which treat mind and body as radically distinct, and thinkers who have been committed to dualism have even been led to deny that such interaction takes place. I will argue that the problem cannot be solved within a dualist framework, but that rather than deny the reality of mental causation we should reject dualism. Once we embrace a physicalist account of the mind we can say that mind and body do interact precisely because the mind is ultimately physical in nature.

Main body

Select some key arguments and plan which order to consider them in so that they lead to your chosen conclusion.

Perhaps the obvious place to start the discussion is with Cartesian dualism and the problem of interaction.

The conceptual interaction problem:
If minds are unextended and have no spatial location, then they cannot come into contact with the body and so cannot causally interact with the body. Descartes’ suggestion that the two come into contact at the pineal gland fails to address this problem. The question of whether Descartes’ response that Catherine’s conception of causation is overly mechanistic is successful could be explored. Can we make sense of causation without physical contact? Certainly there is no obvious contradiction in the idea. Hume shows that our concept of cause is grounded in observations of constant conjunctions and that we are never aware of the power connecting two events. So the constant conjunction between certain mental and physical events is sufficient to establish that there is a causal connection regardless of the absence of any physical contact.

**The empirical interaction problem:**
If we cannot rule out immaterial mind–body interaction on conceptual grounds, what of empirical considerations? The physical universe is causally closed, so it is not possible for something non-physical to have a causal impact on the physical. Interaction between the body and a non-physical mind would break the principle 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.

**Epiphenomenalism:**
So, although the conceptual interaction problem fails, the empirical interaction problem is more serious for dualism. This has led some dualists to deny that such interaction takes place. Epiphenomenalism is one such theory. It states that the mind is a ‘collateral property’ of the activity of the brain; produced by the brain but having no reciprocal influence on the brain. So conscious volitions, contrary to appearances, do not cause our actions and it is an illusion to think that your conscious mind has a role to play in determining what you do. Similarly, it is an illusion to suppose that the pain caused by placing your hand in a fire is what causes you to recoil.

**Epiphenomenalism conflicts with the phenomenology of our inner experience & Huxley’s response:**
To deny mind–body interaction appears to fly in the face of our everyday experience, but Huxley points out that if it were true, the appearances would be the same. Careful attention to the relationship between volition and act shows we are aware only of the one following the other, but not of any mechanism or power connecting them. So we cannot dismiss the theory on the basis of the phenomenology of our inner life.

**The challenge posed by evolution is more serious:**
Evolutionary theory says that the characteristics of a species have evolved because they confer some survival or reproductive advantage. But according to epiphenomenalism, consciousness has no causal influence on the physical and so could not provide the species with any evolutionary advantage. But in this case, consciousness would not have been selected for during our evolutionary history and we should not expect conscious mental states to exist now. The fact that conscious mental states do exist, strongly suggests, therefore, that they do confer some survival advantage and therefore that they must have some causal influence on the physical realm.

**Jackson’s response:**
The analogy with the polar bear’s coat. The polar bear’s coat is very heavy and so is some disadvantage to the bear’s chances of survival. However, it would be wrong to conclude from this that the heaviness should have been deselected by evolutionary pressures. This is because the heaviness is an inevitable by-product of evolving a warm coat, and a warm coat has obvious evolutionary benefits. So as long as the advantages of having a warm coat outweigh the disadvantages of having a heavy coat, the polar bear’s coat would still be selected for. In the same way, consciousness may be an inevitable by-product of the development of a complex brain which
helped us to survive. So conscious mental states might still have evolved even though they confer no evolutionary advantage.

The challenge of self-knowledge:
If mental states do not causally affect the physical, then our mental states do not cause our utterances. So if I tell you I have a toothache, the toothache itself is not causally related to my utterance. But in this case the meaning of the word ‘toothache’ has nothing to do with the conscious experience of the toothache. But if talk about my own mental states does not refer to my introspective awareness of those states, what is it about? It would seem that such utterances have no meaning. The fact that we are able to talk meaningfully about our mental states, therefore shows that epiphenomenalism must be false.

Behaviourism:
Could the problem be a result of the dualist picture of mind and body as distinct substances? Gilbert Ryle argued that the problem arises because of a category mistake: the mistake of thinking that the mind is a kind of thing or substance but a substance of a peculiar, non-material kind. Once we define the mind in this way, we make it impossible for interaction to take place. But what if the mind is not a kind of thing at all? Ryle’s analysis of the concept of mind suggests that it is a mistake to think of mental states as causing our actions. Rather talk of decisions, volitions and so forth, is really a shorthand way of talking about behaviour and such words do not pick out private states of mind. Rather they are dispositions to behave in certain ways. My thirst is not what causes me to drink, rather to ascribe thirst to someone is to say they are prone to drink.

Super-Spartans:
But denying causal efficacy to mental states is problematic. Putnam’s super-Spartans example may be used to argue that behaviourism confuses the symptoms of being in a mental state, with the mental state itself. This is why it is possible to be in pain without exhibiting the behaviour, and possible to exhibit the behaviour without being in pain. For it is pain that causes pain behaviour rather than pain behaviour constituting being in pain. By allowing a causal role for our mental states, Putnam is able to produce a more convincing account.

Conclusion
If we reject dualism and are unsatisfied with attempts to deny that interaction takes place and also are happy to reject dualism then we may embrace some form of physicalist reductivism. If the mind is reducible to the brain, as claimed by mind–brain type identity theory, or if mental states are identifiable with their causal role as instantiated in the brain, as functionalism claims, then there is no interaction problem.

Question 2
Introduction
An introduction should show you understand the issue being addressed in the question, but you don’t need to go into detail. This can wait for the main body. What you should focus on instead is setting out what your own argument and conclusion will be. If you can do this with boldness and conviction you will make the examiner take notice. You will also help yourself to be clear about the direction your essay will take. Here is an example of an introduction which tries to do this.

According to Alvramides (Other Minds, 2001, p.45), the problem of other minds is a legacy of the Cartesian picture of the relationship between mind and body. Once a sharp distinction is drawn between the ‘inner’ private mind accessible only by the subject of experience and the ‘external’ and publicly observable human body to which it is especially related, the sceptical question inevitably
arises of how I can know that a mind is indeed connected to any particular human being that I come across. Knowledge of my own mind is the paradigm case of knowledge because it is immediate. But knowledge of another’s mind must be inferred from the behaviour of the outer shell which encases it. Different accounts of the nature of this inference have been suggested, but, as I shall argue, they have been unable to overcome the sceptical concern. But this doesn’t mean that we are condemned to solipsism. For the solution to the problem of other minds is to be found by rejecting the traditional picture of mind and body bequeathed to us by Descartes. Ryle’s approach has been instructive here. He argued that once we have clarified the ‘logical geography’ of our concept of mind we will see that there was no real problem here in the first place (Ryle, Concept of Mind, 1949, ch.1). Although the behaviourist programme is not fully satisfactory, his and Wittgenstein’s discussion of the issue do enough, in my view, to show that this is a pseudo-problem.

Main body
One solution to the problem of other minds is the argument by analogy with my own case (e.g. J.S. Mill):

P1 Some of my bodily behaviour is caused by my mental states.
P2 And some of my mental states are caused by events in my body.
P3 Other people have bodies like me and they behave in the same way as mine.
C So, it is likely that others have mental states like mine.

Criticisms of the argument:
1. Inductive generalisation from one case is weak. (Ryle)
2. No possibility of testing the correspondence between behaviour and hidden mental state. (Ryle)

Another solution: the argument to the best explanation:
P1 Humans have complex behaviour (language, adaptability to unexpected situations). (Descartes’ discussion of the tests for a ‘real man’ as discussed by Alvramides pp.62–4.)
P2 This behaviour can be explained if we suppose they have minds.
P3 There is no alternative theory which explains their behaviour as well.
C Therefore it is likely that others have minds.

Criticisms of the argument:
- This would make the existence of other minds merely probable and so genuine doubt would be possible. Yet we find we cannot doubt other minds in real life.
- Moreover, the epistemological worry presupposes that I can make sense of the concept of other minds based purely on access to my own mind. The conceptual problem of other minds, however, questions how we can form the general concept of mind by reflection on my own case (Alvramides, p.49).

Another approach: Behaviourism:
- Other minds are not hidden from view and do not need to be inferred. Conceptual analysis can analytically reduce talk of other minds to talk of actual and potential behaviour. In this way the problem is dissolved.
- Hempel and/or Ryle could be explored, e.g. Hempel’s example of Paul’s toothache.

Criticisms of behaviourism: e.g.
1. Circularly: an analytic reduction must reintroduce mental state terms and so cannot be completed.
2. Super-Spartans: mental states cannot be reduced because we can always conceive of a mismatch between mental state and behaviour.
Wittgenstein:
The presence of the other as a minded person is not a hypothesis, but the way we are oriented towards them. Since this is the ground for our practice for ascribing mental states, it makes no sense to doubt other minds as such. Doubt takes place within certain bounds.

Conclusion
It appears that attempts to justify an inference to the existence of other minds cannot defeat the threat of solipsism. Worse, the Cartesian picture would not even allow us to form the concept of others’ minds. But we also cannot reduce mental states to behaviour without loss of meaning. Nonetheless, the behaviourist approach does provide some important insights. In particular the recognition that we need to look to our actual practice in order to work out how we ascribe mental states to others and this shift of focus allows us to recognise that we know very well how to do so.

Note that this conclusion may not be completely convincing. You may well have many misgivings about it and concerns that it is not sufficiently supported by the arguments above. However, in an exam you cannot be expected to produce the final word on a complex philosophical problem. Rather you need to fashion a reasonable argument which has conviction and purpose.

Question 3
The question is most naturally interpreted as concerned with eliminativism. (Note that a discussion of philosophical behaviourism should be able to access the full range of marks so long as it is focused carefully on the issue of whether or not an analytical reduction can be construed as denying the existence of ‘mental states’. This would, however, be a difficult route to take. Here we outline the key arguments you could use for a critical discussion of eliminativism. It’s a good idea to have an essay planned for each of the main theories in which you have a clear idea of both your introduction and conclusion.)

The question concerns eliminativism:
• The view that folk psychology may prove to be false and that the theoretical entities it posits will be shown to have no basis in reality.
• The distinction between reduction and elimination. Examples could figure, e.g. caloric.
• The concepts of folk psychology need will be replaced by a more advanced neuroscientific account of human mentality.

Arguments for eliminativism:
• Folk psychology is an inadequate account of human nature. For example, it is unable to explain why we need to sleep, why we dream, or how we learn.
• Successful scientific theories should develop and expand. But folk psychology is stagnating.
• Folk theories in general are not accurate and don’t survive once science in a particular domain matures.

Arguments against eliminativism:
From introspection:
• Introspection provides immediate knowledge of mental states, and so provides certainty that they truly exist.
• Response: Introspection cannot reveal the contents of your own mind in a theory-neutral way but presupposes the framework of folk psychology.

Folk-psychology has good predictive and explanatory power:
Knowledge of someone’s beliefs, sensations and desires enables one to predict and explain their behaviour. Folk psychology has been successful throughout human history. It is universal. It is useful in mental health therapies. By contrast neuroscience hasn’t provided an alternative.

Eliminativism is self-refuting:
- If beliefs do not exist then it is not possible to believe that eliminativism is true. So, according to the eliminativist’s own view, it is not possible to believe and coherently articulate eliminativism. So the theory is self-refuting.
- Churchland’s response: the argument presupposes the truth of folk psychology. The analogy with the anti-vitalist’s denial of vital spirit. Whether this analogy is appropriate.

Question 4
Some general advice about approach:
- This question is not simply asking you to give a critical discussion of physicalism. It specifically asks you to confine your discussion to the question of qualia and whether a physicalist explanation can be given of them.
- Different approaches may be taken when planning a response. You may be tempted to work through the different physicalist theories you have studied and examine whether each can deal with qualia. There are risks with such an approach, however. Different physicalist theories will have some of the same problems with qualia and so you may end up repeating yourself. Also your essay risks becoming a ‘trawl’ through a series of theories with no clear critical direction. And you are likely to have far too much material to cover, meaning the essay will not be able to examine the arguments in sufficient detail.
- A better approach would be to use the question’s invitation to consider qualia in order to focus on those key arguments that challenge physicalism generally by appealing to qualia. By looking at these arguments in detail and developing a clear direction to the argument you are going to score better than by trawling through a series of theories.
- This is something to bear in mind when planning critical essays generally. If you find yourself tempted to work through a series of theories, ask yourself, whether this is the best approach. Will the essay become repetitive? Will I end up with too much material to cover, meaning the essay is superficial? Will I be able to include a clear critical direction to the essay? If the question offers you another route, then take it.

Introduction
- Define qualia: The phenomenal properties or subjective ‘feel’ of certain mental states which are directly accessible via introspection. Qualia are said to have an intrinsic nature, to be non-intentional, incorrigible, private and ineffable.
- Define physicalism: The view that everything is ultimately physical in nature; that all phenomena can be reduced to the physical/can be explained in terms of the physical.
- The problem: those who would reject physicalism claim that qualia cannot be reduced to the physical. Chalmers’ ‘hard problem’ might be outlined here.
- Also use the introduction to identify your conclusion.

Main body
Chalmers’ Philosophical zombies argument:
P1 Physicalism claims that consciousness is ultimately physical in nature.
C1 So any possible world which is identical to the actual world must contain consciousness. In other words, a zombie world is metaphysically impossible.
P2 But we can conceive of a world which is physically identical to this one but in which there is no conscious experience (a zombie world).
P3 What is conceivable is metaphysically possible.
C2 Therefore a zombie world is metaphysically possible.
C3 Therefore physicalism is false.

Critical discussion of the argument could include the difficulties detailed in the specification, namely:
1) A zombie world is not conceivable:
   • Although the zombie hypothesis appears conceivable, this may be because we are ignorant of just how our neurology gives rise to consciousness. If we understood this, then we would be able to recognise the incoherence of the idea of a philosophical zombie.
   • If mental states are analytically reducible to behaviour, then zombies are not conceivable.
2) What is conceivable need not be metaphysically possible:
   • It is conceivable that identity statements are not true. But if they are true, then it is not metaphysically possible for the two to come apart. So if qualia are identical to certain brain processes, then it is not metaphysically possible for those brain processes to occur without qualia. So, if physicalism is true, then zombies are not metaphysically possible.
3) What is metaphysically possible tells us nothing about the actual world:
   • Suppose we concede zombies can exist in other possible worlds and so that they are metaphysically possible. This doesn’t show that they are physically possible in our world. The natural laws that happen to hold here make them physically impossible. This is a contingent fact, but nonetheless a contingent fact about our world.
   • Whether this misunderstands the implications of physicalism: for if physicalism is true then it follows that consciousness is ultimately nothing more than/supervenes on the physical in any possible world. So if zombies are metaphysically possible, then this does tell us that physicalism is false in this world.

Jackson’s knowledge argument:
P1 Mary knows everything there is to know about the physical and functional processes involved in colour vision.
P2 But she learns something new when she experiences colour vision herself.
C1 Therefore there is more to know about colour vision than what is given in a complete physical account of it.
C2 So physicalism is false.

Critical discussion of the argument could include the following arguments:
1) The acquaintance knowledge response:
   • The argument equivocates on ‘knowledge’. P1 is true of Mary’s propositional knowledge and P2 of her acquaintance knowledge. So C1 doesn’t follow: a complete physical account really does exhaust all the propositional knowledge about colour vision and Mary knew all this before leaving the room.
2) The ability knowledge response:
   • This response also claims the knowledge argument equivocates on the word ‘knowledge’. When Mary leaves the room, she acquires new abilities. But this new ability knowledge doesn’t mean she has learned any new facts about colour vision and so it is still true that she possessed all the factual knowledge before leaving the room.
3) The new knowledge/old fact response:
   • Upon her release Mary gains knowledge of what it is like to see colours and acquires new concepts, based on her new phenomenal experience. So she can now describe the processes of colour vision using concepts she didn’t possess before leaving the room. However, these descriptions represent the same facts about colour vision she already possessed and spoke about in physical terms before. So Mary hasn’t learnt any new facts about the world.
4) **All physical knowledge would include knowledge of qualia:**

- If Mary genuinely knew *everything* about colour vision, then she would know what it is like to experience colour and so would learn nothing new (Dennett).

Functionalism as an alternative account of how qualia might be realised physically could be explored.

**Objections to functionalism:**

1) **Inverted qualia:**

- If it is conceivable for functionally isomorphic visual systems to have inverted qualia, then functionalism cannot account for the intrinsic qualitative nature of qualia.
- Response: Whether a systematic assessment of the inverted spectrum possibility is conceivable. Since spectrum inversion couldn’t be detected it has no empirical basis.

2) **Ned Block’s China mind/homunculi head:**

- It is conceivable that the functional economy of a person’s brain be performed by some other system, for example, by a population of little people or homunculi/the population of China.
- But, it seems implausible to hold that such a system could experience qualia.
- So functionalism cannot account for the intrinsic nature of qualia.

3) **Eliminativist/behaviourist arguments: Qualia don’t exist:**

- Folk psychology as an outmoded theory. If its concepts do not pick out genuine features of reality, then qualia don’t exist. In this case we don’t need to accept that there is any knowledge of qualia to be had when Mary leaves the room.
- Qualia, as defined by philosophers, are incoherent, Dennett’s arguments.

**Conclusion**

Advance a conclusion based on your assessment of the arguments considered.

**Question 5**

*This looks like a question asking simply for an assessment of functionalism. And if you have prepared such an essay you could trot it out here and score very well. Note though that the question of whether all mental states are functional states does invite you to consider whether some types of mental states might be given a functional analysis or reduction, while others might resist such a reduction. So a good way to approach this might be to consider different sorts of mental states, most obviously, qualia and intentional states, and consider these separately.*

**Some of the following arguments could be considered:**

**Functionalism:**

To define a mental state functionally is to define it in terms of the causal role it plays in consort with environmental inputs via the senses, other mental states, and outputs via behaviour. To be a particular mental state just is to be whatever it is that plays a specific causal role of this sort. Machine state functionalism could also figure.

**Advantages of functionalism:**

- Functionalism accords with the common sense view that mental states are causally efficacious.
- Unlike behaviourism, a functional analysis is not subject to the circularity problem.
- Functionalism allows for multiple realisability and so is not chauvinistic.
- It is compatible with physicalism.

**Criticisms of functionalism:**
1) Inverted qualia:
- If two people could be in the same functional state and yet experience different qualia, then functionalism cannot account for qualia. Because qualia have an intrinsic nature, they cannot be explained purely in terms of their extrinsic relations to sensory inputs, other mental states and behaviour.
- Responses, e.g. Eliminativist arguments against the claim that qualia have an intrinsic nature to show that a functional definition is sufficient. Since spectrum inversion couldn’t be detected it has no empirical basis. If we think through the thought experiment systematically we may appreciate that it is not conceivable.

2) The ‘knowledge’ argument:
- Knowing all the functional facts about colour vision is not sufficient for knowing what it is like to experience qualia.
- Responses, e.g. Qualia may appear subjectively to have an intrinsic nature which escapes a functional reduction, however, this appearance may be the consequence of us not being aware of the detailed functional facts which ultimately constitute such mental states, so Mary would know what colour vision is like.

3) The China brain/humonculi head:
- It is conceivable that the functional economy of a person’s brain be performed by some other system, for example, by a population of homunculi or by the population of China. Since it is absurd to suppose the system would experience qualia, functionalism cannot account for qualia.
- Responses, e.g. accept that such systems would indeed experience qualia. Any implausibility is the result of us not appreciating the level of complexity of the brain’s workings.

4) Searle’s Chinese room:
- Since someone realising the functional economy of a Chinese speaker by following a rule book would not understand Chinese, functionalism cannot account for intentionality.
- Responses, e.g. the system’s reply, the system as a whole would understand Chinese. (Searle’s response that the person could internalise the rule book and still not understand Chinese.) Accept that the system would understand. Deny that any system has intrinsic intentionality.

Conclusion
The above arguments should be deployed to support a clear conclusion. This conclusion need not be a simple yes or no to the question but may be more nuanced, e.g. you could argue that intentional states can be explained functionally but that qualia cannot; or that since qualia don’t really exist they don’t need to be explained, but that functionalism fails to account for intentional states; that intrinsic intentionality is an illusion, but qualia are real and irreducible; and so on.