

Year 13

Revision Booster

Philosophy and Ethics



Philosophy of Religion- Key Topics

1. Arguments for the existence of God
2. Evil and suffering
3. Religious experience
4. Religious language
5. Miracles
6. Self and life after death

1. Arguments for the existence of God



1. Design Argument

Key Scholars: William Paley (proponent)
David Hume (key critic)

Key Terms: The argument is a **posteriori**, **inductive and analogical**. Paley makes a distinction between **qua purpose** and **qua regularity**

Empirical evidence: Paley uses **natural theology**. Examples given by Paley are the eye, the fins and gills of fish for the water '*The marks of design are too strong to be gotten over.*' *Design must have had a designer*'
Natural theology

Key criticism: 1. Anthropomorphism 2. Order due to chance 3. Evil and suffering



Key ideas to make sure you can answer

1. What is its status as a proof for God?
2. What value does the argument hold for religious faith?
3. The relationship between reasons and faith in the argument

2. Cosmological Argument

Key Scholars: Thomas Aquinas (proponent)
David Hume and Bertrand Russell (key critic)

Key Terms: The argument is a **posteriori** and **inductive**. Aquinas focuses on **contingency** and **necessity**.

Evidence/context: Appears in Way 3 of Aquinas' Five Ways to prove God's existence. Everything in the cosmos is contingent. Something must therefore exist necessarily as its cause.

Key criticisms: 1. Fallacy of composition 2. brute fact 3. Why can't there be infinite regression? 4. Ockham's Razor



Key ideas to make sure you can answer

1. What is its status as a proof for God?
2. What value does the argument hold for religious faith?
3. The relationship between reasons and faith in the argument

3. Ontological Argument

Key Scholars: Anselm (proponent) Gaunilo and Kant (key critic)

Key Terms: The argument is a **a priori**, **analytic and deductive**. Anselm focuses on **subject and predicates, necessary truths and necessary things**.

Evidence/context: Psalm 14:1 Even the fool understood the concept of God. Anselm's two forms of the argument- one in response to Gaunilo.

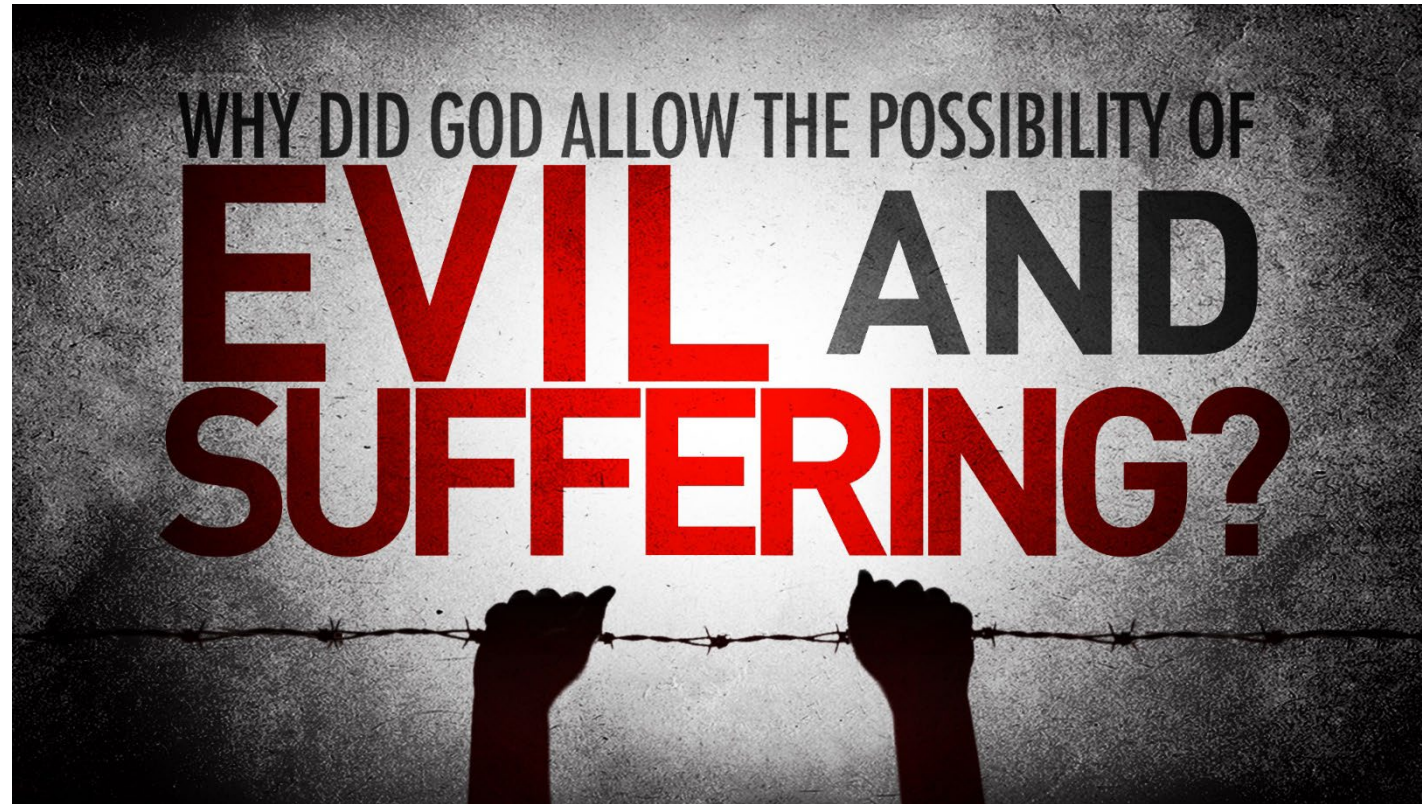
Key criticisms: 1. Lost Island 2. Existence is not a predicate 3. Something cannot be defined into existence



Key ideas to make sure you can answer

1. What is its status as a proof for God?
2. What value does the argument hold for religious faith?
3. The relationship between reasons and faith in the argument

2. Evil and Suffering



1. The Problem of Evil and Suffering

1. **Biblical background-** Adam and Eve, Noah and the Flood, Satan, Job
2. **Natural and moral evil-** examples and the unique problem each poses
3. **The logical problem of evil-** Inconsistent triad and Mackie, Epicurus
4. **The evidential problem of evil-** quantity of suffering coupled with the clear lack of purpose. Dostoyevsky's *The Brother's Karamazov*

IS GOD IS
WILLING TO HE ABLE
PREVENT EVIL BUT NOT
BUT NOT ABLE WILLING
THEN HE
IS NOT
OMNIPOTENT

THEN HE IS
MALEVOLENT
IS HE BOTH
ABLE AND
WILLING

THEN WHENCE
EVIL COMETH
IS HE
NEITHER
ABLE NOR
WILLING

THEN WHY
CALL HIM
GOD
-EPICURUS

2. Responses to the problem of evil and suffering

1. **John Mackie Free Will Defence** (Remember he is not a believer!) first order and second order goods. **Alvin Plantinga**

Key Criticism: Can it justify the sheer volume of evil suffering?

2. **John Hick Soul making** based on the **Irenaen Theodicy**. We move from God's **image to likeness** 'vale of soul making'. We are at an **epistemic distance** to God to allow genuine freedom. Hick was a **universalist** 'there is no hell'

Key Criticism: Does the end justify the means? Is heaven for all supported by the Bible?

3. **Griffin Process Theology** God does not create from scratch and is not omnipotent. God cannot intervene therefore or answer prayers. God is within the world and therefore shares in suffering '*God is the fellow sufferer who understands*' A.N. Whitehead

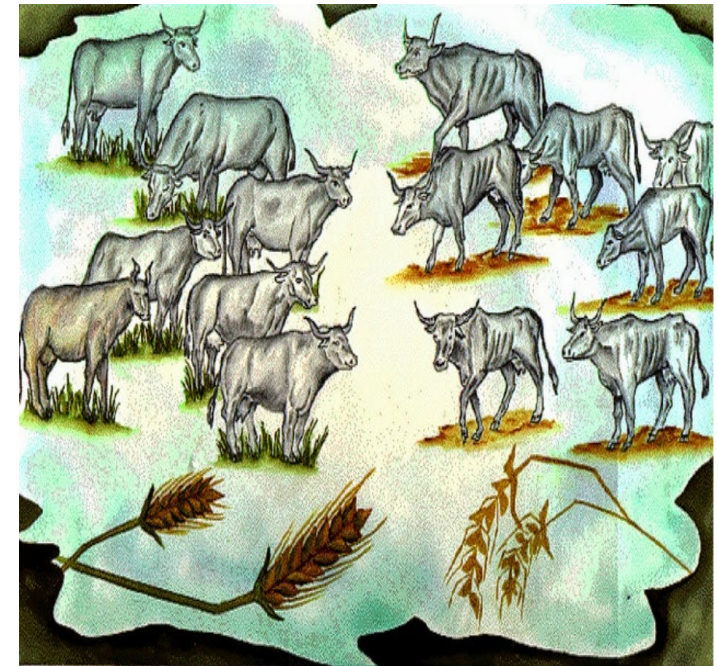
Key Criticism: Is such a God worthy of worship?

3. Religious Experience



1. The nature of religious experience

- **Visions:** corporeal (Bernadette), imaginative (Joseph's dream), intellectual (Teresa of Avila)
- **Rudolph Otto numinous experiences:** Uses the call of Isaiah in Isaiah 6:1-8. The idea of the Holy. *Mysterium tremendum et fascinans* 'fearful and attractive mystery'
- **William James:** Religious experience is primary. Four criteria 1. **ineffable** 2. **Noetic** 3. **Transiency** 4. **Passivity**
- **Walter Stace:** Introvertive and extrovertive mystical experiences

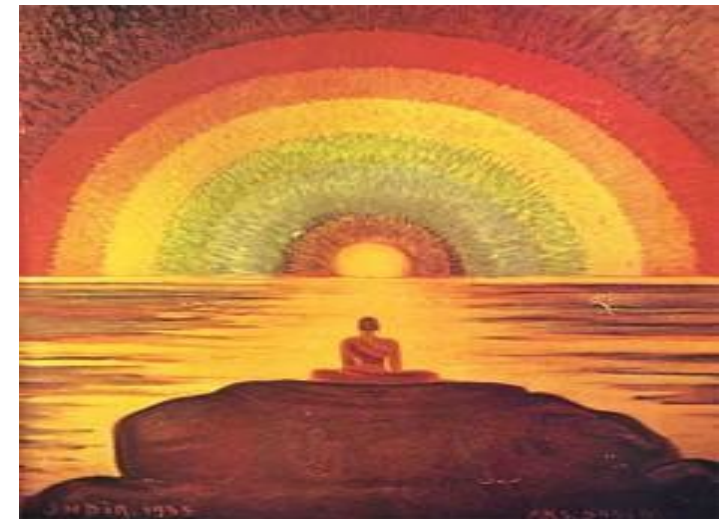


2. Verifying religious experiences

- **Ayer** cannot be verified. Too subjective and personal to be objectively real. HOWEVER, some are group experiences so the evidence is wider.
- **Objections from science: Freud** RE are illusions, RE can be stimulated through devices such as the **God helmet**, Temporal lobe **epilepsy** has been suggested as a reason for Paul's vision HOWEVER this does not mean they are not real
- **Swinburne's Principles of Credulity and Testimony:** How things are is how things seem to be and we should believe unless exceptional circumstances people are telling the truth HOWEVER it is a huge leap to say normal sense experience is the same as religious experience

Value of RE for religious faith

1. Abraham's RE is the foundation of Judaism/Christianity/Islam
2. Sites of RE are pilgrimage sites e.g. Lourdes



1. Background to religious language

- Twentieth century **challenges** to the meaning and significance of religious language- **Hume's Fork**, **Wittgenstein** (1921- note he changes view), **Vienna Circle** and Logical Positivism
- Main argument- is religious language meaningful? Should it be viewed **cognitively** or **non-cognitively**?

2. Challenges to religious language

- **Verification Principle:** **Ayer** religious language is meaningless if it cannot be verified in practice or principle **HOWEVER** it makes many aspects of language meaningless e.g. I love you. The verification principle is meaningless by it's own criteria
- **Falsification Principle:** **Flew** built on the work of **Karl Popper**- something can be counted as scientific only if it is possible that there is evidence to count against it. Flew uses the Parable of the Gardener to support his view. In the end religious statements '***undergo the death of a thousand qualifications***' **HOWEVER** Mitchell this is not true- believer's do allow challenges e.g. problem of evil and suffering

3. Response to the challenge of the verification and falsification principle

1. **Eschatological verification-** Parable of the Celestial City- there is truth to know and it will be revealed after death HOWEVER this does not prove it is true or even a strong probability- it can be verified but not falsified
2. **Blik- Hare** religious language is non-cognitive- all beliefs are blik, illustrated by the Parable of the Lunatic. Bliks are interpretations of the world which are not falsifiable nevertheless they are deeply held and life changing and are therefore crucial HOWEVER makes language too subjective
3. **Language games- Wittgenstein** language has a meaning in a particular social context, each context being governed by rules. Religious language cannot be claimed true or false- it's meaning is defined by the user within their religious language game e.g. 'God loves me' is meaningful to those who accept the first rule of the game that God exists HOWEVER it is impossible to enter into a debate with those coming from another language game e.g. atheism

4. Other view of religious language

1. **Analogy- Aquinas** analogy of attribution and analogy of proportionality, **Ian Ramsey** models, qualifiers and disclosure situation **STRENGTHS** it avoids the issues caused by univocal and equivocal language **HOWEVER** what can be said of God is very limited
2. **Via Negativa-** describing God in terms of what he is not. Key thinkers **Pseudo-Dionysius** and **Maimonides** **STRENGTHS** it avoids anthropomorphism **HOWEVER** most people want to say something positive about God. It is difficult for people to worship being referred to entirely in the negative
3. **Symbolic- Tillich** a symbol contains in itself something of what it represents- symbols speak and arouse emotions e.g. cross or creation story **STRENGTHS** it avoids anthropomorphism **HOWEVER** some of Tillich's ideas are not clear

5. Miracles



1. Differing understandings of miracles

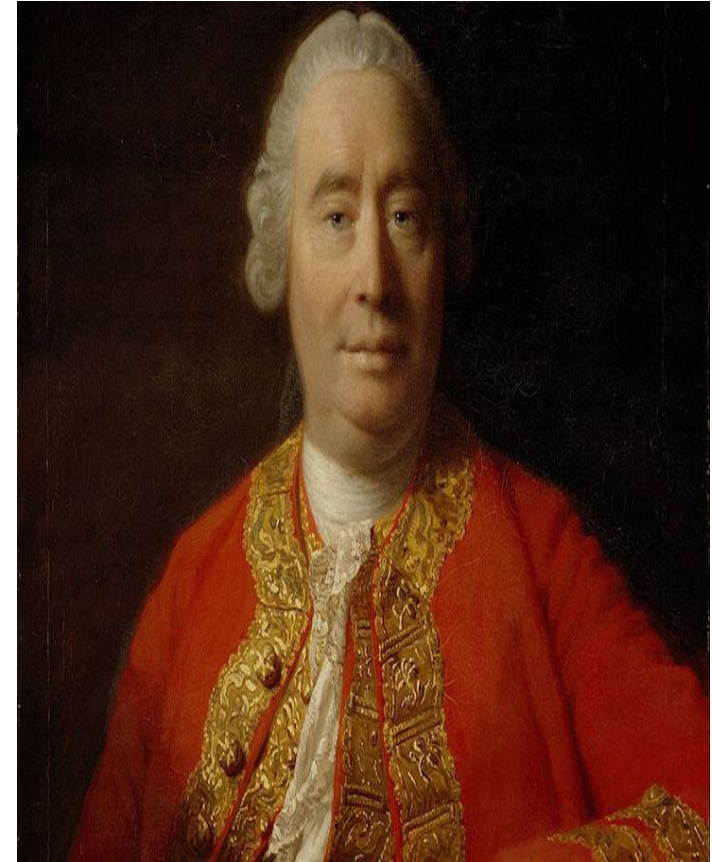
1. Realist views: For Christians this means that miracles are a **real part of what happens in the world**- they come about by the activity of God and are objectively true. This can take different forms 1) through an **extraordinary coincidence** of a beneficial nature e.g. explosion of the **chapel at Nebraska** or 2) miracle as an event brought about by a **spiritual power working through people** e.g. when God worked through **Moses** to free the Israelites from slavery

For realists miracles are a **violation of the laws of nature**, an intentional act of God's will that carries religious significance HOWEVER this encourages a 'God of the gaps approach', science does not accept this view.

2. Anti-realist views: interpret miracles as an interpretation of the mind. They may be seen as symbols, as something that lifts the spirit or transforms the community- they are not activity of a supernatural being. **Tillich** miracle is a subjective experience centring on the individual experiencing it and their reaction to it. It does not breach the laws of nature. Miracles are '**experiencing as**' **Hick** or as '**remarkable coincidences**' **Holland** HOWEVER this view reduces God to interpretation

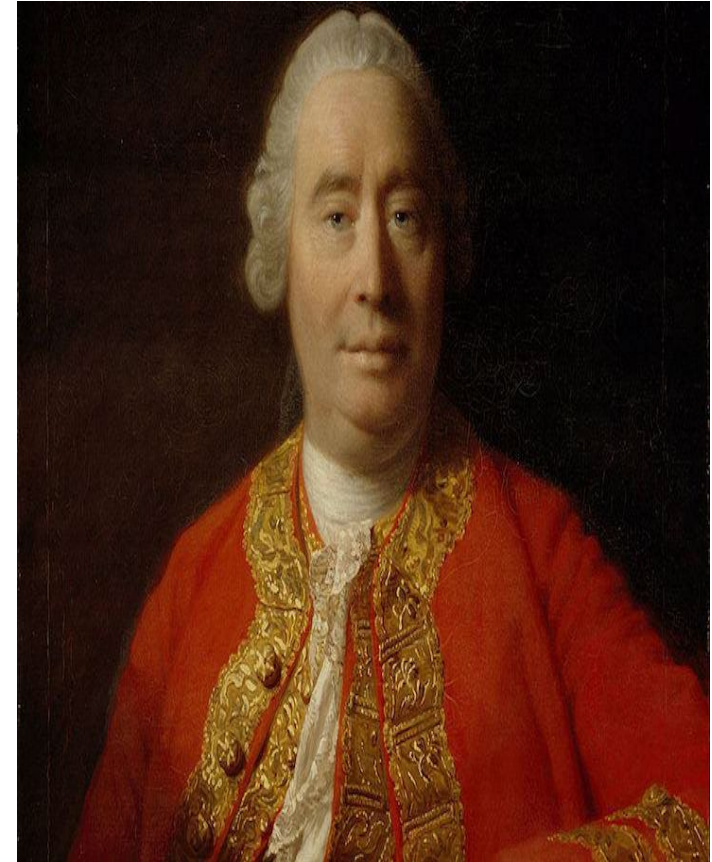
2. David Hume

1. **David Hume:** Hume's thought has its basis in **empiricism**. In thinking about the term 'miracle' Hume adopts a **realist** standpoint however he argues against miracles because: 1) Validity of **witnesses** 2) **Improbability** of a miraculous event occurring 3) Humans are naturally **drawn towards the miraculous** 4) Stories of miraculous occurrences abound amongst '**primitive and barbarous people**'
2. **Significance of Hume:** It is an inductive argument so can neither definitively prove nor disprove the existence of miracles HOWEVER Hume's statement that Christianity is founded on faith not reason makes an important point



3. Maurice Wiles

1. **Wiles' takes an anti-realist approach** miracles are to be interpreted as **symbols**. The only miracle was that of creation. God's creation was so good there was no need for further intervention, God put the laws of nature into place, humans need to rely on those laws.
2. **The interventionist understanding of God is unacceptable** as it means God chooses to help some and not others- this means the **problem of evil is unsolvable**.
3. **Jesus' miracles** are myths to point to the nature of God and the importance of obedience.
4. Wiles makes Hume's views irrelevant **HOWEVER** it has led to claims he is a deist rather than a theist



4. Significance of these views for religion

1. **Significance of realist views** According to realists miracles such as Jesus healing the paralysed man are **objectively true**. These help to support and **strengthen the faith** of Christians and reinforce the belief in an **omnipotent God** and the ultimate miracle- the resurrection of Jesus. Miracles demonstrate **God's love and power**.

2. **Significance of anti-realist views** According to anti-realist the importance of miracles is subjective; they are **not objectively true**. This addresses the problems raised by science. The significance for Tillich is **psychological and personal**- they have religious significance for the person involved. For Wiles Jesus' miracles were not about him breaching natural laws but were stories pointing to God's purposes for the world that were intended to encourage Christians to play their part in overcoming evil and suffering



6. Self and life after death

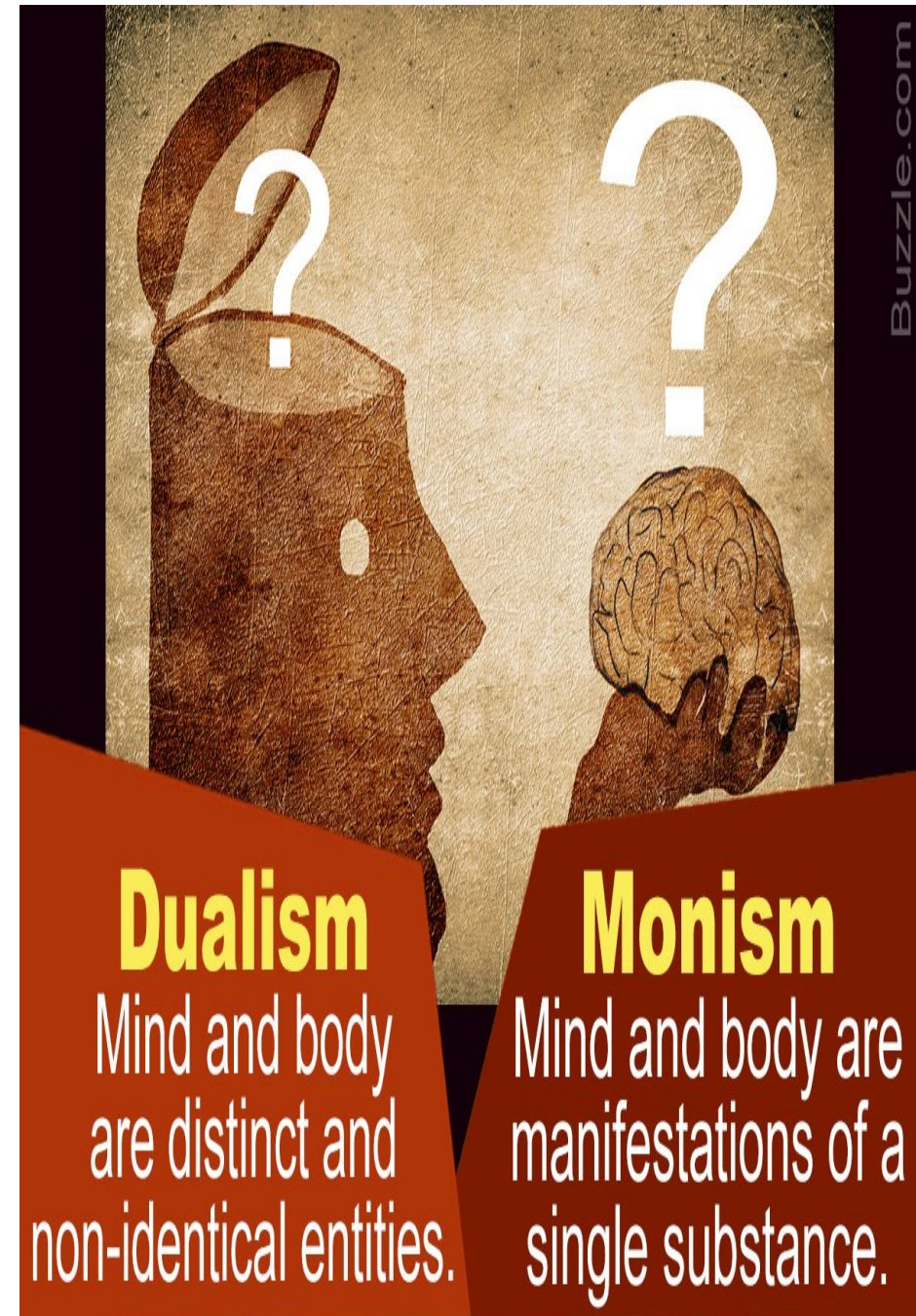


1.The soul: Descartes

- **Dualists** claim the soul exists independently of the body and the soul is superior to the body
- **Plato's** dualist approach is seen in the allegory of the cave with the world in which we live and the **World of Forms**. The soul is superior to the body and belongs in the World of Forms. Plato's charioteer analogy shows the soul is divided into three parts; the rational part, the spirited part and the appetitive part. Some agree this fits in with the feeling on looking at a corpse that something has left it, **HOWEVER** there is no good evidence for the World of Forms.
- **Descartes** is a substance dualist- mind and body are **distinct substances**. First proof came from the **Argument from Doubt**, second **Argument from Divisibility and Non-Divisibility** and third **Argument from Clear and Distinct Perception** '*I think therefore I am*' **HOWEVER** many philosophers view consciousness or the mind as a product of the brain which is itself part of the physical body. **Hume** challenged this argument- if souls are not located in space, how do we know there is only one soul?

1.The soul- Monism

- This is often regarded as **materialism**. This is the view that all is one- **there is no division between the soul and body**.
- **Aristotle** was a materialist and **rejected Plato's concept of the world of the Forms**. His thinking on the soul was based on deductions from the world of **sense experience**. The soul is what gives something its essential nature. It shapes and gives life to the body, however only the human soul has capacity for rational thought and is the 'principle of life', however, for Aristotle the **soul is mortal**.
- **HOWEVER** this contradicts many Christian views that the soul leaves the body after death.



2. Body-soul relationship

- **Plato-** physical body imprisons the soul *psyche*- soul is separate and eternal. At death the soul returns to the world of Forms and then for most is reborn. HOWEVER, science would say mind and body are the same thing.
- **Descartes- interactionism.** Human beings are a material body (temporary machine) and a non-physical mind/soul (permanent essence). Descartes locates the soul in the pineal gland- this is where the body and soul linked. HOWEVER the pineal gland's function is now known. **Gilbert Ryle** 'ghost in the machine.
- **Monism-** the mind is inseparable from the body. **Physicalism-** mind reduced to the brain, there is no soul e.g. **functionalism** sees the mind in terms of what it does- future mind could be uploaded onto a computer. **Hard materialist e.g. Dawkins** no soul, humans are simply carriers of DNA. The only way in which we survive death is through the DNA we pass on HOWEVER the physical brain cannot account for qualia, which are the subjective experiences as a conscious being.
- **Dual-aspect Monism-** only one entity, however not as reductionist as physicalism. The view that mind and matter are two aspects of one, as yet unknown, substance.

3. Possibility of continuing personal existence after death

- **Three categories of personal identity-** 1. Physical (identity is about spatio-temporal continuity) 2. Metaphysical (unchanged conscious awareness) 3. Psychological (Parfit- connectedness to the past and future, but no deeper or enduring self)

Possibility of physical existence:

1. **Hard Materialists:** No continuing personal existence after death./**Bertrand Russell** and **Anthony Flew**. HOWEVER dismisses evidence for NDEs and Reincarnation
2. **Hick's replica theory:** HOWEVER could God create a number of replicas?
3. **Christian belief in the resurrection:** Paul and Nicene Creed talk of a bodily resurrection HOWEVER some Christians believe in a spiritual resurrection. It is also contrary to scientific fact.

3. Possibility of continuing personal existence after death

Possibility of the existence of a conscious self:

1. **Plato**- immortality of the soul. **Price disembodied souls**- the afterlife is mind-based. **Richard Swinburne**- Mental states are soul states. All the soul needs is something to replace the brain in it's earthly life (lightbulb!). HOWEVER Price's theory is dependent on the validity of parapsychology which is challenged by many.
2. **Reincarnation**- belief found in Hinduism. Evidence used is past-life regression or direct past-life recall. HOWEVER some of the research procedures have been weak
3. **Near Death Experiences**- Experiences have been recalled from ancient times. A range of commonly occurring features e.g. tunnel with a bright light HOWEVER many would say the experiences are hallucinations caused by drugs

3. Possibility of continuing personal existence after death

Possibility of psychological continuity after death:

1. **Parfit's Bundle Theory**- Any influence people have in life continues after death as long as the person is remembered. There is no such thing as a self: individuals are bundles of ever-changing states. Theory links to Buddhist belief about life after death HOWEVER how can thoughts and ideas exist without a thinker
2. **Dennet- Functionalism** human brain's computer program consists of the experiences, memories and personality that forms the narrative self- these could survive the death of a person but stored on a different platform e.g. computer HOWEVER neuro-science cannot explain qualia.

4. Objective Immortality with reference to Process Theology

- **Griffin claims that God and the universe exist panentheistically-** God is the universe and the universe is God, with God as the 'soul' of the universe.
- **Objective immortality** means that after death every entity survives in the mind of God. For humans that means actions, thoughts and ideas exist eternally as objects in the memory of the eternal God.
- **Some Process Theologians think of subjective immortality-** God has the power to enable the survival of individuals in such a way there is continuity of identity
- **HOWEVER**, for many Process Theology rejects the traditional attributes of God and therefore leaves us with a God unworthy of worship.

AO1- First part of the question (10)

- Normally begins with the command word 'examine'
- Tests knowledge and understanding- DO NOT INCLUDE EVALUATION
- Give a range of points but not so many it becomes a list. Make sure your points are developed with evidence
- Aim to fulfil level five criteria
- ***Knowledge and critical understanding** is accurate, relevant and fully **developed** in breadth and depth with very good use of **detailed** and relevant **evidence** which may include textual references where appropriate*
- *Where appropriate, good knowledge and understanding of the **diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion** is demonstrated*
- ***Clear and coherent** presentation of ideas with precise use of the appropriate **subject vocabulary***

AO2- Second part of the question (15)

- Consists of a statement followed by the command 'Evaluate this claim'
- This tests your ability to analyse arguments or viewpoints and to evaluate them
- AO2 is NOT giving one set of views, then another set of views and finally giving your own view. This response would be AO1. It is about assessing the persuasiveness of an argument by examining the strengths of its claim and the strength of the counter-claims
- First set out the argument in support of the claim
- Then give critical analysis of this argument e.g. is it inconsistent or illogical at any point? Does it include subjective opinions?
- Use trigger words such as '**however**', '**additionally**' or '**nevertheless**' to help the examiner see where you are making critical analysis
- Then you must consider one different viewpoint from the argument in support of the statement- repeat the process, assess the value of the argument
- Ensure you have a well supported conclusion that addresses the statement and states your judgement

A02- Level 5 criteria

- *A very **well-focussed** response to the issue(s) raised*
- *Perceptive discussion of **different views**, including where appropriate, those of **scholars** or schools of thought with **critical analysis***
- *There is an appropriate **evaluation** fully supported by the **reasoning***
- *Precise use of the appropriate **subject vocabulary***

Top Tips

1. Spend a minute or two jotting down a brief plan (words and phrases not sentences)
2. Remain focussed on the question throughout!
3. Include reference to key scholars where you can.
4. Use specialists terms and spell them correctly
5. Paragraph your work!!
6. Remember chronology!