

MARKSCHEME

November 2005

PHILOSOPHY

Higher Level and Standard Level

Paper 2

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1. Lao Tzu: *Tao Te Ching*

Explain and critically assess the assertion that there is an ultimate reality, “formless yet complete, that existed before heaven and earth, without sound, without substance”.

The question is concerned with the metaphysics of *Taoism*. It refers to its basic principle: behind the constantly changing everyday world of all there is lies an ultimate and everlasting-reality, the *Tao*.

Key points

- The world of ordinary experience is a world of individuals subject to incessant change. There must be an ultimate reality in order to give rise to the world we experience, and this reality must not be subject to the limitations of any of the individual entities within it. In turn, the *Tao* is not in any meaningful sense, an individual entity.
- Concepts (the *Tao Te Ching* uses the term ‘name’) apply only when individuals have arisen from the *Tao*. Nothing can be said about the *Tao* at all: it is beyond all conceptual description, and so is ineffable. The only way to speak about it is metaphorically or in negative terms.
- *Tao* is that which is prior to all individuation (the Nameless) and to which no conceptual descriptions apply. Its nature can only be hinted at by largely negative terms such as ‘not being’, ‘elusive’, ‘rarified’.
- It gives rise to the world of Being *i.e.* of individuals, and can be described metaphorically as their mother. Each individual thing in the universe has a nature *te*, which it receives from the *Tao*.
- The *Tao* is referred to as an uncarved block, it is formless yet has within it the potential for all forms.

Discussion

- A comparison and contrast with other conceptions could be a valid approach as part of the answer. For instance, Classical Greek or Christian metaphysical ideas (the problem of the one and the many; how not-Being can give rise to Being?)
- Is *Tao* a philosophical concept or rather a kind of mystical one depending on intuition?
- The *Tao* articulates a perspective on the human condition. Some implications of this outlook in the moral and political spheres can be discussed.
- A way to see how these ideas might affect the way we conduct ourselves in the world is via the concept of action. Individuals act, the way of the *Tao* is *wu-wei*, non-action: it ‘acts without action, does without doing.’

2. Confucius: *The Analects*

Discuss and evaluate the following statement: “Philosophers who are interested in morals can be generally divided into two kinds, those who are interested in moral character and those who are interested in moral acts. Confucius (in *The Analects*) certainly has more to say about moral character than moral acts”.

The question invites the identification, explanation and analysis of the virtues that must be cultivated and the values that must be practised if a person is to develop the character required for the achievement of inner and outer perfection. The response might demonstrate that moral action flows naturally from the life-long cultivation of virtues conducive to moral character.

Key points

- The moral ideal is to become as good a person as possible. Despite difficulties, Confucius maintains an optimistic hope for the possibility of the realisation of this ideal.
- The cultivation of moral character is difficult, disinterested and guarantees no reward in this or the next life.
- While the moral ideal can take on a variety of expressions, the paradigm for moral character is the gentleman (*chun tzu*)
- The model moral character displays a number of specific virtues (*chun tzu, jen, hsiao etc.*); the practice of these virtues lays the foundation for moral action.
- Humanity’s contentment relies upon each person acting according to virtue and righteousness.

Discussion

- Why must we pursue the moral life even though that pursuit may not be successful?
- What are the differences in character found in the sage (*sheng jen*), the good man (*shan jen*) and the complete man (*ch’eng jen*)?
- Why is the achievement of the character of the gentleman (*chun tzu*) a difficult task requiring a number of virtues?
- What is benevolence (*jen*)? Why is it the hallmark of moral character? How are propriety (*li*), filial piety (*hsiao*), and love of one’s elder brother (*ti*) the root virtues of moral character where benevolence first develops?
- How is the ‘silver rule’ (*shu*) the method of determining benevolence?
- How does wisdom/intelligence (*chih*) imply knowledge of moral character and honesty with oneself?
- How and why are righteousness (*yi*), courage (*jung*), reverence (*ching*), respectfulness (*kung*), and reliability in one’s word (*hsin*) indicative of moral character and conducive to moral action?
- Why must a moral character partake in government where the goal is the welfare of all?

3. Plato: *The Republic*

Explain and discuss the differences that Plato draws between ‘knowledge’ and ‘belief’.

This question offers an opportunity to demonstrate an understanding of how Plato distinguishes these two concepts and the problems of creating such divisions.

Key points

- Demonstration of an understanding of the theory of forms
- Possible explanation of the divided line, sun, cave
- Some evidence of how Plato sets out a progression from illusion to knowledge
- The problem of absolutes and Plato’s difference between appearance and reality

Discussion

- The problem is that Plato provides little real evidence to support his position.
- Plato is a ‘rationalist’ and the perception argument of an empiricist could also provide a source of knowledge.
- Aristotle’s argument that knowledge needs to relate to the physical world
- The problem of judgment and that mistakes can be made, and that ideas of ‘explanation’ to support knowledge claims involve judgment, and that judgments have to be made to establish the abstract
- Forms that Plato saw as objects of knowledge
- The role of truth as a possible end
- That Forms can also apply to qualities rather than just concrete objects and consequently the difference between direct perception and thinking which might be problematic because perception issues involve judgment
- The problematic separation for Plato of knowledge and belief when both seem to require an encounter with the physical world
- The modern discussion of the separation of knowledge and belief

4. **Aristotle: *The Nicomachean Ethics***

Discuss and evaluate Aristotle’s claim that “... virtuous acts are not done in a just or temperate way merely because they have a certain quality, but only if the agent acts in a certain state”.

The question invites an exploration of the differences between the moral quality of an action and the moral character of the agent. The nature of moral virtue and the techniques for the acquisition of those virtues necessary for the state of moral character could be explored. The analysis might focus on the relation between being virtuous and performing virtuous acts.

Key points

- Aristotle’s notion of virtue; virtue as habit; intellectual versus moral virtue; virtue and magnanimity; learning virtue versus practising virtue
- Moral excellence is determined by the way in which a person acts, not by the objective properties of an action.
- The doctrine of the mean and Aristotle’s moral ideal: the person who has developed the capacity to perform the full range of human actions and feel the full range of human emotions
- The relation of virtue to the three characteristics of the human soul: feelings, faculties, dispositions
- Prudence and virtuous character

Discussion

- Does a person act virtuously because he knows what he is doing? Because he chooses an action and chooses it for its own sake? Because he acts from a fixed and permanent disposition?
- Does an individual act virtuously because he does what virtuous people do or because he acts as virtuous people act?
- Does the development of a virtuous character begin with imitating the actions called virtuous and emulating the character of people characterised as virtuous?
- Is virtue a human excellence that makes a person a good person and causes that person to perform his function well?
- How and why does a person become virtuous by performing or practising virtuous acts?
- Does the virtuous person perform the right action and call forth the right feelings in every context in order to achieve nobility, success and pleasure?
- Why does a person take pleasure in acting in a virtuous manner?
- Are virtues culturally dependent?

5. **Aquinas: *Summa Theologiae***
Critically analyse Aquinas's view of the soul.

The question invites a discussion of Aquinas's definition of soul and its function. Along with this, possibilities exist for a critique of Aquinas's views.

Key points

- The relationship of the soul to the body and the rejection of dualism
- The immortality of the soul
- The soul as the controller of all operations, intellectual and sense related
- The relationship of free will to the soul
- Categories of soul

Discussion

- The problem of the idea that the soul could be divided between lower functions and that of thinking
- The contrast of dualism and the separation of body and soul
- That Aquinas might entertain dualism by having the idea of **substantial** form that 'precedes' the intellectual soul
- The incompleteness of the soul when it is not 'linked' to the body after death and the nature of the individuality of the soul after death
- How rationality is acquired from the soul
- Modern materialism and Aquinas's possible response to it from religious and philosophical perspectives
- Is Aquinas a dualist? What is the relation of body and soul?

6. Descartes: *Meditations*

To what extent is God a necessary assumption for Descartes to assert the possibility of knowledge?

This question gives a chance to criticise and assess a key part of Descartes's refutation of scepticism (found particularly in the 3rd and 5th *Meditations*). Answers could place Descartes's passages on God in the overall development of the arguments presented in the *Meditations* and assess how they fit into the whole scheme of Descartes's attack on scepticism.

Key points

- Descartes moves from bleak scepticism to the possibility of a certain foundation for knowledge on the basis of his belief in God.
- The 'trademark' argument – where something (like Descartes's idea about God) cannot come from nothing; God being conceived as benevolent cannot deceive us, hence God must exist and does not mislead us
- The contrast between material things and those which can exist in abstract thought as *a priori* truths; the ontological argument as an *a priori* proposition
- The fundamental principles of the ontological argument: (1) principle of 'clarity and distinction'; (2) the idea of a true and immutable nature; (3) the principle of essence and existence
- Circular reasoning as an objection to Descartes's ontological argument – the 'cartesian circle objection'
- Descartes's response to the charge of circular argument is the 'Memory Answer'; is it convincing? (*Meditation 5*)
- Descartes's Supremely Perfect Being – is this proposition convincing?

Discussion

- Descartes's foundationalism is open to criticism both for its general conception of how knowledge is gained and for its narrowness.
- Are Descartes's proposals about the existence and character of God built on satisfactory foundations?
- Does Descartes prove or assume God's goodness?
- God's goodness is felt in the search for certainty, epistemologically; is this reasonable?
- How crucial to Descartes's treatment of scepticism and the evil demon is the existence of God?
- If Descartes's proof for God is rejected how is his whole response to scepticism affected?
- Is Descartes's use of the ontological argument accepted today?
- Kant's criticism of Descartes's supremely perfect being could be explored.
- The role God plays in the reputation of scepticism.

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

Critically evaluate the advantages *and* disadvantages for Locke in humans assuming life in civil society.

This question offers the chance to discuss and develop ideas concerning Locke's key distinction between man in his natural state, and his ensuing relationship to government and civil order encountered in society. Answers might include the conceptual distinction and Locke's theoretical assumptions as well as practical implications for aspects such as liberty, rights, property.

Key points

- Man is a creature made by God endowed with reason and conscience, not in essence a primal beast.
- The absence of government and civil order is greatly to man's detriment, so he voluntarily comes together to create society.
- The natural community created by the so-called 'social contract' is democracy, with rule by majority.
- Man's social contract exists between free people, not between government and governed.
- Sovereignty ultimately rests with the people for the governed retain their individual rights, even after government has been set up.
- Rights enjoyed include security, property, liberty (even *in extremis* at the expense of one's life).

Discussion

- The challenge in the State is to limit government power; man's natural rights do not cease with the formation of the State thus the State only has those powers delegated to it.
- Role of government in relation to individual rights – the so-called 'night-watchman state' – protection of life, liberty and property as the sole legitimate purpose of government
- If government becomes tyrannical (abuse of rights) or ineffectual (failure to defend rights) the governed have a moral right – after failing to achieve redress through normal channels – to overthrow government and replace it with an effective one.
- The distinction between private and public, with considerable scope for private freedom, especially in family and 'lifestyle' issues; how large is this private 'zone'? How much freedom **should** we have?
- Can Locke's vision of democracy offer protection of the minority from abuse by the majority?
- Can Locke throw light on more recent political experiences/problems? Is the imposition of democracy the best means of guaranteeing the rights of individuals? (see, for instance, the experience of government by coalition forces/politicians in Iraq after the second Gulf War)

**8. Hume: *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*
Critically evaluate Hume’s proposal that the foundation of our knowledge is experience.**

This question seeks engagement with Hume’s fundamental assertion about the role of sense experience in forming knowledge about the world. Answers might show the difference between present knowledge, experience, ideas and memories and investigate the philosophical challenges that arise with an empirical approach to knowledge.

Key points

- How knowledge is ascertained; Hume’s empirical emphasis
- Difference between mathematics and empirical experience as routes to knowledge
- The role of memory of the past in knowledge
- Ideas as representations/copies of our impressions
- The problem of unusual instances as being seen as less real
- Distinction between ‘matters of fact’ and ‘relations of idea’ – how both relate to empiricism
- Cause and effect as Hume’s prime example, where experience gives us causes to expect certain states of affairs without real proof

Discussion

- Hume distinguishes between ‘psychological effects’ and logical proof; logic concerns the relations of statements and one statement may contradict another, but facts do not contradict one another, if both happen.
- Problem for science which involves general statements which assume causal relations
- No field of human knowledge can contain the possibility of conclusive proof apart from mathematics.
- Hume holds a view described as ‘mitigated scepticism’ where humans hold opinions and expectations diffidently – aware of their fallibility; humans should avoid grand philosophical theories of everything, since we cannot be sure even of theories of small things, since we cannot leap from experience of finite instances to a failsafe general conclusion.

**9. Rousseau: *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality and Social Contract*
Evaluate Rousseau's view of social contract.**

This question invites discussion and explanation on the question of the movement from the state of nature to the state of civil society. The question focuses on the positive and negative political implications of this issue.

Key points

- State of nature versus civil society; *amour de soi* versus *amour propre*
- The social contract: necessity, obligation, rational alternative, or benefit?
- The social contract as the resolution of difficulties: improvement or deterioration of the human condition?
- The fraudulent social contract *vs.* the just covenant
- Equality in the state of nature *vs.* inequality in the state of civil society
- Civil society as a means of breaking the chains of inequality versus civil society as the means of introducing the chains of domination and exploitation: natural, civil and moral liberty

Discussion

- How does Rousseau's approach to the development of civil society rest on different views of the necessity for and design of a social contract?
- How and why is a fraudulent social contract that is imposed on the poor by the rich characteristic of Rousseau's *Discourse*?
- How and why is a just covenant with which all agree and to which all subscribe, characteristic of Rousseau's *Social Contract*?
- The move from the state of nature to the state of civil society as the process of 'enchaining' the individual (*Discourse*); the process of breaking the chains (*Social Contract*)?
- Are the establishment of law, the right to property, the emergence of political power, and the introduction of political and civil distinctions always negative in Rousseau's estimation?
- How can the social contract connect liberty, law, freedom and justice in order to safeguard the political integrity of the individual?

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

Explain and evaluate Kant's position that moral principles must have their origin and foundation *a priori* in pure reason.

The question asks for the basic character of moral principles. Kant's project in Section II is to "present distinctly the faculty of practical reason, from its general rules of determination to the point where the concept of duty arises from it". Here, the moral law appears as one of the principles of practical reason. Answers could analyse the imperatives. A theoretical explanation of the concepts *a priori* and 'pure' beyond the context of practical reason is not required.

Key points

- Kant states "...it is absolutely impossible by means of experience to make out with complete certainty a single case in which the maxim of an action otherwise in conformity with duty rested simply on moral grounds".
- As rational beings we act not merely in accordance with laws, but in accordance with our representations of laws.
- We human beings are not perfectly rational, since our desires, fears, and weaknesses may tempt us to act in irrational ways. This opens up the possibility of a gap between the principles upon which we actually act, our maxims or subjective principles, and the objective laws of practical reason. For this reason, we conceive the objective laws of practical reason as imperatives, telling us what we ought to do.
- Moral law must hold not only for human beings but for all rational beings as such, not merely under contingent conditions and with exceptions but with absolute necessity. No experience could give occasion to infer even the possibility of such apodictic laws.
- Demonstrating that the Categorical Imperative governs our wills is not a matter of showing that we actually act on it. Instead, it is a matter of showing that we act on it insofar as we are rational.
- Kant is working towards uncovering what we have to prove in order to establish that moral requirements really bind our wills.

Discussion

- What contribution does pure reason make to the knowledge and government of our actions?
- Is pure reason the only way to ground moral law?
- Kant's argument concerning the basis of moral law can be confronted with other approaches and justifications of morality *e.g.* utilitarian.
- Kant is trying to present his case as based on reason, but in fact he is mainly defending a position based on religious faith.
- From other perspectives *e.g.* Nietzschean, there is no such absolute value of morality.

11. Nietzsche: *The Genealogy of Morals*

In the context of Nietzsche's notion of the debtor-creditor relationship, explain how the moralisation of debt into guilt and sin is achieved by appealing to some imagined corruption of human nature.

The question explores the nature of the debtor-creditor relationship and its progressive spiritualization over time from the simple meeting of two individuals to the encounter between the individual and God. The progressive transformation of contractually based indebtedness into the complex moralised notions of sin and guilt might be explained. Finally, the emergence of the belief in a corrupted human nature could be linked with the notion of indebtedness, guilt and sin.

Key points

- The debtor-creditor relationship: the fundamental encounter between two individuals
- Respect for the contractual terms of the relationship; the right to give one's word; the promise
- Non-moral guilt as regret due to the inadequacy of the debtor to honour the terms of the contractual arrangement; breaking one's promise
- The right of the creditor to exact an equivalent repayment from the debtor
- The moralisation and spiritualization of the debtor-creditor relationship into a relation between the individual and God
- Guilt moralised when it is pushed back into the conscience and experienced as sin and corruption
- Moralised guilt interpreted as absolute inadequacy to pay back spiritualised debt: sin and the temptation to sin blamed on a corrupt human nature

Discussion

- Why and how is the debtor-creditor relationship the most fundamental paradigm for understanding human relationships?
- How and why does the debtor-creditor relationship evolve through the levels of person-person, person-community, person-ancestors, and person-God?
- How is 'non-moralised' guilt the simple declaration of the failure to keep one's word and repay one's debts and why is this form of guilt able to be discharged clearly and innocently?
- Is Nietzsche's description of how the visible terms of a contract and terms of a promise become moralised/spiritualised in the creation of bad conscience a credible description?
- How and why does Nietzsche claim that moralised guilt is life-denying and how does this rest on a belief in the corruption of human nature?
- How is sin (moralised guilt) the moral paradigm for the corruption of human nature?

12. Mill: *Essay on Liberty*

Explain and discuss the boundaries that Mill draws between the individual and society.

This question seeks a demonstration of the limits that Mill puts on liberty and how he wanted to create a balance between the individual and society.

Key points

- Awareness of Mill’s fear that society was beginning to dominate the individual
- The need for individuals to demonstrate their social side
- The ‘right’ of the individual to act without harm to others and an understanding of the ‘Harm principle’
- The role of the State as a value to the individual; that is, that individuals need the State

Discussion

- The idea that you may not like the action of the individual but if they produce no harm then the action is allowable, contrasted with the notion that the State can and should apply higher values to protect individuals from themselves
- The notion that the richness of differing human activity might produce conflicts of value as human interactions become more complex
- The idea that humans would seek ‘higher’ activities, presupposes that humans would want to do these ‘higher’ things. It may be that low pleasures are more fun. Contrast the ‘clubbing scene’ with sitting at home reading philosophy.
- How does general social improvement take place if some higher authority does not set an objective? Contrast the State direction of communism with the *laissez faire* of some western democracies.

**13. Freud: *Civilisation and its Discontents* and *Outline of Psychoanalysis*
Discuss the philosophical problems that arise when assessing Freud's concept of the mind.**

This is a question about assessing Freud from a philosophical perspective. It invites an examination of Freud's contribution to the understanding of the place of the mind in human existence, and the assumptions he makes and models he presents. Answers might relate the question to Freud's views on culture.

Key points

- A discussion of the nature of the *id*, *ego* and *super ego* and their functions.
- Freud's initial work arose as a response to physical symptoms and he thus assumes a distinction between mind and body, where physical symptoms can be addressed through mental experiences.
- Freud's concepts come from the rationalist tradition of a separation between mind and body, with an emphasis on the importance of rationality in addressing human problems and analysis.
- Methodologically Freud's approach is questioned as science; analysis and the diagnosis of hysteria through past experience suffers problems of falsifiability (Popper's objections). The technique of recovered memories and the assumptions of the role of the libido – how persuasive are these?

Discussion

- The difficulty of assigning current symptoms (like amnesia) to past mental trauma, when a modern medical (materialist) explanation would investigate the presence of neurological damage
- Is Freud's application of his concept of the mind to civilisation overly metaphysical, dependent on rational assumptions that modern science will not accept? A worked example could be the place of religion in civilisation – as deriving from unconscious experiences of infantile helplessness and needs
- Sublimation as a cultural tool – can such observations be justified?
- Has psychoanalysis released contemporary man from sadistic, irrational behaviour?
- Freud argues for the supremacy of conscience and in drawing upon Judeo-Christian terminology like 'redemption' or the judging of primeval instincts as 'evil' he is offering a substitution for religion.
- Questions arise as to the relation of theory and observation; the re-naming of common experiences of personal tension with quasi-scientific terminology

14. Buber: *I and Thou*

“For what does one know of You? Only everything. For one no longer knows particulars”.
Critically assess Buber’s conception of the I-Thou relation as a description of possible experience in the world.

This question invites an assessment of Buber’s exhortation of the I-Thou relation as it is felt in the personal life of individuals. It asks for a consideration of Buber’s existential account of man and how it applies to knowledge of the world. Criticisms can be raised both of Buber’s basic distinction between I-It and I-Thou relations as well as the way in which he applies his concept to the wider world of the community.

Key points

- Buber argues that the I-Thou world is a separate world where individuals and communities have the potential to experience transforming relations.
- This world is reached first through experience of I-It relations where people are objects for our own experience, known not in their entirety, but through what is useful to us.
- The I-It world is characterised by the ego which sets itself apart from other egos.
- I-Thou relations with people replace experience of people; one can ‘know thyself’, which to the person means: ‘know yourself as being’. To the ego it means: ‘know your being-that-way’; the distinction between ‘person’ and ‘ego’
- I-Thou relations are feasible in the community/culture at large.
- God is the ultimate source and aim of I-Thou relations – there are no statements about God which do not ultimately say something about man; regardless of the abyss between man and God, dialogue is always possible.

Discussion

- Is Buber’s work poetic, religious, mystical or philosophical? If not primarily philosophical, are Buber’s assumptions open to rational criticism?
- How convincing is Buber’s portrayal of normal human relations as belonging to the ‘It-world’ of object-ness?
- Does Buber’s subject oriented approach to relations place him in the existential tradition?
- What epistemological problems arise with existentialist accounts of human experience?
- Can the human person be treated in such a monolithic way, as a single You entity? Do we not encounter ourselves as complex constitutions? Is personhood a singular entity?
- How do we know the genuineness of the person with whom we are in relation? Might a person deliberately mislead us by displaying inauthentic character and personality traits?
- What makes the I-You world preferable to the I-It world? Buber assumes its superiority, but on what grounds? Is this convincing?
- Buber poses experience and relation as exclusive worlds; only objects can be experienced, so the world of relations is beyond the realm of experience – is this realistic to place relations beyond empiricism? Religious believers believe that the object of their faith will be experienced directly, if not now then in the future when conditions have changed.
- Buber’s account was avidly greeted by some psychological counsellors; does this mean Buber is open to similar objections on the grounds of falsification (Popper)?
- Are Buber’s assumptions too far-fetched? Are his grounds convincing? Is the method and style of the book more akin to eastern philosophy than the rational dominated west?

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

Explain and critically assess Ortega y Gasset’s statement: “Man is impossible without imagination, without the capacity to invent for himself a conception of life, to ideate the character he is going to be. Whether he be original or a plagiarist, man is the novelist of himself.”

The question is focused on Ortega’s conception of human life. Man is an infinitely plastic entity. Life is a drama that happens, and the subject of the drama would be its argument.

Key points

- Ortega’s argument aims to show that human life should be understood as an absolutely unique kind of reality. The way to apprehend the uniqueness of human life is Ortega’s ‘historical reason’, as opposed to naturalist reason.
- Man has no nature. Man is not his body, which is a thing, nor his soul, psyche, conscience, or spirit, which are also things. Man is no thing, but a pure and universal happening which happens to each one of us and in which each one in his turn is nothing but happening.
- The mode of being of life, even as simple existing, is not a being already, since the only thing that is given us, and that is when there is human life, is the having to make it; each one for himself. Life is a task.
- At every moment of my life there opens before me diverse possibilities: each individual must make his choice and decide for himself between them. These decisions are guided by his conception of life which he projects.
- It is impossible to see what frontiers can be set to human plasticity. Human life is thus not a phenomenon that changes accidentally.

Discussion

- ‘Possibility’ as a concept applied to human life means something special, different from every other concept or form of possibility.
- Ortega’s conception of human life as an invention or fiction should be understood literally? Does it imply that projecting and being is the same?
- Man is not always able to decide to make himself according to a decision or a previous project.
- Ortega’s opposition between nature and history is only a new formulation of dualism. Natural, biological dimension, on the one hand, and social, cultural, historical dimensions, on the other, are interwoven in more subtle and complex ways than Ortega’s too strong and to some extent simplistic opposition.
- A comparison with other similar approaches *e.g.* existentialism, historicism, could be developed.

16. Wittgenstein: *The Blue and Brown Books*

“The man who is philosophically puzzled sees a law in the way a word is used, and, trying to apply this law consistently, comes up against ... paradoxical results”. Discuss this claim in the context of Wittgenstein’s view of language.

This question considers Wittgenstein’s view of the content and method of true philosophy. The question invites an exploration of Wittgenstein’s later emphasis on the meaning of language being derived from the context of its use. The discussion might consider how Wittgenstein approaches meaning and its representation in language and it might offer a critical assessment of the philosophical advantages and disadvantages of Wittgenstein’s view of language.

Key points

- Philosophy as a search for sense; Wittgenstein’s view of what philosophical problems are and what philosophical enquiry is
- Wittgenstein’s later emphasis on language not as picturing reality, rather as a tool able to be used for an indefinite number of tasks
- Examples of language doing more than picturing reality... *e.g.* giving orders, congratulating *etc.*
- Specific words do not stand for specific things, so they do not have fixed meanings.
- For Wittgenstein words derive their meanings from forms of life *e.g.* the scientific community uses a word like ‘evidence’ differently from the legal community; thus the meaning of a word is in its use. We do not use language according to strict rules, like applying a calculus, rather we use language in ways dependent on use and context.
- Language springs to life in intercourse between people.
- ‘Language games’ as a way of shaking off the idea of a ‘necessary’ form of language

Discussion

- The abandoning of rules for language use leaves a problem of what ‘knowing the meaning of’ precisely is; Wittgenstein does not address the question ‘What *can* be said?’ as he feels we answer this by reference to a kind of calculus
- “What does the *possibility* of the meanings of our words depend on?” – in *The Blue Book* words have the meaning we give them, it would be a confusion to seek ‘real’ meanings; but what is the difference, then, between learning a language and learning a notation?
- How can a language develop in the future if its meaning is defined by current use?
- Impossibility of a private language as evidence that we do not need to know the private minds of speakers to know their intentions; this is eagerly accepted by mid-20th century sociology and anthropology
- Wittgenstein’s rejection of solipsism and the use by some religious people of public language as evidence for belief in an outside Supreme Being

17. Arendt: *The Human Condition*

Explain and discuss Arendt’s claim: “Action ... corresponds to the human condition of plurality, to the fact that men, not Man, live on earth and inhabit the world. [...] this plurality is specifically the condition ... of all political life”.

This question explores the political implications of one of Arendt’s core notions – action. It focuses attention on the tension between individuality and community and on the central importance Arendt attributes to plurality against the backdrop of the unique existence of the person. The relationships among freedom, plurality, speech and political life could be considered.

Key points

- Action, along with labour and work, define the basic conditions of human existence.
- Acting is the revelation of the self to others and the relationship of acting and being defines the context of political activity.
- Political activity is the sharing of word and deed by diverse, unique individuals in a context of pluralism.
- Natality is the hope for plurality, the birth of new individuals – doers and speakers – on earth
- Life without action and plurality ceases to be human life as it is a denial of community
- Hostility to plurality in any form is destructive of political life

Discussion

- What does Arendt mean by plurality and how is it a guarantee of identity, diversity and political activity?
- How is the capacity for freedom as a mode of action the source of plurality of acts?
- Why is political action the ordering and judging of appearances in the public forum for the sake of a plurality of persons?
- How is action initiated in the context of a robust, talkative context of plurality?
- How and why is political activity the sharing in word and deed by diverse individuals who, in acting together, generate political power?
- How has the modern emphasis on productivity, materialism, consumerism and narrow individualism threatened the values of action and plurality?
- Does Christian doctrine divert human attention from earthly political action?
- What factors might militate against authentic political activity?

18. Simone de Beauvoir: *The Ethics of Ambiguity***“Man is free; but he finds his law in his very freedom.”****To what extent does this statement illustrate de Beauvoir’s source of morality?**

The focus of this question is to explain how de Beauvoir resolves the ambiguity of man being free yet at the same time being able to create values that limit his actions. It also allows an exploration of the role of responsibility and its relationship to freedom, along with relations to the Other.

Key points

- The existentialist position that humans are free but recognise their duty and responsibility to themselves and others
- The existential moral agent is responsible for himself, for his own consciousness. Hence choices are governed by a sense of goodwill.
- Failure is defined by one’s self and this is not a contradiction with freedom.

Discussion

- The idea that choice is controlled by the individual and humans make the right choices or at least do not act in an inherently wrong way
- Humans have become their own gods and can judge their actions, so fixed non relativistic values are established which will bring about the best conditions to live in.
- The relationship with the Other which might control actions
- The issue of desire and passion and the restriction the individual places upon them
- The problem of each individual being different and the issue of making choices that interlock and aim to produce harmony
- There might be mention that the quotation uses ‘man’ and ‘his’ law, therefore this control of freedom may be seen as male oppression and manipulation of the Other (in this case women) and the possible reduction of the Other to an object for male use. This may result in an argument that male focused morality prevents women from seeking a meaning and purpose to life for themselves.

19. Rawls: *A Theory of Justice*

Explain and discuss Rawls's argument that general principles of justice are the most justifiable.

This question requires an explanation and understanding of the 'original position' upon which Rawls bases his theory. It then asks whether or not it is justifiable to base his argument on this position.

Key points

- An explanation of the 'original position'
- The notion of the equal distribution of basic human rights
- The nature of humans that would tend to accept a fair and equal distribution *i.e.* just acts in terms of all human behaviour are right and acceptable
- The importance of generality in principles of justice.

Discussion

- The inherently positive view that Rawls's holds about human nature
- Whether there is a consensus of the right of humans to have specified rights
- The validity of the original position as a modern social contract
- The validity of a social democratic position in a new market driven perception of social behaviour
- The problem of the interpretation and application of equal opportunity, for it to be treated the same means to recognise differences with the resulting consequence of 'unequal acts'
- The role and importance of the State relating to the freedom of the individual

20. Feyerabend: *Farewell to Reason*
Critically evaluate Feyerabend's claim that tensions about values can be resolved by way of power, a theoretical approach, or an open exchange between groups.

This question invites an exploration and evaluation of the ways different cultural groups encounter each other and how they attempt to deal with differences of opinion and perspective on a practical level. The answer might focus on the tension between intercultural confrontation and intimidation and intercultural understanding and appreciation. The role of power in terms of exploitation and intimidation could be explored.

Key points

- Values differ across cultures, and influence opinions, attitudes and actions in different ways. Therefore, arguing about values entails entering into the plurality of cultural life styles.
- When different cultures encounter each other a tension of values usually ensues. This tension can be resolved by power, by theory or by exchange.
- Power and theory when wielded by a 'developed' culture tend to misunderstand, underestimate or suppress the values of 'less developed' cultures.
- Open exchange affirms the integrity of a culture's value system and preserves the identity of a culture's accumulated wisdom.
- All cultures have attained cultural achievements from which humanity as a whole can benefit.
- These achievements must be shared amongst all parties.

Discussion

- Why and how is practical relativism an effective means of describing the ways in which we can find ways of allowing views, customs and traditions different from our own to affect our lives?
- How can individuals, groups, and entire civilisations benefit and profit from an exploration and appreciation of the values of groups different from their own?
- Why does the tension about differing values help us challenge our most deeply held beliefs and help us see that we can change our most conclusive arguments?
- Differences of cultural perspective lead to tension and confrontation. Is Feyerabend justified in claiming that this situation always reduces itself to a tension about values?
- Why and how is the 'way of power' destructive of multi-cultural pluralism?
- Why and how is the 'theoretical approach' conceited, ignorant, superficial and incomplete?
- How does knowledge about different people and cultures emerge from interaction and personal contact with the way people live, think and feel?
- Why and how must open exchange guarantee all traditions and value systems 'equal opportunity' and 'equal rights' and why must the members of a culture, not specialised groups of experts, have the last word in deciding what is valuable for that culture?
- Is it possible to believe and say conflicting things about a situation and yet be 'right'?

21. Foucault: *The History of Sexuality*

Explain and critically assess Foucault's idea of analysing knowledge regarding sex in terms of power.

The question is focused on Foucault's intention to define the regime of power-knowledge-pleasure that sustains the discourse on human sexuality. According to Foucault, the essential thing is the existence of a discourse in which sex, the revelation of truth, the overturning of global laws, and the promise of a new felicity are linked together.

Key points

- The aim of his inquiry is to move toward an idea of the specific domain formed by relations of power. Foucault wants to get rid of a juridical and negative representation of power, and cease to conceive it in terms of law, prohibition, liberty, and sovereignty, advancing toward a different conception of power through closer examination of an entire historical material – the history of sexuality.
- Knowledge is indissociable from regimes of power. Power is “a multiple and mobile field of force relations where far-reaching, but never completely stable effects of domination are produced.” It is plural, fragmentary, differentiated, indeterminate, and historically and spatially specific. He speaks of the mechanisms of power as “a grid of intelligibility of the social order”.
- Foucault rejects the idea that power is anchored in macrostructures or ruling classes and is repressive in nature. Power is dispersed, indeterminate, heteromorphous, subjectless, and productive, constituting individuals, bodies and identities. It operates through the hegemony of norms, political technologies, and the shaping of the body and soul. Power operates not through the repression of sex, but through the discursive production of sexuality.
- Sexuality is a historical construct. Sex began to be ‘put into discourse’ at the dawn of the classical epoch. Prior to that, people just had sexual relations and although this aspect of life was hardly invisible, it was not considered to hold the keys to human nature. Sexuality ‘appears as an especially dense transfer point for relations of power: useful for the greatest number of manoeuvres.’
- The traditional practice of the sexual confession come to be constituted in scientific terms through: (a) a clinical codification of the inducement to speak; (b) the principle of a latency intrinsic to sexuality; (c) the method of interpretation; (d) the medicalization of the effects of confession.

Discussion

- Large-scale enterprises, such as the sciences of medicine, pedagogy, and economics, and other forms of discourse, are considered by Foucault in different historical contexts. Therefore, the discussion can follow different directions. Comparisons with psychoanalytic views, Marxist views or views from the history of science could be appropriate.
- The repressive hypothesis: It has been argued that repression coincides with the development of capitalism. Sex is repressed because it is incompatible with a general and intensive work imperative. But Foucault claims repression is only a ‘component part’ in a power/knowledge *dispositif*.
- People in Foucault's world seem reduced to cogs in a machine, able only to choose from among the culturally available tactics of ‘power-knowledge.’ What adds particularly to this sense of pettiness is the fact that our knowledge choices do not bring us any closer to reality nor represent success in dealing with nature.

- How accurate is Foucault's conception as history? Is he an accurate historian or does his philosophy distort his vision of history?
- The facts are constantly interpreted in terms that must seem bizarre to those who are not true believers in Foucault's vision. Does Foucault offer any reasons to suppose *e.g.* that sexuality is a historical construction? Any reasons that do not presuppose his own philosophical framework?

22. Putnam: *Reason, Truth and History*

Evaluate Putnam's argument concerning the possibility that we are 'brains in a vat'.

This question focuses upon the self-refuting idea that we are 'brains in a vat'. It asks for an exploration of the difference between physical and conceptual possibilities and that meaning is not 'in one's head'.

Key points

- An explanation of the idea of 'brains in a vat' and the notion of self-refuting ideas
- An explanation of anti-scepticism and an exploration of the idea of externalism
- The possible use of the argument *reductio ad absurdum*
- The nature of a theory of reference

Discussion

- The possibility of another world with another 'language'
- The application of the Turing Test
- The possibility of the illusion of referencing and the Imitation Game
- The problem of intentionality attributed to mind
- Possible mention of Wittgenstein's 'beetle in the box' idea and Wittgenstein's own attack on scepticism
- How meaning comes about and that it may not be solely or at all a mental construct
- Possibly a full explanation of externalism
- Possibly a critique or investigation of the connectionist model

23. Taylor: *The Ethics of Authenticity*

Analyse and critically discuss Charles Taylor's argument that the institutions of a technological society do not impose on us an ever-deepening hegemony of instrumental reason, but that left to themselves they have a tendency to push us in that direction.

The question is focused on Taylor's second malaise of modernity: the primacy of instrumental reason. Answers might consider the positive aspects hidden within the negative use of instrumental reason.

Key points

- By 'instrumental reason' Taylor means the kind of rationality we draw on when calculating the most economical application of means to a given end. Maximum efficiency, the best cost-output. Ratio, is its measure of success.
- Whether we leave the society to 'invisible hand' mechanism like the market or try to manage it collectively, we are forced to operate to some degree according to the demands of modern rationality, whether or not it suits our own moral outlook.
- The view of technological society as a kind of iron fate simplifies too much and forgets the essential: human beings and their societies are much more complex than any simple theory can account for.
- It is true that instrumentalism has a head start in our world. But it is still the case that there are many points of resistance, and that these are constantly being generated *e.g.* the whole movement since the Romantic era which has been challenging the dominance of instrumental categories.
- Without exaggerating our degree of freedom, it is not zero though. That means that coming to understand the moral sources of our civilization can make a difference, in so far as it can contribute to a new common understanding.

Discussion

- The discussion can be connected to many aspects of Taylor's general argument, *e.g.* the authentic life. The authentic life is an ethical goal and peculiar to modern culture, stemming from individualism. Individualism comes from Descartes affirming the primacy of the person as self-responsible to find the truth.
- The ideal of authenticity yields the understanding of identity. Living an inauthentic life, I have no self-identity. How can I then be a member of a democratic society?
- Taylor opposes moral dimensions to economical and social phenomena. Is it realistic?
- Although Taylor states that moral authenticity is fundamentally dialogical in character, his view on authenticity, which is a main way to overcome instrumental reason, is still individualistic.
- Taylor thinks that there is a great deal of truth in the description of modern society as an 'iron cage', but at the same time he believes that the view of technological society as a kind of 'iron fate' cannot be sustained.

24. Nussbaum: *Poetic Justice*

Explain and critically evaluate Nussbaum's assessment of the utilitarian rational-choice models that are in present day economics.

The question is focused on Nussbaum's assessment of utilitarian rationality. Consideration of Nussbaum's conception of a broader rationality, analysing literature and its significance for public life might appear.

Key points

- Nussbaum sustains that the claim economics presents only and all the facts of human life needs to be viewed with scepticism, if by 'facts' we mean 'truths.' And its claim to stand for 'reason' must also be viewed scepticism, if with 'reason' we mean a faculty that is self-critical and committed to truth. For the 'facts' of political economy are actually reductive and incomplete perceptions, and its 'reason' is a dogmatic operation of intellect that looks, frequently, incomplete and unreliable.
- Four main assumptions give utilitarianism its characteristic view of persons: (a) commensurability: the rational choice involves regarding all the valuable things under consideration as measurable on a single scale; (b) aggregation: a social result is obtaining by pooling the data about and from individual lives, without regarding the boundaries between lives as specially salient for the purposes of choice; (c) commitment to maximizing: it means to see both individual and social rationality as aimed at getting as large an attention of something as possible, whether that something be wealth, or the satisfaction of preferences and desires, or pleasure, or utility; (d) the theory assumes that people's preferences are exogenous, that for economic purposes they can be taken as given.
- Nussbaum argues that the utilitarian rational-choice models needs to be completed with an expanded conception of the quality of life.

Discussion

- In today's political life there is an excessive reliance on technical ways of modelling human behaviour. These models which derive from utilitarianism frequently prove incomplete as a guide to political relations among citizens.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - A novel like *Hard Times* is a paradigm of such assessment. Presenting the life of a population with a rich variety of qualitative distinctions and complex individual descriptions of functioning and impediments to functioning, using a general notion of human need and human functioning in a highly concrete context, it provides the sort of information required to assess quality of life and involves its reader in the task of making the assessment. At the same time, it both exemplifies and cultivates abilities of imagination that are essential to the intelligent making of such assessments, in public as well as private life.
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