

2021 Assessment resources

A-level Philosophy

Metaphysics of Mind

Answers and commentaries

The question numbers in this resource reflect the question numbers from the original papers and match the question numbers in the corresponding 2021 assessment materials.

Question 06

06 What is 'hard' behaviourism?

[3 marks]

Student A

Philosophical behaviourism is a semantic theory which attempts to show that ^{we can only meaningfully} talk of mental states ^{by} talking about behaviour. ~~and~~ Hard behaviourism argues that we can reduce talk about mental states to talk using the language of physics ^{without loss of meaning}. It argued that this reduction is analytic.

Commentary

Clear, correct, and sufficiently full for maximum marks. This is a question where answers break down into three relevant dimensions (when explained clearly) for the full three marks. This response has all three philosophical behaviourism concerns: 1) 'talk of mental states', 2) a reduction 'without loss of meaning', to 3) 'the language of physics'.

3 marks

Student B

A physicalist theory of the mind proposed by Hempel that claims
~~all the stuff in the world is physical~~ all talks of mental concepts
state
can be analytically reduced to talks of behaviour, where a mental
state can be reduced to a
finite list of behaviour, ~~analytically~~ without loss of meaning.

Commentary

This answer is substantively correct but lacking precision: what should have been the translatability of language about mental states into the 'language of physics' becomes identified with a 'finite list of behaviour', thereby blurring with soft behaviourism.

2 marks

Student C

The belief that all talk
of mental states is reducible
to talk of behaviour.

Commentary

A point of credit worthy understanding – neither the 'physicalist' dimension nor the 'analytic reduction' is included in the explanation.

1 mark

Question 08

0 8 Outline Descartes' indivisibility argument for substance dualism.

[5 marks]

Student A

Descartes indivisibility argument is as follows;

P1 My mind is indivisible

P2 My body is divisible

C Therefore, my mind and body are two separate substances.

Descartes appeals to Leibniz's Law of the Indiscernibility of Identicals, which states that if two things share ~~not~~ all the same qualities, they must in fact be the same thing. However, as the mind is indivisible, and the physical body is divisible, they cannot be the same thing and must therefore be two separate substances. So substance dualism ~~not~~ must be true.
Descartes argument

Commentary

A precise outline with well-defined points and logical links. This is sufficiently full for maximum marks. The student illuminates their concise, logical presentation of the argument by explaining it in relation to Leibniz's law. There is no redundancy.

5 marks

Student B

Dualism is a claim that our mind and body consist of separate entities. Descartes presents the indivisibility argument in favour of substance dualism. Substance dualism states that mental states consist ~~of separate~~ mental substances. Descartes' indivisibility ^{argument} states that the mind cannot be physical as it cannot be divided the same way physical objects can. For example an arm can be cut and separated from our body whereas our thoughts cannot. This means that, according to Descartes, the body consists of divisible physical substances whereas the mind consists of indivisible mental substances.

Commentary

The substantive content of the argument is present, but it is not precisely expressed (eg the plurality of 'substances' with respect to the mind) and nor is it fully developed.

3 marks

Student C

My body is divisible but my mind is not, hence it must be made from a different ~~type~~ type of 'stuff' with completely different characteristics from physical ~~stuff~~ substance. This is explained by the existence of a mental substance.

Commentary

Relevant points are made (eg about the 'divisible' nature of the body contrasted with 'mental substance'), but the answer is not precise and the logic of the argument is not well developed.

2 marks

Question 10

1	0
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 Is eliminative materialism convincing?

[25 marks]

Student A

Two of the main defenders of EM are Paul and Patricia Churchland. They call our language of mind 'folk psychology' (FP) which indicates it's not scientific. They point to other examples in the sciences where things we thought of as existing proved not to. One example is 'caloric' which scientists once thought was a weightless substance that could explain heat, as it passed between things. Scientists would use this term in their discussion of the science of heat as it seemed to fit with the evidence, just like our talk of 'beliefs' seems to fit with the evidence of human behaviour. But overtime the caloric theory was replaced by a more advanced science of heat based on kinetic energy. So eventually all talk of 'caloric' was shown to be a mistake and fell out of use. EM argues that eventually all talk of mental states will be shown to be a mistake and should fall out of use.

EM shows that even widespread scientific ideas can be shown to be false. And because brain science is quite a recent one, maybe we should expect our understanding of the mind will change radically. The Churchlands argue that FP is just a theory about the mind, and the problem is that it has not changed in thousands of years. This is an issue, as good science involves theories changing or being replaced overtime, making FP look primitive. EM supporters argue that this is why FP has not managed to fully explain mental illness, why we need sleep, or how we remember. It is a problem for FP if it cannot explain these important features of mind.

Another strength is how it compares with other materialist theories, like Mind-brain Identity Theory. EM can argue identity theory's failure so far to identify all mental states with brain states should make us question whether one side of this 'Mind-brain' theory is mistaken or just doesn't exist, and it is more likely to be the mental since, as usually understood, as it cannot be studied objectively like the brain. This would be a good explanation of why identity theories fail, and why EM avoids this problem as it eliminates the primitive mental concepts. By focussing on the brain it is also more intuitive than materialist versions of functionalism, which identifies mental states with functional states, meaning things like 'mouse traps' could be thought of as minded. By focussing on brains, EM is more intuitive as we know brains are related to minds. It can also avoid the problem of 'qualia' (the 'what it is like') that materialists like Behaviourists face (e.g. 'smell of coffee' is not easily reduced to some physical state like behavioural dispositions). Eliminating any 'internal state' from science is a simpler materialist option, though it is very counterintuitive.

Despite these strengths EM has many weaknesses. It assumes that FP is a theory when it might just be what sciences have to study and is no less real than the brain, and that is why it hasn't changed its basic form. Psychologists have worked with FP for quite a long time and done successful science, including on dreams and mental illness. Just because they don't know everything does not mean they are useless sciences. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is one of the best recent treatments of mental illness and it works by examining 'beliefs' and helping to change false or negative ones. 'Beliefs' are one of the mental states that EM would eliminate. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy may not be perfect, but unless EM comes up with something better it's reasonable for psychologists to accept mental states like 'beliefs.'

One of the things science does is make predictions, and 'FP' is very good at doing that. If my friend says he is very 'thirsty' and he 'believes' there might be a bottle of coke in the fridge, then I would be able to predict what he will do next (go to the fridge) better than a scientist looking at his brain. Another thing science does is explain why things happen. If my friend goes to Church every week, prays everyday, and reads the Bible, one good explanation for this behaviour is that he 'believes' in God. EM would have to show that it would be able to explain this behaviour much more convincingly by means of neuroscience, which seems unlikely. FP is much stronger based on current knowledge.

Then there is the problem of eliminating intentionality. 'Intentionality' is the 'aboutness' of the mind, where I could be thinking 'about' Australia or 'about' philosophy. Other physical things like Brains are not 'about' anything. The Churchlands might argue that this is the very reason we need to eliminate them. But when EM says that it wants to 'replace mental state terms' with terms from 'brain science' it seems to be assuming what it says doesn't exist. It seems to be talking and thinking 'about' things. This seems contradictory. A similar way of making this argument is to say it is 'self refuting' when it comes to trying to convince people of the theory.

If an EM defender tries to argue for the theory then a positive result would be to make people 'believe' it. But if beliefs don't exist, how can EM hope to persuade people? Also for the EM theorist themselves, if you argue for a theory that you want people to accept then it is usually because you believe it, otherwise we could probably not take you seriously. But EM theorists can't believe their own theory, as 'beliefs' don't exist. So why should we believe it?

There is a reply to this objection. The Churchlands argue that it assumes that FP is a true theory and that 'beliefs' are really important to scientific truth, but maybe they aren't. It 'begs the question'. They use the analogy of vitalism, a discarded theory which posits a special 'force' which gives life to physical things. The non-vitalist says to the vitalist 'we can't take you seriously as if your theory was true then you'd be dead'. The problem here is that the vitalist assumes the truth of vitalism. We now know that vitalism is false and we don't need this 'force' to explain life. So the analogy is that we may come to know that folk psychology is false, and we won't need 'belief' to explain anything about why we change theories.

The problem with this response is that the analogy is not close enough. Vitalism tried to explain life and was replaced by a better theory of life. EM does not have a new theory of the mind but a prediction of what might happen in future, and so can't be thought of as a good replacement. Also, when it is claimed that FP might be 'radically mistaken', this assumes a difference between true and false. But when we say something is 'true' or 'false', we are talking 'about' something again, and so we are sneaking intentionality back in, when it is not supposed to exist.

Overall EM is an interesting theory which makes us wonder if our understanding of mind might be seriously mistaken. It's materialism is a strength as it appeals to brain science and it offers a

radical solution to the problem of qualia compared with other materialist theories. But I do not find it convincing. It assumes FP is a theory which many scientists reject. FP explains and predicts things well, and scientific psychologies have been developed based on it. And most importantly it is not coherent since the arguments for the theory seems to assume many of the things that it says it rejects ('belief' or 'intentionality' which are essential for 'truth'), which means there is a logical challenge which brain science can't solve.

Commentary

The position of this essay is argued with intent, and the logic of the argument is sustained. The content is detailed and correct, and the rationales for the weight given to particular arguments, the crucial and the less crucial, are well explained. Relevant philosophical language is used throughout. This is, without doubt, a top band answer, and the awarding of maximum marks was reasonable.

The introduction briefly and accurately defines eliminative materialism (EM) and indicates what the student takes to be the major problem with the theory: it suffers from 'incoherence'. EM is correctly distinguished from other materialist theories – it is 'eliminative' not reductive. The theory is then explained using a popular analogy ('caloric'), and the student makes sure that the historical point about caloric is well connected (integrated) with the theoretical point about the prospects of folk psychology (FP).

Having outlined EM, the student starts to bring out its strengths: in its own right and in relation to other theories. We do not get long and detailed explanations of those rival positions (eg 'functionalism' or 'mind-brain identity' theories). We get some brief and accurate points about the theories, and a brief but reasoned judgement is made in favour of EM's superiority.

The student then goes on to respond to every single point that was raised as a strength of EM: it is counterintuitive on qualia; FP is not a theory; FP is effective in prediction and explanation and underpins some successful sciences already: cognitive behavioural therapy is cited, and the student even explains what features of this theoretical approach to psychological therapy are relevant to an evaluation of EM.

The problem of intentionality is raised, briefly responded to by EM, and then replied to in a way that suggests that intentionality is still presupposed by EM's theory of mind and its attempt to argue for its truth. The student then develops this into the more familiar version of the 'self-refuting' charge, which is clearly explained. Many students used the 'self-refuting' argument as the 'killer' objection, without reply, but this student is able to formulate a reply from the relevant literature: the 'self-refuting' claim is dismissed as 'question begging', and another analogy from the history of science is provided ('vitalism').

The student then counters the aforementioned defence of EM by questioning the strength of the analogy and doubling down on the point that the asserted 'truth' of any theory depends on/presupposes 'intentionality'.

The conclusion is a faithful summary of the preceding arguments. The argument that there is an 'incoherence' concerning EM is presented as the strongest because it is a 'logical' problem that resists scientific resolution. There are, of course, relative weaknesses to this essay. For example, 'qualia' is treated just once briefly; there are EM responses to all the arguments against it here; and distinctions could have been made between the distinctive arguments of Paul and Patricia Churchland. But in the time available, this student produces a very knowledgeable, well-reasoned, robust, and integrated argument.

25 marks

Student B


PLAN: ~~the~~ debates about consciousness, distinction between dualism/physicalism. What is EM.

- ① Occam's Razor: simpler as it ~~moves from~~ ~~reduces~~ ~~more~~ eliminates talk of mental states and doesn't require further entities like dualism
 - ↳ But by doing this it eliminates talk of belief, desire, thought etc. which we are more certain about than anything else. Would need strong arguments to give it up (not convincing enough)
 - ↳ Only think this because we presuppose

- ↳ Only think this because we presuppose FP which is wrong
- ↳ But FP is reliable & should be ~~to~~ maintained

② Self refuting!

- ↳ Analogy w vitalists
- ↳ But they gave an alternative. EM doesn't.
- ↳ Ultimately relies on ~~to~~ FP in order to even make its claim. So only works as an argument for reduction, not elimination.

In debates about the nature of consciousness, there are various theories about what constitutes a mind. Dualists hold that ~~there are~~ the mental is distinct from the physical (whether a separate substance or property), whilst physicalists hold that ~~to~~ everything, including the mental, relies on the physical. Mind-Brain Type Identity Theory, for example, says we can ~~reduce mental concepts~~ make an ontological reduction from mental concepts to the physical. However, Eliminative Materialism goes further than these kinds of physicalist theories, ~~holding that~~ going from reduction to total elimination of mental  concepts.

One advantage of Eliminative Materialism is that it is simpler than dualist theories, which require the introduction of further entities than the physical. ✓ Therefore, by Occam's Razor ('do not multiply entities beyond necessity') it is perhaps a superior theory. ~~It holds talk of mental concepts~~ It regards talk of mental concepts ~~as~~-like thoughts, beliefs and desires- as a mistaken Folk Psychology which refers to things which do not actually exist. For this reason, they should be abandoned in order to allow for neuroscience to replace Folk Psychology with a better account of the mind which ✓ recognises its ultimately physical nature. For these reasons, it could be considered convincing, especially when backed up by developments in neuroscience which reveal things such as a perceived lack of 'will-power' in drug addicts to actually be the result of brains with different dopamine systems which are prone to drug addiction. ✓

However, a major issue with the theory is that it demands that we abandon all of our intuitions about our minds. It seems that we are more certain that we are having thoughts, beliefs, desires etc. than we are about anything else in the world. These are the things most directly and immediately accessible to us and so we should trust them more than any arguments presented by the Eliminative Materialist. It ~~would~~ seems that no argument could be convincing enough to lead us to ~~eliminate our beliefs~~ in abandon such strong intuitions, making Eliminative Materialism highly unconvincing.

An Eliminative Materialist would respond that ~~such strong beliefs~~ have this inability to ~~reject~~ accept the elimination of beliefs etc. simply arises from the presupposition ~~of~~ ^{that} Folk Psychology is true, as it forms our ways of thinking in order to deceive us that we have a mind in this spiritual sense. Once we accept Eliminative Materialism, it will make way for alternative neuroscientific theories which will replace Folk Psychology and show how the ^{feeling of} certainty about the existence of folk psychological concepts is mistaken. ✓

However this seems reputable; Folk Psychology ~~is~~ is perhaps not as inadequate as the Eliminative Materialist asserts. ~~As~~ As a theory it has good ~~predictive~~ explanatory power and enables us to successfully make predictions about other mental states. ✓ For example, ~~if I know~~ knowing that my brother has a desire to go to university and a belief that hard work ~~derives~~ success allows me to reliably infer, using Folk Psychology, that he will study hard for his exams. To condemn a ~~is~~ greatly effective way of

thinking about the mind that also coincides with our intuitions ~~seems~~ to elimination seems unnecessary, and Eliminative Materialism provides no ^{convincing} ~~strong~~ account for why we should do .

A further, issue with the theory of Eliminative Materialism, and perhaps the most damaging to its ability to ~~offer~~ offer a convincing position, is the criticism that it is self-repeating. We can formulate the arguments of the Eliminative Materialists Paul and Patricia Churchland~~s~~ to a summarising statement: there are no beliefs. Yet this poses an apparent contradiction.

The very nature of ~~their theory~~ a theory is that it creates arguments in order to provoke thoughts in readers, and convince them to change their beliefs. But this seems futile to a position that holds there are no beliefs! The Churchlands require the existence of intentional mental states - which they deny - in order for their arguments to truly be 'about' anything at all. Therefore the theory is unconvincing because it cannot comply with its own standards of what mind is (or isn't).

Paul Churchland ~~is~~ gives an analogy to deter claims that his theory is self-refuting by discussing the 19th Century debates over the existence of 'vital force'. ~~People who~~ ~~kept~~ a special life energy that keeps people alive. People who believed in it said that deniers of vital force cannot be correct - if it didn't exist they would be dead, they claimed. Yet this presupposes the existence of such a force, and so is an invalid objection. Paul Churchland argues ~~that~~ that the claim that Eliminativism is self-refuting is the same - it presupposes

the existence of a mind in the Folk Psychological sense and so it does little to object to ~~that~~ his position. It is only belief in beliefs that ~~not~~ deceives us into seeing things this way. Again, once neuroscience develops its new account, this issue ~~with~~ will cease. So Eliminativism could still be convincing. ✓

This analogy fails, however, as ~~the~~ anti-vitalists did not simply deny the existence of 'life force', but instead gave an alternative account to object to it with

Extra space ~~the~~ Contrastingly, Eliminativism fails to offer any alternative account of mental states (merely asserting it may come from neuroscientific developments eventually) and so offers no way of conceptualising what other way of defining them could ~~be~~ be. Thus, it holds no strong argument for why it is necessary to eliminate mental concepts, as they have been reliably used through Folk Psychology for many thousands of years, making it ~~entirely unconvincing~~ remain self-reputing and entirely ~~the~~ unconvincing. ✓

Ultimately, Paul Churchland fails to deflect the issue that Eliminativism is self-refuting, revealing how the very nature of Eliminativism requires the existence of thoughts, beliefs, and intentional content in order to make its claims. This shows how an account of mind must include these concepts and explain them sufficiently, ~~showing how~~ meaning that ~~eliminates~~ they certainly cannot be eliminated, despite the claims of the Eliminativist that we can and should do so. Therefore, it seems that the Churchlands fail to provide any convincing reason for taking their stance. Instead, their arguments can only coherently provide a basis for the reduction of mental states to ^{the} physical (neuroscience, perhaps). This makes Mind-Brain Type Identity Theory or dualist accounts of mind more persuasive - only they can maintain the evidently necessary existence of mental concepts.

To conclude, Eliminativism fails not only as a result of its contradiction with our intuitions, but as a result of its attempt to convince us at all with the position that beliefs don't exist. It is the ^{very} fact that it tries to convince us that makes it ~~convince~~ unconvincing.

Commentary

This essay argues with sustained intent. There is argument and countered argument, drawing on a range of material, some of it detailed and well-integrated, in support of the conclusion. The conclusion is not as robustly defended against objections as it might have been, and there are gaps in relevant content (eg on 'qualia'),

The student begins with a general (extended) summary of different positions on the mind, in order to introduce EM as a particularly radical approach, one that the student will argue is 'highly unconvincing'. The advantages of EM over dualism are noted, in terms of simplicity and support from neuroscience.

An early challenge to EM is identified in terms of its counterintuitive claims about mental states, which are 'directly and immediately accessible to us'. However, there is a reply to this from EM – it depends on the assumption that FP gives an accurate account of the mental, which EM denies. Against this, however, FP is said by the student to have good predictive power (which is illustrated) and so there is no reason to abandon this approach to the mind.

The next (and 'most damaging') argument concerns the self-refuting character of EM: the case for EM presupposes the very intentional mental states it denies. The student considers Paul Churchland's response to this, using the analogy of vitalism – the 'self-refuting' objection presupposes the truth of FP which just begs the question. But this strategy is rejected by this student on the grounds that anti-vitalists actually had alternative accounts of what constitutes life which did not refer to a vital force, whereas EM offers no such account.

The relative (greater) plausibility of identity theories and dualism are introduced rather late in the day, such that little credit worthy evaluative work can be done, but it is not reasonable to point to alternative positions. The conclusion is a faithful summary of the key reason the student has offered for rejecting EM.

19 marks

Student C

~~ACE1: Folk psych = stagnating introspection of self~~

~~ACE2: Neuroscience is developing and shows physical~~

~~FP has good explan/pred powers~~

~~ACE3: ~~Exp~~ Folk psych often proved wrong by sci.~~

~~EM = self-refuting.~~

~~↳ brain death
gen theory~~

~~* on extra paper
Eliminative materialism (EM) is the theory that folk psychology will be completely eliminated as neuroscience progresses. To show that EM is not convincing I will use the criticisms that it is self-refuting, it fails to account for introspection and that folk psychology has good explanatory & power. I think that EM doesn't succeed because it is dependent on a development in neuroscience that hasn't come around yet and so such a predictive theory isn't convincing now, but I think it may be so in a number of years.~~

Eliminative materialism argues for the total elimination of Folk Psychology, which is the commonsense belief that mental states are observed and seen through behaviour and etc. ^{→ beliefs}

one's behaviour is a good indicator of what they will do next. ✓ Eliminative Materialism is valid because ~~the~~ ~~an~~ ~~the~~ elimination in common sense/Folk psychology beliefs has been done before. Before the true concept of heat was found, people thought heat was ~~is~~ gained from a liquid in objects called caloric. This was a widespread scientific belief of the middle ages. However, this was proved to be false due to the fact that when heated up an ~~of~~ object doesn't gain weight and so a liquid that propagates heat was false and heat was found to be developed by the vibrations of atoms. This gives EM the claim that new developments in science can eliminate ~~the~~ ~~previous~~ 'common sense' / Folk psychological ~~theories~~ theories.

The first argument in support of EM is that Folk Psychology is stagnating and nothing new is being discovered/ added to ~~it~~. Patricia Churchland argues that a true scientific theory should constantly develop new ideas and theories but much of the cases Folk Psychology promotes have been the same

for years ✓. Churchland argues that we shouldn't follow such a 'dead scientific theory' because we learn nothing new about it and its cases are primitive. Folk psychology doesn't seem to give me an account and display/teach us new things. I think that although this theory is wrong because it points out the huge flaw in folk psychology, it doesn't consider that folk psychology is the benchmark for our life and common sense beliefs. I think this ignorance is weak and demonstrates how Churchland doesn't understand the significance of it in our society. 📄

A criticism of Eliminative Materialism that shows ^{that it is not convincing} folk psychology is superior is the introspection of self. If EM eliminates folk psychology when we look at our selves introspectively and see ~~our~~ attitudes, thoughts, beliefs and so on, it displays the contradiction that ^{EM} provides. We cannot deny our own introspection as that would be illogical and would contradict our own selves. This conflict EM has with folk psychology indicates that EM cannot be right as it asks us to deny our introspection. ✓

I think that this criticism is decisive in ~~proving~~ proving how Eliminative Materialism is not convincing because it shows a clear contradiction. EM encourages us to undermine and deny our own senses. Such a contradiction proves the absurdity of the position as it is illogical to expect that to occur and if we were to do that, I think it would lead to massive scepticism about the theory which ~~would~~ would further damage it. Therefore, one reason I think Eliminative Materialism is not convincing is because of the absurd position it takes in wanting one to reject their own introspection. ^{I think} The criticism shows that even though Folk Psychology is stagnant, it sticks to reasonable beliefs and doesn't take an ~~absurd~~ absurd position, however perhaps if a

replacement for Folk Psychology as a development
~~Another reason why~~ in neuroscience came
around, it could prove this absurd position to be
false. ✓

Another important reason why EM & conspiracy is
that it argues Folk Psychology ~~is~~ doesn't give us
an adequate account of why we do things. ✓
The Churchlands claim that Folk Psychology can't
help us account for the need to sleep or dream and so
it is wrong because of this. As a result it argues
~~is~~ that developments in neuroscience will give
us an explanation for these things and thus will
be able to eliminate folk psychology. This
lack of ~~an~~ explanation seems to be good. ✓
reason to reject the theory as if we cannot know basic
things through Folk Psychology, we will not be

able to learn/develop more complex concepts.

I think that ~~folk psychology~~ this is a very valid criticism of folk psychology because of it ~~proves~~ fails to display answers to questions we create, for it is inherently a bad theory because it doesn't add to our beliefs, however I do believe that Folk Psychology has some strengths.

A common criticism of this point of view is ~~that~~ ^{to} argue that Folk Psychology has good explanatory and predictive power. Folk Psychology has been at the core of society for over 5,000 years and so its ability to allow humans to ~~develop~~/predict what actions others will do has served humanity incredibly well. The fact that it hasn't been eliminated shows the theory is strong because it still has huge benefits in explaining why someone

behaved that way/will act in a certain way ✓
I think that Folk Psychology is a good theory
and EM is wrong to preemptively eliminate
it as it has served us well for a prolonged
period of time. Although it doesn't have every
answer, it provides a working way to explain and
predict action which I think is ~~critical~~
critical in our society. ✓ Furthermore, I think
that without a solid development in neuro-

science, it will continue to be ~~the best & most~~ the best theory of
there aren't really any viable alternatives.

Therefore, I think that the criticism of EM that
Folk Psychology has good explanatory and predictive
powers succeeds over the fact that it doesn't
give us an adequate account because folk psych-
ology is one of the only adequate accounts and
so I think that EM fails in this respect and
is not convincing due to a lack of a theory
to replace EM. ✓

Finally, another argument that supports EM is that time and time again, Folk Psychology is proven wrong by science. The Churchlands argue that Folk Psychology is wrong very often and is proven to be false on numerous occasions through scientific discoveries. An example of this is during the prevalence of the Black Plague in the Middle Ages. Folk Psychologists⁴ thought it spread through 'bad air' and that parts of the air were contaminated with the disease. However, due to new scientific discoveries, we have understood it to be a result of Germ theory, which is the theory regarding how germs can travel through the air and other mediums in many different ways. The lack of understanding and huge misconceptions that Folk Psychology

Extra space allows for a clearer indication of why EM may be conspiracy. ✓

I think that this is a very weak argument because it ~~means~~ means that any theory that has ever been wrong and proven so is instantly wrong and should be eliminated. By this logic, ^{because it} that means pre-Newton conception of Gravity was wrong, the entirety of physics should be eliminated. I think it is in the nature of science to keep improving ~~through~~ through trial and error and it doesn't warrant total elimination. ✓

However, EM's incessant want to wipe out Folk Psychology proves to give EM substantial problems as it becomes self-refuting. If EM wants to eliminate Folk Psychology, then it has no means to articulate the theory due to a lack of Folk Psychology, which means EM is ~~self~~ self-refuting. ✓ I think that this is a huge issue for EM that cannot be smoothly avoided without truly destroying the credibility of the theory. Paul Churchland attempts to reply by using the argument of the vitavists and non-vitavists that is obviously fallacious. A vitavist argues that we need a spirit to live, whilst the non-vitavist ~~states~~ claims we don't, however if we don't have

a spirit then we can't believe and so this is self-refuting. Paul Churchland is trying to show that a flaw of the current is that Folk Psychology is assumed to be the used theory but instead we would use the framework of a newer theory. ✓

I think that although this reply succeeds to ~~convince~~ ^{an extent}, Paul doesn't show any theory that could replace folk psychology and so the only way to articulate our thoughts is by presupposing that we are using it. Thus I think the strength of the self-refuting claim for EM is an ~~an~~ ~~willer~~ argument and shows EM to not be convincing. ✓

In conclusion, it is very clear that EM cannot be convincing due to three key reasons: its failure to account for self-introspection, the good explanatory and predictive powers it has which are superior to that of any current ^{replacement} ~~theory~~, and finally the most important one, the claim is self-refuting which displays the inherent ~~for~~ fundamental flaws in the argument and it thus why I think EM is not convincing right now, but maybe later when a better alternative to Folk Psychology is thought of. ✓

Commentary

There is an argument to a conclusion here, but no sustained intent to that argument, which flips back and forth throughout the essay. There is plenty of relevant content to support a conclusion, but there are serious misunderstandings which reoccur (concerning FP) which means that a response which could have been at the top of this band is close to the bottom.

The student begins with an explanation of EM and gives the basic rationale for the position, drawing on analogies from the history of obsolete scientific theories. The student then builds on this by claiming, on behalf of EM, that FP is 'stagnant'. The response, that EM does not recognise the significance of FP as a societal 'benchmark', is trying to latch onto a relevant criticism, but this is not executed with precision.

The next objection to EM is (initially) more convincing, drawing as it does from evidence afforded by 'introspection'. However, the evaluation degenerates somewhat into assertions about the 'absurd' and 'illogical' nature of EM. Again, the student is aware of problems with EM, but they are just not developed with any clarity.

The student returns to offering some support for EM because of FP's inability to account for 'dreams', but the later comments on FP's inability to add to our 'beliefs' makes little sense.

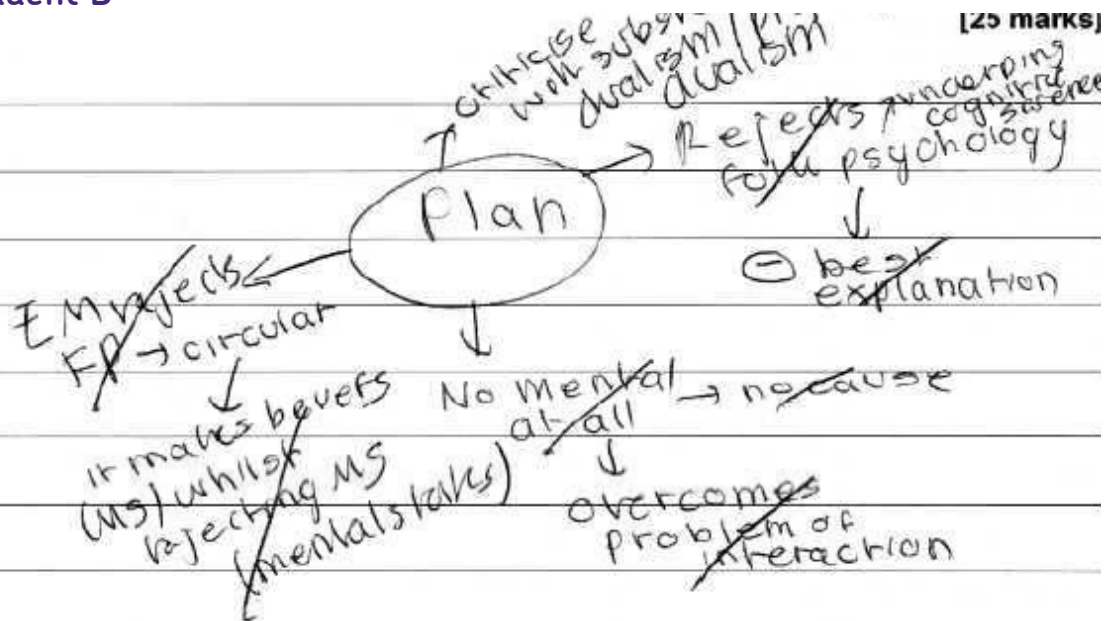
In support of FP, the student points to the practical success of FP over time. The response, drawing on EM's supposed refutation of FP shows a complete lack of understanding in mistaking another historical analogy (concerning the 'black death') as an argument directly against FP. The quality of the evaluation improves when the student turns to the 'self-refuting' objection to EM, which is well explained.



The conclusion equivocates between arguing for the 'inherent, fundamental flaws of EM', and holding out the possibility that future advances in neuroscience may vindicate it over FP. This is not a coherent conclusion.

12 marks

Student D

[25 marks]



Eliminative materialism^a ^{a physicalist theory} claims that what we think of as mental states do not exist (only physical concepts/ states are what we know of as accept as existing).  whilst eliminative materialism (eliminativism) is successful against criticism that breaks down other theories, its inability to build a strong argument of its own whilst rejecting others makes the argument unconvincing. Therefore, it will be argued that eliminative materialism is not convincing. 

Eliminativism tries to build its


argument, presenting it as convincing, by rejecting its contender: folk psychology. Folk psychology is the basis for the claims about the mental, it comprises all arguments that point to proving factors about the mental and their existence, (such as arguments in cognitive psychology, and such arguments as substance dualism in philosophy). Eliminativism argues that folk psychology should be totally rejected because its basis rests on the idea of mental existing, which is incorrect, and instead eliminativism states we should shift our focus

to neuroscience in creating new concepts around our ideas of the mind, Focusing on the physical aspects of such scientific theories, because they can provide strong ~~scientific~~^{empirical} theories which eliminativism argues folk psychology cannot.

From this it can be observed that the main idea behind eliminativism is that we should reject our previous ideas surrounding mental states (therefore ~~is~~ rejecting folk

psychology and the existence of mental states) and look to new developing ideas on what the mind constitutes, which the forerunning ideas should be ones taken from such scientific fields as neuroscience according to eliminativism.

It could be argued that this theory is convincing in that it avoids criticism faced by theory supporting the role of mental states, of which undermines such theories significantly. Substance dualism is the claim that the mind (mental states) exists as a separate, distinct substance to the body (physical states), and the sub-branch of interactionist substance dualism claims that the mental and physical substances interact. From this the empirical problem arises, that energy cannot be created or destroyed in a closed system such as our universe. As the mental is a ^{of interaction} ^{from the concept} ~~different~~ substance to what is physical it exists outside of our physical universe, however it can

assert force on the physical^{according to substance dualism}, which would entail that energy from outside of the physical universe is being created when the mind (which brings force into the physical universe) interacts with the body. This criticism undermines substance dualism because it shows either mind and body interact (and the whole of our basic knowledge of the physical laws of the universe are incorrect) or that mind and body do not interact, the latter of which is the option that is thought to be much more accurate; the option of which also shows substance dualist claims to be wrong. However, as a physicalist theory (argues everything is physical) and as it rejects mental states as existing, eliminative materialism faces no objection in how mind and body ~~relate to~~ interact, and so holds strong as a theory for understanding mental states can't interact with physical states. This points to  eliminativism being convincing because it is able to build up a stronger argument than the

Theories that oppose it, such as substance dualism which would criticise eliminativism in claiming that mental states do exist and that they are a separate substance to physical states.

However, whilst eliminativism is arguably convincing in avoiding objection to theories and their criticisms that oppose the theory, and therefore showing it to be stronger than the theories that held the belief in the existence of mental states, it is not convincing due to criticisms that point to the theory being weak, even if it is stronger than others. One substantial criticism arises from eliminativism rejection of folk psychology. Folk psychology has come to underpin much of our current theories, such as cognitive science, that are constantly gaining influence, and impacting as much as neuroscience on our understandings of the mental (or lack of). The basis for rejecting

Folk psychology came from the idea that its claim for the mental is outdated, however as discussed folk psychology is actually ~~as~~ just as influential now as it ever was. Therefore, ~~eliminativism~~ eliminativism's basis for rejecting its strong contender of ^{Folk Psychology} ~~psychology~~ as outdated is lost, and it seems the basis for rejecting the theory rested nothing more on that eliminativism did not agree with the views of this standpoint, meaning folk psychology poses as a strong contender to eliminativism, contrasting its theory and gaining greater support that makes it as influential and as ~~the~~ theories eliminativism advocates. Therefore, eliminativism is not convincing ~~on~~ through the idea that folk psychology (which advocates for mental states) stands strongly against it, and through eliminativism's weak basis for rejecting theories that pose a threat to its assumptions.

A stronger criticism is that in rejecting

Extra space Folk psychology, ~~eliminativism~~ and so mental states, eliminativism becomes self-contradictory. In rejecting these ideas eliminativism rejects such concepts as belief, thought and desire, however in rejecting these expresses the belief that this is the wrong theory (the one that sees mental states as existing). Therefore, eliminativism is contradicting itself by rejecting mental states, but then using ideas around mental states (beliefs, for example) and mental states themselves to talk about its own idea - that mental states don't exist. An eliminativist might respond stating that it is one role of a mental state that has been rejected (the role of mental states in folk psychology) and through new, developing theories eliminativism can assert ideas ~~with~~ through a new concept of what we currently know as thought, desire, belief (mental states). However this response falls in that, until a new theory has

presented us with these new concepts, that prevent eliminativism from being self-contradictory, it remains that our concepts of mental states fall under folk psychology (the best hypothesis and most influential field on mental states) and so in rejecting it, eliminativism becomes nothing more than self-contradictory, and a confusing theory to grasp (due to its counter-intuitive nature of mental states).

In conclusion, eliminative materialism is not convincing. This is because, whilst it seemingly is stronger than the dualist theory of substance dualism it does not stand strong against the fore-running theory behind the advocacy that mental states exist (folk psychology) and so fails to stand strong in its claim that mental states ~~are~~ do not

Commentary

This is a response in the form of an argument. The material is relevant, but relatively narrow in range, with much relevant content from the specification that is missing. The arguments lack detail and precision.

The essay begins with a less than precise account of EM, but it contains relevant and accurate content, and the student's position is clear – they will be arguing that EM is not convincing.

The rationale for EM is then described through a juxtaposition with FP, which is narrowly (but not inaccurately) connected to dualism, although the account of FP is not characterised with any precision.

The student correctly notes the emphasis that EM places on advances in neuroscience. Problems with dualism (eg interactionism) are said to be solved by EM because it simply denies that 'mental states' can interact with 'physical states', which is not as precisely stated as it might have been: for EM, in so far as any mental states do exist at all, they are just physical states like everything else in the universe. But it is not unreasonable to argue that physicalist positions are better able to solve the interaction problem, dealing as they do with one (material) substance.

Against EM's claim that FP is outmoded, it is proposed here that FP is as influential as ever, especially within 'cognitive science'. The presumption that FP is a theory of mind to begin with, however, is Paul Churchland's rather than the holders of other recognised positions in the philosophy of mind, but the student consistently treats FP on those terms.

The self-refuting objection to EM is clearly explained, but certainly not precise and detailed. A reasonable response from EM is attempted, though again it lacks detail.

The conclusion is a partial summary of the previous discussion, and ends mid-sentence. This is a response placed at the very top of the 6–10 band.

10 marks