

# **MARKSCHEME**

**MAY 2005**

**PHILOSOPHY**

**Higher Level and Standard Level**

**Paper 2**

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1. **Lao Tzu: *Tao Te Ching***

**Explain and evaluate the idea that nature is not kind because it treats all things impartially and that the sage is not kind because he treats all people impartially.**

The question is focused on nature, wisdom and how they can be related by means of the Tao.

**Key points**

- The individual who lives in accord with the Tao is the Sage. The Sage must become as much like the Tao, and therefore as little like an individual, as possible.
- ‘Tao’ basically means: (a) literally, ‘way’ or ‘path’ (b) ‘way of doing something’ and (c) ‘principle’ or ‘set of principles.’ Behind the constantly changing everyday world of all that exists there lies an ultimate and everlasting reality, the Tao.
- Purposes are the result of the desires of the ego. The fewer the desires and wishes of the ego, the closer we come to the Tao, and the less individual we become. The Sage does not strive for any personal end diminishes personal desire to the greatest possible degree. The Sage relies on ‘actionless activity.’
- Taoists do not make a radical distinction between the Tao and the order of Nature in general. Tao is in some sense present in or informing all there is. All things receive their *te* (virtue, power, capacity) from the Tao. For the Taoist, nature is (as we would say) divine.
- The Sage, like a mirror, reflects impartially and desirelessly what is before it. The Sage has no personal desires, and so submits unprotestingly to the course of events (Fate).
- Kind should be interpreted within the text.

**Discussion**

- There is something that is real, ultimate and in some way the basis of all there is. Impartiality can be understood as a basis from which all kind of particular or individual differences have no real meaning.
- ‘The Sage relies on actionless activity’ is an assertion of consequences for the moral and political philosophy, therefore some of these implications can be discussed, *e.g.* “The more laws are promulgated the more thieves and bandits there will be”.
- A comparison and contrast with other conceptions could be a valid approach as part of the answer. For instance, classical Greek or Christian ideas regarding the role of imitating nature in forming the moral or personal character.
- The perspective on nature and wisdom transmitted by generations could and should become dated. The identified ideas can be related to present issues.

## 2. Confucius: *The Analects*

**Explain and analyse what Confucius means when he says that Man can enlarge the Way, but the Way cannot enlarge Man.**

In this question, candidates are expected to explain and discuss the differences between the Way (*dao*) and humaneness (*virtue*). Confucius claims that humaneness can flourish only when the Way prevails. His conclusion is that only via the deeds of gentlemen can there be good in a society where the Way prevails; the degree of moral prosperity in a society is wholly dependent upon the humaneness of the gentleman, and a good political system and ethos is not enough.

### Key points

- The gentleman, the one who is humane, or promotes humaneness is: active in learning, cultivates friendships, is observant of traditions and ritual, appreciates culture (music, drama, and art), respectful, humble, sensitive, yet forthright, courageous and honest.
- There are two understandings of ‘The Way’: (a) that of a personal set of moral maxims, and (b) a political system/ethos. Both are relevant to this topic. The Way, in both senses, refers to an ethos of incorruptibility. The first is a condition for the second.
- A gentleman is instructed not to enter a political system where the Way does not prevail, as they may become corrupted, or their deeds compromised.
- Though maxims and rules are necessary in moral conduct, it is on their deeds and words that a gentleman is judged. As a system of virtue ethics, Confucianism claims that if a man is virtuous, then his actions will also be virtuous.

### Discussion

- If Confucius does not want the gentleman to enter a political system where the Way does not prevail, then how is reform possible? If the Way prevails, then what is the need for a gentleman?
- Are the qualities and practices that Confucius describes the essential/exclusive ones for virtue or are there others? *e.g.* Are there occasions when the virtuous must lie? Conversely, does possession of these traits necessarily make you good? *e.g.* The Nazis admired and valued ritual, authority, and music.
- Does Confucius’s emphasis on the observance of ritual and tradition mean that the gentleman is inherently conservative and deferential to authority?
- Does personal virtue guarantee political integrity, knowledge, ability and efficiency? Is the gentleman a civil servant with little knowledge of how others live? *e.g.* possible skepticism of civil services

### 3. Plato: *The Republic*

**Explain Plato's programme of study for a philosopher and assess his reasons for his emphasis on mathematics.**

In this question, candidates are expected to identify the basic assumption of Plato's education of the philosopher: there are two kinds of perception, those that stimulate thought and those that do not, and mathematics is the best for stimulating abstract thought, and leading to the 'dialectic'. This claim needs an evaluation. The general regime of education could be explained.

#### Key points

- There are perceptions that stimulate thought and there are those that do not. Mathematics is the prime example of 'perceptions' that instigate abstract thinking. Plato questions the value of astronomy and harmonics because they rely on empirical methods.
- Plato devotes a section of the dialogue to the qualities of a philosopher: loves learning, honest, intellectually and morally courageous, *etc.* Though character is necessary for a philosopher's education, it is not the primary focus of the essay.
- Plato describes a regime that emphasizes the moral, intellectual, and physical. The intellectual aspect must be undertaken with patience, as there should be no duress in learning; 'play' is emphasized as a method of teaching.
- The final step in the education of the philosopher is the dialectic; this occurs when the mind is turned to the Forms and Plato suggests this happens after 18 years of age. This corresponds to the last part of the Cave when the prisoner looks directly at the Sun.

#### Discussion

- Are the virtues and education described by Plato all that are necessary for a successful leader? *cf.* Machiavelli: a leader must be like a lion (courageous and terrifying) and like a fox (cunning and prepared to willfully deceive).
- Is Plato too simplistic in classifying only two types of perception?
- Is mathematics a suitable framework for understanding or finding the truth on moral questions?
- Does Plato's general approach *i.e.* an emphasis on physical activity in the early years, and the freedom to learn, make for a sound education for a philosopher? As a general programme for education?

4. **Aristotle: *The Nicomachean Ethics***  
**Critically evaluate Aristotle's claim that happiness is the ultimate objective of man.**

This question requires candidates to have some grasp of both the beginning and end of the set text and be able to explain and analyse it. In addition, the candidate would be expected to look critically at the assertions made by Aristotle.

**Key points**

- Need to define the meaning of happiness in Aristotle's terms
- That happiness is a virtue of the soul and a god like prize.
- Mention that man is a rational creature and that the exercise of reason is important.
- That happiness is the aim of man and yet in Book 10 Aristotle later lowers the expectation of achieving happiness and therefore should just strive for it, maybe accepting the real difficulty of achievement.
- Reached by good actions and prosperity
- Measurement is by a qualitative process rather than quantitative

**Discussion**

- The issue of whether the achievement of happiness is the only objective of man – mention other possible objectives *e.g.* moral.
- Can happiness be achieved in the way suggested by Aristotle and can it be measured?
- To achieve happiness man might withdraw from society. Is this good or a contradiction of man as a social/political creature?
- The problem of translation of *eudaimonia* and *makarios* the former being happiness and/or success and the later happiness and/or bliss. The issue of compatibility and whether success brings happiness.
- Possibility that with such an objective, self-interest might take over, happiness for its own sake might take over. It rests on a belief that man's reasonableness will operate this may not be the case, examples could be given of selfish/harmful acts that bring the actor happiness.

## 5. Aquinas: *Summa Theologiae*

**Explain and evaluate Aquinas' conception of man as a being composed of matter and form and its implications for human life.**

The question firstly asks for an account of the main aspects of the conception of man as a composite of matter and form. It is also an invitation to develop a personal approach about what human life could be like, when mind and body are conceived of as a substantial unity.

### Key points

- Except pure spirit all other beings are composed of actuality and potentiality, a dualism which is a general metaphysical. In the physical order, potentiality and actuality become matter and form.
- Man is a compound of body (matter) and of soul (form). Following the tradition from Aristotle, Aquinas conceives of the soul as the form, actualization, or realization of the body. It is not a substance distinct from the body, but a co-substantial principle with the body, both being united to form the composite substance, man.
- The rational soul is one with the sensitive and vegetative principle. Though 'connaturally' related to the body, it is itself absolutely simple, *i.e.* of an unextended and spiritual nature. It is not wholly immersed in matter, its higher operations being intrinsically independent of the organism.
- The term 'mind' usually denotes this principle as the subject of our conscious states, while 'soul' denotes the source of our vegetative activities as well. Aquinas identifies mind (*mens*) with the human soul viewed as intellectual and abstracting from lower organic faculties.
- From the fact that the soul in its intellectual operations attains a knowledge of the abstract and universal, and thus transcends matter and material conditions, Aquinas argues that it is immaterial and immortal.

### Discussion

- How is the natural essence of the human being to be understood? Answers can explain Aquinas's account versus dualist positions, for instance, Plato and Descartes.
- Man, as a compound of body and of soul, puts forth activities of a higher order: knowledge and volition.
- All our intellectual activity rests on sensory function, but through the active intellect (*intellectus agens*) an abstract representation of the sensible object is provided for the *intellectus possibilis*. Hence the characteristic of the idea, its non-materiality, and on this is based the principal argument for the spirituality and immortality of the soul.
- Understanding the man as a composite easily permits the inclusion of human life into the world general architecture.
- To what extent do religious assumptions have an influence on Aquinas' account?

**6. Descartes: *Meditations***

**Explain and discuss the merit of Descartes' argument of "*Cogito, ergo sum*".**

This question gives the opportunity to the candidate both to explain and critically evaluate the classic assertion made by Descartes.

**Key points**

- The application of skepticism to eliminate all sense data including acts of thinking except thinking itself, that is, the application of reason
- The nature of *cogito*: intuition, inference, deduction
- Descartes's probable assumption about identity
- The probable assumption about the reliability of memory

**Discussion**

- Whether skepticism is a valid approach given that it implies inference but, in Descartes' case, is intuition.
- The problem of times when one is not thinking
- The possibility of not observing the self in isolation, in essence without involving other thinking activities
- The problem of subjectivity in the claim of truth
- The reliance upon the existence of a supreme being to justify and validate the argument
- The problem of the 'I's. Are they all the same or is one looking at the other and is there a third existence that is asserted for us?
- The problem of use of language, in that the use of 'private' language seems contradictory when language is 'public'. The notion of the privacy of language and Descartes declaration of unquestionable truth. By its declaration he admits the existence of a sense world.



**7. Locke: *Second Treatise on Government***

**Explain and critically discuss how Locke understands the concept of right.**

The purpose of this question is to allow candidates to critically explore and discuss Locke's ideas of rights; discussion can concentrate merits, limitations and implications of the idea of rights in general and specifically related to Locke's classification of right.

**Key points**

- 'Rights' can be described as privileges that individuals have. Locke claims that people have God given 'natural rights' to 'life, health, liberty and property'. Individuals have these rights in the 'state of nature' *i.e.* without political state.
- The state is formed by social contract to protect rights, particularly right to property.
- In the political state individuals retain their right to rebel against a government that tries to violate rather than protect their natural rights.

**Discussion**

- It is possible to argue that such entities as rights do not exist, or that the justifying of natural rights by God is a weak argument.
- One could also criticise the list of natural rights: right to life could be fundamental, and some may argue the only, right, whereas the right to property does not seem as essential as other rights.
- The idea of rights leads to a particular view of individual and society. One could equally well take the idea of duties as a starting point for a political philosophy.

**8. Hume: *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding***

**How does Hume argue against the idea that everything is caused by something? Critically evaluate his argument.**

The purpose of this question is to allow candidates to critically explore and discuss Hume's ideas about causation, the merits, limits and implications of the idea of causation.

**Key points**

- 'Causation' is a relation between two events so that the first brings about the second.
- Hume regarded events as 'loose and separate': we can have perceptions, or 'impressions', of separate events. We are also capable of understanding patterns events seem to fall into.
- Pattern recognition leads us to think in terms of causality, even to generalise that all events have causes. Yet we cannot perceive causation as such: 'when many uniform instances appear, and the same object is always followed by the same event; we then begin to entertain the notion of cause and connection.' Causation is only an assumption of our mind.

### Discussion

- It is possible to criticise Hume's idea of 'impressions' from the point of view that Kant developed. He pointed out our mind is active in all perception, and causation can be regarded as one of the categories that make experiences intelligible. There are no pure 'impressions'.
- Causation is also related to how we use language to describe experiences. Description of experiences would become impossible if causal links between events were not 'explained'.
- Particular examples related to the problem of causation are causal interaction between mind and body, such as pain, and connection between past and present.

9. **Rousseau: *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality and Social Contract***  
**How does Rousseau justify his idea of 'forcing people to be free'? Do you agree with him? Explain your answer.**

The purpose of this question is to allow candidates to critically explore and discuss the arguments behind Rousseau's apparently paradoxical idea of 'forcing people to be free', implications of this idea and encourage critical counter arguments.

### Key points

- The idea of 'forcing people to be free' links to Rousseau's theory that the individual's freedom in civil society can be preserved by founding the state in which individuals surrender themselves to the 'general will' or the idea of common good.
- For Rousseau enjoying 'rights of citizenship, while refusing to fulfil the duties of a subject' is unthinkable. Anyone who refuses to obey the 'general will' shall be compelled to do so, which 'means nothing less than that he will be forced to be free'.
- Rousseau says that general will is infallible, it is expressed by unanimity at the moment of making the social contract and in civil state by the will of majority.

### Discussion

- Rousseau's idea of freedom could be criticised as ambiguous. It is unclear what people are free from and what they are free to do.
- The idea that 'general will' is expressed by the majority leaves little protection for the minority; the majority could act in the name of the 'general will' to subordinate the rights of the minority.
- It is not clear how society determines what is a fair distribution of burdens that citizens are supposed to have in the name of common good.
- Rousseau's ideal state could easily become totalitarian, particularly by acts of the mythical figure of lawgiver or legislator that Rousseau mentions.

**10. Kant: *Groundwork on the Metaphysics of Morals***

**Why is it important for common human reason to understand that duty is the necessity of an action from the pure respect for law? Explain and evaluate.**

Starting from Section I, the question is deliberately set in such a way that it can be approached in different legitimate ways. For instance, answers can analyse and justify the content (*e.g.* duty is the necessity of an action from pure respect for law), or identify the strategy of the argument (to proceed from common rational to philosophic moral condition).

**Key points**

- Good will is that which could be considered good without any condition; good will even constitutes the indispensable condition of worthiness to be happy.
- Moral actions should be done not from inclination, not from the purpose to be obtained but from respect for law. Moreover, a moral action should be done not in conformity with duty but from duty.
- I do not need any particular qualifications to see what I have to do in order that my volition is morally good. I ask myself only: can you also will that your maxim become a universal law?
- Common human reason knows very well how to distinguish the case that comes up what is good and what is evil, what is in conformity with duty or contrary to duty. If we are only attentive to its own principle, then accordingly there is no need for science and philosophy to know what one has to do in order to be honest and good, and even wise and virtuous.
- Kant's aim in Section I is to proceed analytically from common sense cognition to the determination of its supreme principle. He is trying to identify what it is that it has to be established to prove that human beings have obligations.

**Discussion**

- Although the argument is not an empirical one, Kant considers examples *e.g.* a merchant who refrains from overcharging gullible customers, because this gives him a good reputation, which helps his business. The discussion could include Kant's examples or others.
- Alternative views about the relation between common reason and moral actions could be discussed, *e.g.* a common sense approach could argue that human beings spontaneously only tend to understand what is convenient or useful for them.
- Kant's general argument is circular, it postulates and presupposes good will and respect for law.

**11. Nietzsche: *The Genealogy of Morals***

**Explain and assess Nietzsche's reasons for rejecting science as an alternative to the ascetic ideal.**

This question asks candidates to explain and assess what the ascetic ideal is, and to compare this with Nietzsche's conception of Science. The conclusion for Nietzsche is that Science presents itself as a viable alternative only superficially. In fact, science is the latest disguise for the ascetic ideal. The behaviours and attitudes of its adherents, and a slavish devotion to the truth lies at the heart of both.

**Key points**

- The ascetic ideal as a preserver of life: how the restricted condition for life (morality) literally protects and preserves life, and sets up a clear distinction and appreciation of the values that make life bearable and dangerous.
- Science and its claim for objectivity, disinterestedness, and empirical method make it a good candidate for a 'new mode of living'; a new perspective.
- Objective truth is the claim and promise of the ascetic ideal, and this is the motive and source for the attenuation of the will to power. Objective truth is also the claim of science.
- Science requires an ideal of value, it never creates them; science needs presuppositions and so it is beholden to these values; it works on faith. This makes it a new version of the ascetic ideal.

**Discussion**

- Though science may seek the truth, does it not do it in a way that is radically different from the past? *i.e.* it qualifies as a new and valuable perspective.
- Is Nietzsche's characterization of the scientific attitude contrived, or is Nietzsche correct when he compares it to a Christian attitude?
- Does science seek to preserve life with the truth, or can it (has it) revolutionize(d) it?
- Does Nietzsche's perspectivism necessarily deny the individual the concept of some authentic set of moral values?

12. **Mill: *Essay on Liberty***

**Discuss the implications of Mill's categorization of acts into one of two groups either "self regarding acts" or "other regarding acts".**

Here the candidate needs to know the nature of the key ideas and then to see these in the context of Mill's work and in a wider context.

**Key points**

- Mill's problem of distinguishing self regarding acts and other regarding acts
- Distinguishing rights and interests of others
- Problem of the 'self's' right to act without harm to others may imply not knowing the scope of the act and therefore its implication.
- Need to define the concept of harm
- The notion of the freer development of individuals allows the development of better individuals.
- Ultimate aim to limit the interference of the state in the action of individuals rests upon assumptions about the basic nature of individuals.

**Discussion**

- The problem of harm and whether some actions might cause injury but not be harm in Mill's sense *e.g.* examples from sport.
- The problem of some actions though private may still cause harm, privacy does not eliminate harm.
- The role of the state to protect the individual from themselves *e.g.* of ignorance on the part of the individual could cause an assumption of no harm, so the state should step in for the best interests of the individual and others.
- The difference between maturity and rationality. Mill's assumption that all mature people are rational could be challenged.
- The notion of moral harm could be explored and perhaps the need to restrict individual actions so as to prevent offence to the wider community seen when the action is private *e.g.* drinking alcohol in an Islamic state.

**13. Freud: *Civilisation and its Discontents* and *Outline of Psychoanalysis*  
Evaluate Freud's account of the evolution of civilization as a struggle between *Eros* and *Thanatos*.**

The purpose of this question is to encourage candidates to explore and evaluate the concepts of *Eros* and *Thanatos* in relationship to Freud's account of the evolution of civilization.

**Key points**

- Need to define Freud's use of *Eros* (integrating force) and *Thanatos* (destructive/separating force)
- The reasons why he thinks that these are key – some discussion of the drive for sex and his, now, admission of the drive to death – death instinct
- The relationship of aggression and passion – pleasure – in man, to civilization and the way civilization uses *Eros* and tries to contain *Thanatos*
- The idea of property as an extension of the self
- The idea of religion and Freud's view of the role of religion
- His view of morality and the dichotomy between social conditioning and individual control
- Freud's tripartite division of the inner self and the relationship to the world
- His pessimistic vision of the human condition
- The individual's struggle with the community and the conflict between egoism and altruism

**Discussion**

- The historical root of Freud's perspective is not recent, but prehistoric, the rise of guilt.
- Contrast his more recent experience of the First World War with what was to come in terms of Nazism and world war as an example of the struggle between *Eros* and *Thanatos*.
- Possible links to present day terrorism, the aggression being expressed outside the body not in the inner self.
- A challenge to Freud's 'self' division as to whether it is the case that the *Id*, is the animal within man, contrasting different more positive perceptions of man.
- Possible mention of TV violence and the neutralisation of violence
- Possible comparisons to the optimistic views of the human condition *e.g.* Rousseau, Sartre, Marx
- The hope factor that *Eros* would win through.

**14. Buber: *I and Thou***

**Discuss Buber's distinction between I-Thou relationships and I-It relationships and their impact upon everyday human interactions.**

The purpose of the question is to encourage candidates to discuss Buber's ideas of the I-Thou and I-It relationships.

**Key points**

- I-Thou: reciprocal relationships
- I-It: others as objects
- The context of the arrival of these notions – the religious connection and the notion of the relationship with God being the ultimate I-Thou
- The concept of Love in the I-Thou relationship
- The type of behaviour that generates I-Thou and whether it can be taught
- The structure of society if these primary words govern all relationships

**Discussion**

- The issue of whether all relationships fall into these two categories
- The issue of an understood mutuality
- The relevance of Buber's views may no longer be appropriate in our 21st century post industrial societies or secular societies.
- Possible examples whereby both relationships can exist with the same person at different times.
- Possible mention of the impact of Buber's categories upon Gestalt therapist approaches to relationships
- A discussion of the ethical codes and behaviours that would follow if Buber's notion is applied
- Comparison with other views on human relations *e.g.* de Beauvoir, Sartre, Rousseau

15. **Ortega y Gasset: *History as a System***

**Could history be understood as a system? Explain and evaluate this in the context of Ortega y Gasset's ideas.**

The purpose of this question is to allow candidates to critically explore and discuss if Ortega y Gasset's idea of history as a system is justified, and what are the implications of this idea to philosophical understanding of the nature of history.

**Key points**

- Ortega regards history as 'a system' because he thinks cultures and societies are constantly evolving self-reflective symbolic systems in the context of time.
- Cultures and societies progress through accumulating experiences and ideas, through 'accumulating being'.
- Ortega's idea of human life as action forms the basis of his understanding of history.

**Discussion**

- Ortega's talk of 'human experience' seems a sweeping generalization because it is based on European history.
- If Ortega had considered other cultures would it challenge his conception of history as a system?
- Even if cultures and societies were regarded as self-reflective entities, it does not necessarily follow that history as a whole can be described as 'a system'.
- If history is seen as a system, a group of interacting and interrelated elements that make a complex whole, what problems arise?
- The value of describing history as a system can be challenged; does Ortega's existentialist view create a perspective that enhances understanding of the nature of history and 'human experience', or is it only a conceptual superstructure that creates an illusion of such understanding?
- The extent to which Ortega is a prisoner of his own time and place in relation to the development of his ideas.
- Comparing Ortega's conception of history to other philosophies of history *e.g.* Spengler, Marx, Foucault



**16. Wittgenstein: *The Blue and Brown Books***

**“There is a temptation for me to say that only my own experience is real: ‘I know that I see, hear, feel pains, etc., but not that anyone else does. I can’t know this, because I am I and they are they.’ ” Explain and evaluate Wittgenstein’s discussion on private ownership of experience.**

This discussion is characterized, as is the whole *Blue Book*, by the refusal to force all the multifarious variety of thought and language into the mould of a single theory. Candidates can pick up some (or even one) of the main issues to construct their answer or choose other forms of answering. e.g. given that Wittgenstein’s argues dialectically, answers can analyse some arguments and counter-arguments. Some of the relevant issues are indicated in the following key points.

**Key points**

- We construe the mind as an inner world to which only its ‘owner’ has access. If only the ‘owner’ can have a given experience, then it seems plausible to hold that only he can know what experience he has, for someone else logically cannot have the same experience. We say, “I cannot feel your toothache”.
- If the word ‘toothache’ means the same, in ‘I have toothache’ and ‘He has toothache’, what does it then mean to say he can’t have the same toothache as I do? Is being the owner a defining mark of the toothache itself?
- The ‘owner’ of pain is not a property of the pain. Rather, ‘having a pain’ is a property of the suffering person. Maintaining the opposite would be like arguing that two books cannot have the same color, since this red color belongs to this book and that red color belongs to that book.
- To have a pain is not to own anything. To have a pain is no more to own anything, logically or otherwise, than it is to have a bus to catch.

**Discussion**

- Self and solipsism are main issues. The solipsist’s claim ‘Only what I see exists’, or he says, ‘I am in a favoured position. I am the center of the world.’
- The solipsist seems to be referring to himself as a person, but really, he or she is using the pronoun ‘I’ to refer to something entirely abstract, which is introduced merely as ‘the subject which is living this mental life’ or ‘the subject, which is having these visual impressions’.
- Wittgenstein’s examples are trivial. We should not draw conclusions on important issues such as personal identity, mainly based on the analysis of a toothache.
- The subject is a vanishing point. Relations to other positions (Hume, Kant, Schopenhauer) can be developed.
- Although the expression ‘private language argument’ does not belong to Wittgenstein but to his commentators, the discussion of whether it is possible for a language to be private is relevant.

**17. Arendt: *The Human Condition***

**Explain and evaluate Arendt's claim that political philosophers have often viewed action with suspicion.**

This question asks candidates to explain and evaluate Arendt's conception of action (and speech). Arendt argues these are the only means of asserting our human uniqueness and distinctness, and that its unpredictability and unboundedness are the motives for philosophers viewing it with suspicion. Arendt accuses these philosophers of trying to turn action into work; the spontaneous and boundless into a controlled, calculable process.

**Key points**

- For Arendt, action was the pinnacle of human achievement; it can only occur in a social/political sphere, a sphere we willingly enter into for the company of others; action means to enter into political life and reveal ourselves to others, not to fabricate but to initiate.
- The essential qualities of action are its unboundedness and its unpredictability (our actions and words influence and effect others we do not know nor have thought about); speech and action define who we are as individuals; both are essential for a self identity and to make ourselves known to others.
- Work (fabrication) and labour are contrasted with action: fabrication is a process that has a beginning and end, and is predictable in outcome and effects. This is what makes this category attractive to philosophers (Aristotle and Plato) who wanted to secure a framework (laws made by craftsmen) for action. Labour covers the activities for sustaining life. Work is apolitical, labour is anti-political.
- The power generated by the body politic needs public space, action, and speech to survive. Strength lies with individuals, and is not power. Violence, the outcome of strength, can defeat power.

**Discussion**

- Is our identity dependent upon only action and speech? Are there other traits, independent of speech and action that also define who we are?
- Is Arendt correct in her claim that action is inherently unstable and uncontrollable?
- Has the advent of digital technologies and work from home via the Internet, enhanced or diminished Arendt's distinction between action and work, or the public and private?
- Is the political/social sphere the only realm for action? Is Arendt's ideal of a public realm, borrowed from the Athenian concept of the *polis*, a relevant one for today's global economies?

**18. Simone de Beauvoir: *The Ethics of Ambiguity***

**Explain and critically evaluate the relevance of de Beauvoir's ethics of ambiguity to the human condition.**

The purpose of this question is to allow candidates to critically explore and discuss the connection of the idea of human condition and the argument produced in *The Ethics of Ambiguity* for discovering what is morally right and wrong. Critical discussion calls for putting de Beauvoir's argument into framework of ethics in general.

**Key points**

- 'Human condition' has two elements: humans exist in the world like any object but, as rational beings, they have awareness of their temporality and they are able to create meanings and values. They are free to do what they want.
- 'The ethics of ambiguity' is an ethical perspective that would allow everybody individually to live authentic, free and moral lives. For de Beauvoir 'to will oneself free' and 'to will oneself moral' are the same decision.
- De Beauvoir describes various dispositions to avoid authentically living such as 'sub-man', 'serious man', 'nihilist', 'adventurer' and 'passionate man'. Each of these leads to unauthentic life and distortion of morality.
- People 'do what [they] must, come what may' in the spirit of freedom and personal moral responsibility could achieve meaningful authentic lives.

**Discussion**

- De Beauvoir's theory is fundamentally individualistic. The world of individuals applying their value systems to live free and authentic lives is bound to lead to conflicts that arise from each thinking primarily from the perspective of their own self-actualisation.
- This is in contrast to the idea that most ethical theories encourage individuals to look at their behaviour and aspiration from the neutral perspective or from the point of view of other people.
- Criticism of de Beauvoir's psychological treatment of different ethical dispositions, which claims that her theory gives little guidance to solve real ethical problems.

**19. Rawls: *A Theory of Justice***

**“One conception of justice is more reasonable than another, or justifiable with respect to it, if rational persons in the initial situation would choose its principle over those of the other for the role of justice”. Evaluate to what extent Rawls’ conception of the original position is based on rationality.**

The question asks for the very core of Rawls’s argument: the basic notions of original position and justice as fairness. Firstly, a development of these notions, is expected, and, secondly, an assessment of them as to their rational ground. Answers could interpret ‘rational’ in different ways.

**Key points**

- The original position is the appropriate initial status quo, which insures that the fundamental agreements reached in it are fair. This fact yields the name ‘justice as fairness.’ Two principles of justice would be agreed in the original position.
- A formulation of the first principle of justice: “each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with similar scheme of liberties for others.”
- The second principle (second formulation) states: “social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) to the greatest expected benefit of the least advantaged and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.”
- The central ideas and aims of the conception of justice as fairness are those of a philosophical conception for a constitutional democracy. The basic liberties of a democratic regime are most firmly secured by the conception of justice as fairness.
- The principles of justice are not dogmatically based on absolute grounds, but they are teleological; as teleological principles they permit grounds for equal liberty and provide the strongest arguments for freedom.
- The theory of justice is a part, perhaps the most significant part, of the theory of rational choice.

**Discussion**

- Are the different forms of democracy the only social systems that can be rationally supported?
- Setting ends implies decisions and decisions are not necessarily rational.
- The original position is an abstraction originated in an historical concrete situation and only reflects the ideals of a time and type of society.

**20. Feyerabend: *Farewell to Reason***

**Explain why Feyerabend claims Protagoras' views on truth and reality are useful to democratic relativism. Is Feyerabend's claim justified?**

Candidates should explain and justify what Feyerabend says about Protagoras' views on truth and reality: that what is true and real is measured by our standards, experiences and opinions, and is not defined by an abstract theory. These tenets form the basis of Feyerabend's relativism; democratic, moral and epistemic.

**Key points**

- Protagoras' view on truth: it lies with the common experiences and opinions of the many, not in abstract theories of philosophers. (R5)
- Protagoras' view on reality: our experiences constitute our reality but not all worlds are equally preferable; a sick person inhabits a world where everything is sour, a healthy person lives in the same world and thinks it sweet. Words of the wise man (the opinions and beliefs of the majority in a democracy) can improve the state of the sick. The sufferer, not the healer, makes the judgment of effectiveness.
- Democratic relativism: a political system based on liberty and that caters for plurality, characterized by common sense and tolerance. Based on R5 and R5b, stated in R7: man is the measure of all things; laws, facts, customs are judged by citizens according to their own beliefs, perceptions, and not by abstract systems and distant experts.
- R7 is also based on epistemic relativism as it rejects authority by experts; values are essential 'ingredients' to knowledge; opinions not tied to human traditions are outside human existence; opinions are objective in the sense that they are supported by a culture's traditions but without explicit reference to them.

**Discussion**

- Is the democratic relativism that Feyerabend describes either a utopian vision, or a political system where power ultimately resides with the many and their desires, and not with those who claim to know?
- Does the claim of 'one amongst many' imply an inherently self-contradictory position when it comes to any theory of knowledge? The criticisms of Popper and Putnam on relativism and Feyerabend's response
- Are Protagoras and Feyerabend too dismissive of experts and the role and benefits of theoretical approach to matters of knowledge and politics?
- Are Protagoras and Feyerabend correct when they suggest that the limits of my perceptions and experiences are the limits of my world?

**21. Foucault: *The History of Sexuality***

**Discuss and evaluate the relationship between sexuality and discourse.**

Sexuality and discourse have to be understood in their broadest sense encompassing sexual relationships and language.

**Key points**

- Brief overview of why he thinks it important to link these two ideas – the idea that if sexuality is spoken about then you control it
- The notion that such a speaking of sex may be a Western idea and not cross-cultural.
- The notion of the confessional and that the listener has the power not the speaker.
- The historical (genealogical) approach showing periods in time when discourse was seemingly used to regulate sex and the relationship to class again link with language.
- The clinicalisation of sex through biological and medical language therefore repressing the pleasurable normality of it
- The relationship of sexuality to language and power

**Discussion**

- Historical factors may be raised in the presentation of sexuality changing perceptions that Foucault investigates.
- The notion of sin (not a Foucault word) and why it existed in relation to sexuality – the Christian's changing perceptions. Perhaps contrasted with the open language of other cultures.
- Interrelationship of sexuality and other social activities. Was sexuality's seeming control geared to economics or power?
- The contradiction of more speech but seemingly more repression not freedom
- The issue of Foucault's new interpretation of power in society
- The realization that discourse might be in a number of ways advertising, visual images, not just speaking, linked to the concept of the female body and first it being covered and then its exposure without sexuality and then its overt sexuality and worship – contrasted with historical perceptions.

**22. Putnam: *Reason, Truth and History***

**Explain and evaluate Putnam's claim that a person with no values would have no facts either.**

The point of this question is for candidates to outline Putnam's argument that fact (truth) and rationality are interdependent notions. To be rational means you use criteria of relevancy and rational acceptability; these are wholly dependent upon our values. These terms should be explained and an evaluation of this argument is also required.

**Key points**

- Internalist perspective on truth: truth is an idealized rational acceptability or ideal coherence of our beliefs with each other and with our experiences "as those experiences are themselves represented in our belief system", and not to some external system.
- Rationality is an ability that enables us to determine which questions are relevant to ask and which answers are warranted to accept.
- Rejection of relativism as a moral/epistemological theory. Putnam also rejects the claim that relativism is a consequence of holding an internalist perspective on truth.
- Relevancy is value laden because any judgment we make requires conceptual resources that are provided to us by a particular culture. The presence and ubiquity of these concepts reveal something of the interests and values of that culture.
- Putnam uses many examples of traditional philosophical issues *e.g.* brains in vats, qualia, realism, relativism, to emphasize his point that misconceptions about meaning and reference (a theory of truth) underlie most of these problems. Candidates could use these examples to argue the error in his understanding of truth and values.

**Discussion**

- Is Putnam correct, or are there facts about the world, or myself, that need no values?
- Does Putnam satisfactorily defend the internalist perspective on truth against charges of relativism, or is it just playing with words?
- Are there consequences for a theory of truth, where emotions play a role in determining our values, which are ignored by Putnam?

**23. Taylor: *The Ethics of Authenticity***

**“Taylor’s ideas of ‘self-centred narcissism’ and ‘horizons of significance’ flatten and distort the idea of authenticity.” Critically discuss and evaluate.**

The purpose of this question is to allow candidates to critically explore and discuss Taylor’s ideas of authenticity as it appears in his work and particularly in the context of the dichotomy between ‘self-centred narcissism’ and ‘horizons of significance’.

**Key points**

- ‘Authenticity’ means the way of life that has a purpose and feels right because one is true to oneself.
- By ‘self-centred narcissism’ Taylor means behaviour that is motivated by what feels good at a given moment.
- By ‘horizons of significance’ he means the conceptual and cultural background against which our value judgements and ideas make sense.
- Taylor criticises modern people who claim to live authentic lives but are, in his judgement, self-centred narcissists. Their authenticity is not rooted on any ‘horizon of significance’ but on fleeting feelings.
- The quotation suggests that Taylor’s description of authenticity in terms of ‘self-centred narcissism’ and ‘horizons of significance’ distorts the idea of authenticity.

**Discussion**

- Taylor fails to re-conceptualise authenticity in reference to ‘horizons of significance’ because it is impossible for someone else to judge what being true to oneself means, only I can make that judgment.
- By creating a dichotomy of ‘self-centred narcissism’ and authenticity based on ‘horizons of significance’ does Taylor ignore the possibility of a life that for him seems narcissistic but may be an authentic and well justified to the person who is leading such life?
- Does Taylor also ignore the possibility that somebody may lead an authentic life to which ideas of ‘horizons of significance’ or ‘narcissism’ have no conceptual value?
- A discussion of the value that Taylor’s perspective offers to our understanding of authenticity, given that all our judgments can be interpreted to have some ‘horizon of significance’.



**24. Nussbaum: *Poetic Justice***

**Are poets good judges? Explain and evaluate Nussbaum's idea of the "literary judge".**

Candidates can legitimately develop their arguments focusing on the figure of the 'literary judge', or in a more general way, relating literature and its significance to public life.

**Key points**

- Nussbaum identifies her main concern by means of Walt Whitman's point of view, who wrote that the literary artist is a much-needed participant, and that the poet is 'the arbiter of the diverse,' 'the equalizer of his age and land.' She makes a defense of the emotions and their contribution to public rationality.
- Nussbaum contrasts the literary judge with three rivals: a judge who cultivates skeptical detachment, a judge who conceives of judicial reasoning on the model of formal reasoning in the sciences, and a judge who cultivates a lofty distance from particulars for reasons of judicial neutrality.
- The literary judge prefers an evaluative humanistic form of practical reasoning. He pursues neutrality, but in a manner, that requires sympathetic knowledge of value-laden human facts.
- The ability to imagine vividly another person's pain, to participate in it and then to ask about its significance, is a powerful way of learning what the human facts are and how to assess them judicially.
- The literary judge is able to develop a strong commitment to regard each life as individual and separate from other lives, and a concern with social equality as well.

**Discussion**

- In today's political life, there is an excessive reliance on technical ways of modeling human behavior, especially those that derive from economic utilitarianism. These models frequently prove incomplete as a guide to political relations among citizens.
  - Although emotions have limitations and dangers, and although their function in ethical reasoning must be carefully circumscribed, they also contain a powerful, if partial, vision of social justice and provide powerful motives for just conduct.
  - Storytelling and literary imagining are not opposed to rational argument, but can provide essential ingredients in a rational argument. The literary imagination is an essential part of citizenship.
  - A good judge, some philosophers insist, is someone stable, someone who cannot be swayed by the currents of fortune or fashion. If he lacks the stability and solidity of the wise person, his thoughts could attach importance to unstable external things. This objection is what led Plato to urge that most existing literature be banned from the ideal city.
  - Whitman's call for public poetry is, she believes, as pertinent to our time as it was to his.
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