



MARKSCHEME

November 2008

PHILOSOPHY

Higher Level and Standard Level

Paper 2

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

“The *Tao* is frequently referred to as the mother, the ancestor, the foster-mother of all creatures.”
Critically assess this claim.

This question asks for a critical examination of one of the fundamental and central descriptions of the *Tao*, a description found throughout the text (*e.g.* Chapters 1, 6, 12, 25, 42, 51, 52). It also allows for an exploration and evaluation of the relationship between the female and male principles alluded to in the text.

Key points

- *Tao* as ‘mother of 10,000 creatures’
- *Tao* as first cause, as ‘mother of this world’
- *Tao* as ‘mysterious female’
- *Tao* as cause of all things to be born
- *Tao* as nourishing principle
- *Tao* as source for the development of life
- *Tao* as ‘maternal force’, as ‘womb’ as ‘primal ancestor’
- *Tao* as *wu* (unseen) and *yu* (seen) in relation to the female principle
- *Tao* begins in unity, later splitting into *Yin* (female) and *Yang* (male) principles
- Birth, generation, regeneration

Discussion

- Can the *Tao* be adequately and convincingly described as the mother?
- What is the relationship between the un-named, supreme *Tao* (*ch’ang tao*) and the *Tao* that can be named as the mother, the ancestor, the foster-mother of all creatures?
- How/why does the *Tao Te Ching* advocate female (*yin*) values above male (*yang*) values?
- Is the English translation of the terms – which speak of the *Tao* – gender specific whereas the original Chinese version speaks in a more comprehensive gender neutral manner?
- Does *Tao* only show itself convincingly as the primal cause of all things to be born or can it have characteristics that are not solely procreative?
- Does *Tao* begin in unity and develop into multiplicity?
- How does *Tao* incorporate and manifest female aspects, virtues and functions?
- Does the vision of *Tao* as mysterious female, mother and ancestor adequately account for this central principle of the text?
- Does sexuality function in the vision of the text?
- Does the female perspective influence the political aspects of the arguments of the text?

2. **Confucius: *The Analects***

Discuss and critically evaluate why a gentleman (*Chun tzu*) must have both learning (*hsue*) and thinking (*ssu*).

This question invites a discussion of the difference Confucius makes between the idea of learning, action, and thinking and the relationship of these to the development of a gentleman (*Chun tzu*).

Key Points

- The need for a gentleman to have benevolence as the highest virtue and the way learning and thinking are means to developing this benevolence
- Notion of *hsue*, learning. The idea that the learner's actions should be improving in nature
- The difference between learning and studying from the perspective that studying may have no impact or change effect whereas learning does make a difference to what the agent does
- The notion of *ssu* (thinking) is the interaction, reflectively, between rules, social codes and principles. A gentleman needs to be able to judge moral rules against fundamental principles so as to improve his action
- The importance of thinking (*ssu*) as a means to see connections and consequences so as to reflect upon both rules and actions. This allows *shu* (the idea to know by reference to ourselves what is good and right for others) to become clearer, allowing benevolence to be practiced
- A prime purpose of a gentleman is to become a better moral agent and in this, *hsue* – as accumulated wisdom – does improve moral insight and action

Discussion

- Does theoretical thinking about human behaviour actually give insight into moral action?
- Can a person thinking with little or no guidance (Confucius says he will point the direction only once) discover right actions?
- Can thinking create ideals for humans to follow or is this a result of analysis of practice and consequences?
- Is an intelligent and/or learned person necessarily a superior moral agent?
- How far is imagination and speculation of consequences part of *shu* and a necessary apart of *ssu*?
- Without *shu* does *ssu* become aimless?
- Are morals mere conventions that can be learnt or are they objective and accessible just through thought?
- Can a benevolent person be unintelligent with little learning? In contrast, is a highly intelligent person more benevolent?

3. Plato: *The Republic*

Explain and discuss why the ruler of the ideal State is the person in whom political power and philosophy come into the same hands.

This question addresses Plato's views concerning the character and definition of the philosopher-king. It invites an assessment of Plato's argument that philosophy and ruling must coalesce in the person of the ruler of the ideal state he described in the text. The question also invites a consideration of the relationship between knowledge and opinion and theory and practice in the description of the philosopher-king.

Key Points

- The defining characteristics of the philosopher-king
- The fundamental necessity of a philosopher-king in the ideal state
- Knowledge and opinion; the intelligible realm and the visible realm of reality in the life of the philosopher-king
- The relation of theory and practice in the life of the philosopher-king
- The philosopher-king: The philosopher as knower; the philosopher as doer
- The philosopher-king as the ruler of the closest approximation to the ideal state
- The philosopher-king and the correction of imperfections in existing states
- The philosopher-king: One person – two jobs
- The ideal state and the ideal person
- The proper educational programme for the creation of the philosopher-king
- The authentic philosopher-king excludes those who do not combine philosophy and ruling in the same hands

Discussion

- Is Plato's description of the nature of the authentic philosopher-king able to be realised?
- Why should a philosopher-king be the only person qualified to govern the ideal state Plato describes in the text?
- Why are the rulers of existing, imperfect states unable to remedy the problems they face?
- What are the problems of any existing state that the philosopher-king is likely to confront?
- Why is a proper education an absolute necessity in the creation of the philosopher-king?
- How can philosophy and ruling come into the same hands?
- Does the philosopher who is fit to rule differ from a philosopher who excludes ruling from his education?
- Why does the philosopher-king neither seek nor want to rule?
- Will the philosopher-king bring about a perfect state or the best/closest approximation to the ideal state described by Plato in the text?
- Is it the case that authentic political leadership not only demands theoretical knowledge (knowing that), but also practical knowledge (knowing how)?
- Does Plato's argument have any relevance to contemporary political situations?
- Does the ruler have to be king?

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

Explain and discuss the relation between practical reason (*phronesis*) and theoretical wisdom (*sophia*) in the development of happiness.

This question encourages an evaluation of the two prime aspects of the intellectual virtues and the role they play in developing moral virtue and increased happiness.

Key Points

- Definition of theoretical wisdom – intuition and scientific knowledge which involves understanding eternal truths and is the highest of the intellectual virtues
- Definition of practical wisdom – prudence is related to action and opinion. It is also an intellectual virtue and not a moral virtue
- Prudence is learnt through instruction and not experience
- The need to know how to reach the right end, merely meaning well is not enough, there must be action that is doing what is understood to be right
- Prudence and cleverness create true virtue so producing the best means to the end
- The value of such action is that humans can move toward happiness

Discussion

- How far is it necessary to have some sense of eternal truth to live morally? Is the ordinary person concerned with such truths?
- Is moral action an intellectual activity? Morally good people need not be clever
- Aristotle's argument is reflective of the classical syllogistic structure; but can morals be reduced to such simple arguments?
- Given that prudence is claimed to be acquired by instruction, does it follow that moral goodness is a skill that can be taught?
- Is it justifiable to reduce morality to a technique?
- Does it follow that if you, the agent, act in a morally good way you will be happy and, consequently, happiness for the individual could be a product of something that is learnt?
- Can moral behaviour be outside the realm of a rational process?
- Is there a basic contradiction in that acts that increase my happiness might be perceived as good by me but not by others? Do my happiness and my actions have to have similar consequences on others otherwise the actions are not fundamentally good?

5. **Aquinas: *Summa Theologiae***
Critically assess Aquinas’s view about what our intellect knows in material things.

This question asks for an exploration of Aquinas’s theory of knowledge, especially with regard to the mind’s relation with physical/material entities. It also invites an examination of how the soul, and the intellect interact in the acquisition of knowledge.

Key points

- The union of soul to body and knowledge of material things (q 84)
- Mode and order of understanding (q 85)
- Knowledge of singulars, of the infinite, of contingent things, of future things (q 86)
- Abstraction of intelligible species: universals, singulars
- Phantasms as mental images
- The intellect knows singulars, the infinite, contingent things, and future things
- Indirect understanding in the phantasm: singulars
- Conjunction of the active intellect and passive senses in knowledge
- Form, universality, essence, substance given potentially in material/individual things
- Infinity known potentially in our mind via material things but not actually and/or habitually
- Contingency itself known directly by the senses but indirectly by the intellect
- Universal principles of contingent things known only by the intellect and constitute the domain of science
- Future things considered subject to time are singular and known by the intellect by reflection
- Principles of future things are universal and, therefore, objects of the intellect and constitute the domain of science

Discussion

- Why does Aquinas’s discussion of knowledge of material things occur in the context of his discussion of the soul?
- Why does Aquinas feel that the intellect is not a capacity, but a component of the soul itself?
- Why does Aquinas argue that any real knowledge must be universal?
- Does Aquinas reject the notion of innate ideas in achieving knowledge of material things?
- What is the relation of Aquinas’s ‘phantasms’ to our sense experience of material things?
- Is it convincing to argue that sense experience provides the passive component of knowledge while the mind provides the active component?
- How does abstraction raise sense experience to real knowledge?
- Can we actually know the individual sensible object or only the phantasm or the universal?
- How does universal knowledge make science possible?
- How has Aquinas’s theory of knowledge regarding material things influenced other theories of knowledge?

6. **Descartes: *Meditations***

“It is through introspection that Descartes develops a process by which he can move from doubt to certainty.” Explain and discuss.

The question enables candidates to explore Descartes’s method as well as the content of his arguments that relate to introspection.

Key points

- Introspection is the process by which beliefs come to be formed by the individual about his/her mental states
- This is what Descartes embarks on once he has settled that knowledge through perception is fatally open to the possibility of doubt
- Sitting by the fire, Descartes realises by thought alone how mistaken his knowledge gained through sense impression could be
- The way of rejecting as open to doubt all perception Descartes calls analysis; the content of thought includes doubt and acknowledging doubt as thinking leads Descartes to the *Cogito*
- Descartes develops scepticism before embarking on introspection to find an indubitable starting point for knowledge
- Descartes assumes a special ‘privileged access’ given by introspection which can guarantee infallibility
- Descartes argues that mental states are accessible through introspection, but body states or brain states are not – substance dualism emerges.

Discussion

- Introspection is both a method for philosophy as well as the confirmation of a central truth about human nature – man is a thinking thing as well as a material thing extended in time and space; is Descartes justified in this conclusion?
- Is the assumed infallibility of self-knowledge of mental states open to criticism? – see problems of memory
- Ryle’s rejection of introspection as a ‘logical mess’ – the infinite regress involved in assuming a faculty exists which can observe mental states
- Is introspection as a model for thinking acceptable in modern neural analysis?
- The journey towards atomistic individualism encouraged by introspection – rejected by subsequent existential ontological approaches
- Assumptions about the nature of self as composed of distinct ‘substances’ due to introspection
- The inevitable solipsism of Cartesian introspection, except by appeal to God, for knowledge of external objects

**7. Locke: *Second Treatise on Government*
Explain and discuss Locke's position regarding slavery.**

The question is initially focused on slavery. However, since this directly refers to the concept of liberty answers might develop more general arguments, for example, the state of nature, human nature or equality.

Key points

- Slavery is defined as being subject to absolute, arbitrary, and despotic power
- The freedom from absolute, arbitrary power is necessary to, and closely joined with, man's preservation
- Locke refuses the argument that man can enslave himself to another; ultimately, he may take his own life and thereby regain his freedom, thus depriving the slave master of his power
- Locke envisages the state of nature as a state of perfect equality in which each person has the freedom to do as he sees fit without asking leave or depending on the will of any other man
- Slavery, might be seen as a continuation of the state of war between a lawful conqueror and a captive

Discussion

- The significance of Locke's account of slavery for Locke's political philosophy
- The moral, economic and political value of slavery has been disputed by philosophers from ancient times. It was defended as an institution by Plato and Aristotle
- Slavery is not wholly unjustifiable in Locke's system; if a man aggresses against another, he loses all rights in the just war fought against his aggression, and thus may he be rightly enslaved
- Are the concepts of liberty, human nature and equality good grounds to oppose slavery?
- Is Locke's conception open to a view of slavery from the standpoint of the slaves, not the slave-owners, which might allow us to understand more fully complex moral concepts such as paternalism, forgiveness, citizenship and resistance?
- Slavery and Locke's notion of property

**8. Hume: *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*
Explain and discuss Hume’s account concerning the origin and status of ideas.**

The question enables an exploration of Hume’s division between the primacy of the world of immediate sensations and the secondary world of ideas. It is possible to assess and evaluate Hume’s argument about ideas being secondary to impressions.

Key Points

- Ideas gain their existence from the perception experience of the knower in the world; ideas depend ultimately on experience
- For Hume man is a “bundle of perceptions” making immediate sense perception primary in knowledge; ideas are built upon those experiences in various ways
- Simple ideas correspond to the sense experience at the time of that experience
- Complex ideas are built from “compounding, transposing, augmenting, or diminishing” simple ideas
- Even more abstract ideas (like God, eternity, injustice *etc.*) come initially from impressions, see Hume’s illustration concerning the person deficient in perception correspondingly deficient in ideas
- The connection between ideas is made by the individual; experience provides us with both the ideas themselves and our awareness of their connection
- All human beliefs result from repeated applications of the simple association of ideas derived from human experience

Discussion

- Innate ideas *versus tabula rasa* pictures of the mind
- Hume’s distinction between ‘inward’ and ‘outward’ experience
- Can all ideas be analysed into prior impressions? Hume offers one example – is this sufficient?
- Do Hume’s examples support his thesis that all ideas correspond to a prior impression?
- By introducing the primacy of impressions (which are more lively and accessible) Hume considers that discussion of ideas can take place on a surer footing
- The role of habit *versus* reason in forming associations of ideas
- Beliefs emerge from sentiment and habit, more than by reason
- Hume’s treatment of imagination and belief – belief simply being a more certain piece of imagination (contrast with Descartes and Plato)

9. **Rousseau: *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality and Social Contract***
Explain and discuss Rousseau’s perspective that to examine inequality amongst humans is to examine the development of humankind itself.

This question invites an examination of Rousseau’s attempt to account for all forms of inequality from the experience of the state of nature through to that of civil society as set out in his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*. It also allows for comment on Rousseau’s project to account for the actual means by which the human leaves the state of nature and enters into the civil society as set out in his *Social Contract*.

Key Points

- The central problem: “Man is born free but everywhere is in chains”
- The state of nature *versus* civil society
- Progressive, developmental nature of human development from equality to inequality
- Natural/physical inequality *versus* unnatural/moral/political inequality
- Natural/physical inequality as the result of nature, age, health and bodily strength
- Moral/political inequality occurs through consent of humans and from privileges, power and status
- The state of nature as a hypothetical situation: ‘noble savage’; *amour de soi*
- The state of civil society as a contractual situation: self-consciousness, ownership, possession; *amour propre*
- Unrealised perfectibility *versus* realisable perfectibility
- Natural and unnatural inequality *versus* natural, civil and moral freedom
- The social contract: equality and inequality
- The General Will safeguards equality

Discussion

- How legitimately and/or effectively does Rousseau focus on liberty and the mechanisms by means of which humans are forced to give up liberty?
- Are Rousseau’s descriptions of the state of nature, the ‘noble savage’ and natural inequality convincing?
- Is it accurate to claim that the emergence of civilisation has robbed humanity of natural freedom and happiness?
- Are unnatural inequalities preventable? Does the social contract prevent them?
- Does Rousseau’s analysis of the movement from nature to state deal exhaustively with questions of political organisation?
- Are notions of respect, status and privilege natural or learned?
- How credible is Rousseau’s evaluation of the development of humankind?
- Is some level of inequality necessary or even desirable in a political organisation?

**10. Kant: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*
Critically assess the view that only actions done out of duty are moral.**

This question might involve an evaluation of the status and importance that Kant gives to the notion of duty in denoting the moral nature of the behaviour of humans.

Key points

- The importance of duty for Kant's ethical theory; fulfilling one's obligations not for self-orientated goals or an individual's inclinations
- The dismissal of other inclinations like love or compassion in generating moral action
- The relationship of objective moral law, which is universalisable with the subjective nature of the moral act, good will
- The submission to reason as justification for the moral act
- Justice, respect of others and doing what we know to be our duty are the only factors that justify the moral action

Discussion

- Does the act of acting upon good will, that is doing one's duty, correspond to moral laws?
- Can some actions be morally worthwhile even though the driving motive and means are 'wrong'?
- Are moral laws universalisable beyond their culture base? If not could culturally relativistic positions be entertained?
- Is duty alone the supreme justification? Are love, compassion and respect less significant motives?
- Is the notion of duty, acting with moral integrity, an outmoded guide to human behaviour? Is one's duty and dying for a cause no longer relevant to the 21st Century?
- Is fulfilling one's duty an indicator of a morally upright person, nobly virtuous and selfless?
- Is duty just another culturally relative notion that can be both good and bad, right and wrong depending up one's perspective?
- Can/should compassion and love of one's fellow man override a call to duty?

**11. Nietzsche: *The Genealogy of Morals*
Explain and discuss Nietzsche's account of ascetic ideals.**

The question refers to the title of the 3rd essay (What do ascetic ideals mean?). It is deliberately open to a variety of approaches, where the answers might be focused on key issues such as: nihilism, atheism, will to power, critic to philosophy, religion or science.

Key Points

- Ascetic ideals might mean diverse things according to different perspectives *e.g.* among artists they mean nothing or too many different things; among philosophers they mean having an instinct for the conditions of a higher spirituality (*e.g.* Wagner, Schopenhauer); among the clergy they are the foundation of their priestly faith, their best instrument of power (the ascetic priest)
- The fact that the ascetic ideal has meant so much to human beings is an expression of the basic fact of the human will, its horror of a vacuum. The ascetic ideal is the expression of a will
- “Man will sooner will nothingness than not will.” Nihilism
- The three great catchphrases of the ascetic idea are: poverty, humility, and chastity. If we look closely at the lives of all great, prolific, inventive spirits we always rediscover all three there to a certain degree
- The characteristically detached stance of philosophers: something which denied the world, was hostile to life, had no faith in the senses, and was free of sensuality
- In the case of an ascetic life (*e.g.* the ascetic priest) living counts as a bridge over to other ‘supranatural’ existence. The ascetic treats life as an incorrect road. This is “a monstrous way of assessing values”, for an ascetic life is a self-contradiction (“life opposing life”)
- The ascetic ideal arises out of the instinct for protection and salvation in a degenerating life seeking to keep itself going by any means and struggling for its existence

Discussion

- Science and truth as forms and transformations of ascetic ideals
- It seems that Nietzsche's critique on ascetic ideals is in fact a critic on ideals as such; this seems to be a one-sided way of seeing moral life and values
- Is the opposition between strong people and weak people enough to understand morality as a whole?
- Nietzsche's method of interpretation is not sufficiently explained. It uses categories of the individual psychology, even images (‘weak’, ‘strong’) to explain collective and cultural phenomena
- To what extent does Nietzsche's interpretation of ascetic ideals contribute to a better understanding of moral ideals?

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

Critically assess the claim that “If all mankind minus one were of one opinion and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he would be justified in silencing mankind.”

This question invites an appraisal of Mill’s arguments that promote freedom of expression for the individual and how his views on freedom of speech for the individual are compatible with other aspects of his notions of liberty.

Key points

- Reasons why Mill thinks freedom of expression is important – because such freedom will lead to truth
- Freedom of speech might be seen as good because even if the opinion expressed is wrong it encourages a clear perception of what is true and when it is right it is healthy to see errors in truth
- The responsibilities that individuals should have having been given these freedoms
- Such suppression of opinion could lead to the tyranny of the majority
- The assumption that one opinion is true beyond all others implies infallibility, discussion is necessary for relevant acts and arguments to be developed
- False opinions do have a function as they encourage others to see different perspectives and therefore might be able to amass reasons to better support their own position
- Open discussion with opposing opinions could prevent the development of dogma
- No suppression of opinions allows the development of opinions that are both partly true and false; this richness of opinion allows fair play and develops the human intellect

Discussion

- Is toleration of opposition enough or must society have a constant conflict of ideas to be healthy and safe from non-democratic forces?
- Does freedom of expression really prevent an underground press and subversive expression of dissent?
- Is free speech a contradiction to the development of the greatest good in that some opinions could incite action that would produce harm, *e.g.* the invoking through speech of terrorist acts?
- Is Mill unable to resolve the conflict between his harm principle and his support for freedom of speech? Is it enough to say that one should be accountable for what one says?
- Is liberalism on the scale that Mill proposes unacceptable in the 21st Century because the amount of information available makes it possible for only a few to have the overview and only a few have credible opinions? Or is Mill’s position essential in our multi-ethnic communities?
- How do Mill’s views of expression relate to issues such as pornography?
- Should there be different levels of freedom for children and adults?
- If we should not have freedom of expression for a good reason, who decides what is a good reason – the government – the State? Does this cause a tyranny of the State? Hobbes’ arguments for such State interference might be presented
- Does Mill credit too much reasonableness to humans?

**13. Freud: *Civilization and its Discontents* and *Outline of Psychoanalysis*
Explain and discuss Freud's critique of religion.**

This question enables an exploration of Freud's critique of religion, both as it appears in culture and in the history of civilisation, and also as it appears in the psychoanalysis of the individual.

Key Points

- Religion provides a father-figure who exerts a banning, prohibitive influence on the individual; the father-figure being a bridge between desire and law
- In calling for submission to a father-figure God, western religions embody a prohibition on individuals and civilisations
- Freud tests his psychoanalytic approach in the face of the phenomenon and existence of religion and theology
- The history of civilization is a history of a struggle to control nature both as it affects the individual and society
- The notion of God helps humans to cope with the essentially traumatic nature of life
- The formation of religion reflects a need to mediate in the conflict between nature and culture, or between the ego and the drive
- Religious dogmas are fantasies, wish-fulfillments in response to the most basic needs of humankind
- The central religious fantasy, a Father-God, emerges from the childhood experience of the human being: the child's helplessness creates a need for protection
- The need for protection from the father motivates the individual despite suppressed hostility caused by rivalry in relation to the mother; the father-figure of God transcends the weakness of the human father-figure who cannot offer proper protection against the human condition; thus the all powerful Father-God emerges
- In *Civilization and its Discontents* religion in individuals is described as an obsessive neurosis or a psychosis; in practising religion together the experience becomes shared and mass-produced
- The role of guilt as a motivational force and the emergence of the all-powerful Father-God to reinforce and cope with guilt
- Libido and sublimation in Freud's analysis of religion

Discussion

- The principle which regulates desire is associated with the father-figure because of his role in prohibiting the mother; the powers of civilisation have upheld this figure to serve as a prohibiting force
- Religions allow the human to admit her/his extraordinary vulnerability and at the same time, to retain a sense of superiority in relation to the surrounding reality; the price for this compromise is the acceptance of an "illusion" at the heart of the beliefs
- Freud comes to posit religion as a defence in the face of utter helplessness; it is a fantasy that makes life tolerable despite the hardships, and it even negates death as the final end of human life
- Freud centralises guilt as a tool for civilisation in the face of natural aggression; the western religions uniquely deal with notions of aggression and guilt and thus exert massive cultural influence
- From a psychoanalytic view, religion offers a solution to what Freud sees as the problem of the opposition between culture and the drive to death

14. Buber: *I and Thou*

Critically assess Buber's view of personal dialogue as the defining characteristic of the nature of human existence.

This question invites an exploration of the manner and modes of human existence in terms of dialogue with others, with the world around us, and with God. It also allows for comment on Buber's key concepts as they are developed in the text.

Key Points

- I-Thou relationships as subject-to-subject relationships; I-It relationships as subject-to-object relationships
- Transformation of I-Thou to I-It relationships and *vice versa*
- I-Thou relationships as awareness of the other as a unity of being
- I-It relationships as awareness of specific, isolated qualities
- I-Thou relationships: reciprocity and mutuality; I-It relationships: separateness and detachment
- I-Thou relationships as an act of choosing dialogue in direct interpersonal encounter
- I-Thou relationships as a dialogue based upon love, sharing, care, respect, commitment and responsibility
- I-It relationships as one of analysis, distance and description; absence of authentic encounter and dialogue
- God as the eternal Thou, as absolute person
- Movement from potential being to actual being in the movement from I-It to I-Thou dialogic relationships
- Human reality as encounter, dialogue and openness to being
- Dialogue as challenge

Discussion

- What is the relationship between I-Thou and I-It relationships?
- How does the I-It relationship actually serve the I-Thou relationship?
- Is the dialogue established between two persons in an I-Thou relationship different from the dialogue established between a person and God? In what ways?
- If personal dialogue is constitutive of human existence how is monologue destructive of it?
- In Buber's view, is dialogue with God an absolute necessity for authentic existence?
- Is Buber's philosophy of dialogue actually an ethical view about authentic living?
- Are I-Thou and I-It relationships exhaustive of the ways we relate to others, the world and to God?
- Does Buber expect an intensity of dialogue that is difficult, if not impossible to achieve and maintain?

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

Explain and discuss the difference between ‘physical reason’ and ‘historical reason’.

This question encourages an investigation and evaluation of the difference between physical and historical reason. It also allows for a judgement as to the value of such a distinction.

Key points

- Ortega’s definition of ‘historical reason’; the reasoning that humans can only understand themselves through their past. They are a result of their past
- Physical reason: this is restricted to physical needs and the physical world, perhaps a scientific perspective, it might be the same for other creatures and therefore does not make humans unique
- Vital reason – *raciovitalismo*: reason creates knowledge based upon a radical reality of life at its centre, and is the root of humanness. Humans are not ‘static’ but ‘dynamic’. I reason and think therefore I live, is the ‘vital reason’
- Interaction with the other creates new realities and this is the essence of ‘historical reason’, reflective of the past, and goes beyond physical reason which does not necessarily involve mutuality and reflectiveness. It is the revelation of a new reality. ‘Historical reason’ involves a faith which creates a new dimension to reason
- The system that arises out of ‘historical reason’ seeks explanation through origin and development not necessarily making experience fit into laws
- Human life is unique through ‘historical reason’, physical reason is not unique
- Through ‘historical reason’ a possibility of an absolute truth can be created

Discussion

- If we cannot escape the past are we determined and therefore not truly free?
- Does relativism still exist and the only absolute truth is that we are products of the past?
- Could the nature of humans actually be that they are dynamic and that is their nature and hence this could be another absolute truth? Ortega’s rejection of human nature would then not hold
- Has Ortega attempted to develop a ‘new’ science to give credence to an imprecise non-scientific past? Can an investigation of the past and judgements based on the past ever be precise?
- Does a Marxist and existentialist idea of ‘historical reason’ contradict or blend with Ortega’s views? Man is what he makes himself. Can this be divorced from his past and, if not, is it merely another definition of existentialism?
- Is it possible that an absence of will/dynamism is also a realisation of the role of the past and circumstances that formulate human life and relations?
- In Ortega’s system is freedom really possible?
- Has Ortega made a new distinction which creates a new dimension to humanness, or is he merely differentiating the obvious, and in so doing trying to fill a gap, perhaps left by a decline of religious faith in the western world?
- The need for humans to have a sense of something beyond the ‘now’

16. Wittgenstein: *The Blue and Brown Books*

Explain and discuss the relation between Wittgenstein’s investigation into language and his conception of philosophy.

The identification of philosophy as “a fight against the fascination which forms of expression exert upon us” is only one way in which this question might be approached. Answers might be constructed along their own line of argument according to what aspects of both investigation into language and conception of philosophy they focus on.

Key Points

- Wittgenstein understands philosophical activity in connection with his investigations into language, *e.g.* family resemblance
- Criticism of the “the craving for generality”: it is the result of a number of tendencies connected with particular philosophical confusions: (a) to look for something in common to all the entities; (b) to think that to understand a general term is to possess a kind of general picture; (c) to ask and answer questions in the way science does, reducing the explanation of natural phenomena to the smallest possible number of primitive natural laws
- Wittgenstein’s philosophical method was to lead any philosophical theory back to the point where it originated. Grammatical problems seem to be tough and ineradicable, because they are connected with the oldest thought habits, *i.e.* with the oldest images that are engraved into our language itself
- Philosophical problems arise primarily out of misleading features of our language, for our language presents very different concepts in similar guise; *e.g.* to be red is a property some things have and other things lack, but is existence a property some things have and others lack?
- Philosophy has a double aspect. Negatively, it is a cure for the diseases of the intellect. Philosophical problems are symptoms of conceptual entanglement in the web of language. More positively, philosophy is a quest for a perspicuous representation of segments of our language which are a source of conceptual confusion
- Examples considered by Wittgenstein: Socrates’ question, “What is knowledge?” and Saint Augustine’s, “What is time?” In the second case, solving this puzzle will consist in comparing what we mean by “time measurement” (the grammar of the word “measurement”)

Discussion

- The reach/scope of understanding language use when engaging in philosophical activity
- The idea of reducing complex philosophical problems to more elementary forms of language is contradictory in some way; this kind of problem must be explained by technical or complex language
- Since Socrates’ theory of definition, philosophy has always been a search for general concepts; Wittgenstein’s procedure based on analysis of single cases is more a literary one
- Wittgenstein’s procedure starts with the analysis of cases, but after that it looks for some kind of generality; using general terms is unavoidable; they belong to the very nature of language
- Should philosophical activity, even philosophical analysis, be reduced to analysis of language?

17. Arendt: *The Human Condition*

“For Arendt the quality of freedom in the world of appearances, which is the core requirement of politics, is to be found in the activity of *action* proper, the highest dimension of *Vita Activa*.” Critically assess this view.

This question asks for a critical exploration of Arendt’s notion of the *Vita Activa*. In particular, it asks for an evaluation of one of the constitutive elements of the *Vita Activa* – the phenomenon of *action* as the hallmark of authentic political life. It also allows for comment on ‘labour’ and ‘work’ and their impact on ‘action’.

Key points

- *Vita Activa versus vita contemplativa*
- *Vita Activa: Animal laborans* (labour), *Homo Faber* (work), *Zoon Politikon* (action)
- ‘Labour’ as biological and animal necessity
- ‘Work’ as artificial, instrumental fabrication; unnaturalness, *techné, poiesis*
- ‘Action’ as ineliminable freedom; an end-in-itself, not subordinate to anything outside itself
- ‘Action’ as active, worldly, public
- ‘Action’ as the arena of interaction and freedom
- ‘Action’ as *initium* (initiative), as *archein* (beginning, rule)
- ‘Action’ as novelty outside the realms of necessity, instrumentality and predictability
- ‘Action’ justified by public recognition in a political community
- ‘Action’ goes on between men and women in the plurality of the human condition
- ‘Action’ as public, political disclosure in disclosive speech acts
- ‘Action’ as coming together to exercise the capacity for free agency where the reason for politics is freedom and freedom is the field of human experience as action
- Freedom for *versus* freedom from

Discussion

- How do ‘labour’ and ‘work’ impede ‘action’ and destroy the realm of the political?
- How and why is the capacity of acting together the primary condition of all political life?
- Does ‘action’ effectively recover the condition of plurality in the political realm?
- How would Arendt’s analysis of ‘action’ fit into contemporary global, multinational and multicultural contexts?
- Is Arendt successful in identifying the conditions of the possibility for effective and authentic political experience?
- Has the *vita contemplativa* had as great a negative influence on the *Vita Activa* as Arendt suggests?
- Is ‘labour’ strictly dictated by biological necessity?
- Is ‘work’ exhaustively defined by instrumentality?
- Does Arendt’s view of ‘action’ adequately guarantee the possibility of freedom in all political situations and circumstances?
- How does freedom operate in the context of ‘labour’ and ‘work’?

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

“de Beauvoir maintains that the individual is singular but not alone.” Critically assess this claim.

The question enables an exploration of a central theme for de Beauvoir; that intersubjectivity is a key influence on the development of the individual, which has consequences for her moral and ontological references.

Key points

- The individual is not alone in a solipsistic sense in *The Ethics of Ambiguity*
- Consciousness is unable to lead to closure or self-unification, but is spontaneous and unstoppable
- de Beauvoir rejects ethical absolutes that close off future questions, but she is not an ethical egoist and places the emphasis on an acknowledgement of the future as open
- Individuals and societies can never impose on or reveal meaning in the world but they are linked together in possessing spontaneous consciousness
- Notions of God or naturalistic/metaphysical accounts of Humanity attempt to take away the individuals' responsibility to share in a project to create the conditions for our existence
- In a secular age, the challenge is to discover the extent to which the individual is bound to another and to ask if laws can be constructed which apply to all; de Beauvoir insists that a common pursuit of freedom binds us all
- Ethically the individual cannot achieve freedom without insisting on (and providing the means of) freedom for others – both in political and economic means
- Some individuals cannot cope with the responsibility of adulthood (free choice) and return to the metaphysically privileged state of childhood in which they submit to the authority of others
- The generous human recognises the importance of preserving the distinctness of others and the ethical imperative of not submitting another individual to one's will

Discussion

- Utopias – either religious or secular – encourage individuals to sacrifice the present for the future
- Closed answers to the human condition encourage a 'means to an end' ethical approach that compromises the freedom of the individual
- Violence as a response to those who reject the 'we' of humanity; is this a contradiction or inconsistency?
- Does the serious human really reject freedom?
- Is de Beauvoir's argument an uncomfortable mix of realism and metaphysics?
- Is choice really the defining distinction between childhood and adulthood?
- Is choice the primary characteristic that defines adult relationships?

19. Rawls: *A Theory of Justice*

Explain and discuss the role liberty plays in guaranteeing fairness in Rawls' theory of justice.

This question enables a discussion of the relationship between fairness and liberty in achieving justice in society.

Key points

- Rawls' principle of justice is framed in terms of achieving fairness
- Fairness is guaranteed by two principles – (1) each person's liberties should be maximised, consistent with the provision of equal liberty for every other person, and (2) inequalities are to be arranged so they benefit everyone and so that everyone has access to positions/possibility of advancement; from (1) liberty is at the heart of Rawls' notion of fairness
- These principles are qualified by priority rules that must be adhered to for justice to ensue; one priority rule – 'the priority of liberty' – says that there is an order of rules for justice (lexical priority) and liberty can only be compromised for the sake of liberty
- "The system of natural liberty asserts, then, that a basic structure satisfying the principle of efficiency and in which positions are open to those able and willing to strive for them will lead to a just distribution."
- The liberties Rawls outlines are; political liberty (the right to vote and to be eligible for public office), freedom of speech, freedom of thought/conscience, freedom to hold personal, freedom from arbitrary arrest
- These liberties nonetheless do not mean a liberty to do anything; Rawls restricts his libertarianism by the need to guarantee basic provisions for those with less liberty

Discussion

- Lexical priority says that a principle does not come into play until those previous to it are satisfied or do not apply; examples with liberty are that a restricted liberty must extend the overall liberty shared by all; and a less than totally equal liberty must be acceptable to those who possess less liberty than others
- Rawls' list of primary social goods which are the subject of fair distribution include liberty and opportunity, wealth and income, self-respect
- Possible problems of envy from those with more liberty but greater commitments or vice-versa
- Rawls subordinates liberty to justice – is there compulsion in Rawls' vision of a just society?
- How can/does Rawls differentiate liberty with notions of self-respect or the gaining of wealth or income?
- How does the fairness concept operate in a multicultural, global context?
- Is it possible for liberty for all to be ensured if there is gross social inequality?

20. Feyerabend: *Farewell to Reason*

Explain and discuss Feyerabend's idea that values affect not only the application of knowledge but are essential ingredients of knowledge itself.

This question asks for an explanation and evaluation of the relation between knowledge and its applications from the point of view of values, and, more in general, for Feyerabend's account of relativism. In the first place it refers to Feyerabend's initial analysis of practical relativism. However, answers might not be restricted to this first section but could also refer to other parts of the text.

Key points

- Relativism as presented by Feyerabend is not about concepts (though most modern versions of it are conceptual versions) but about human relations. It deals with problems that arise when different cultures, or individuals with different habits and tastes, collide
- Practical relativism (which overlaps with opportunism) concerns the manner in which views, customs, traditions different from our own may affect our lives. It has a factual part dealing with how we can be affected and a normative part dealing with how we should be affected (how the institutions of a state should deal with cultural variety)
- By 'science' Feyerabend means modern natural and social science (theoretical and applied) as interpreted by most scientists and a large section of the educated public: an inquiry that aims at objectivity, uses observation (experiment) and compelling reasons to establish its results and is guided by well defined and logically acceptable rules. He argues that neither values, nor facts, nor methods can support the claim that science and science-based technologies (IQ tests, science-based medicine and agriculture, functional architecture, and the like) overrule all other enterprises
- Decisions concerning the value and the use of science are not scientific decisions; they are what one might call 'existential' decisions; they are decisions to live, think, feel, behave in a certain way. The existential nature of the decisions for or against a scientific culture is a main reason why values affect not only the application of knowledge but are essential ingredients of knowledge itself
- Speaking of values is a roundabout way of describing the kind of life one wants to lead or thinks one should lead
- There exists no scientific argument against using or reviving non-scientific views or scientific views that have been tested and found wanting, but there do exist (plausible but never conclusive) arguments in favour of a plurality of ideas, unscientific nonsense and refuted bits of scientific knowledge included

Discussion

- Citizens, and not special groups have the last word in deciding what is true or false, useful or useless for their society
- It is not at all certain that even a scientific comparison, based on scientific values or scientific and non-scientific cultures will always favour the scientific culture. Agreed – there will be advantages in large areas of abstract knowledge and practical skills. But there are other areas where the superiority of a scientific-technological approach is far from obvious
- For every statement (theory, point of view) that is believed true with good reasons, there may exist arguments allowing that either the opposite, or a weaker alternative is true
- Objectivist positions are not mainly concerned with human relations but with some content-related knowledge issues

**21. Foucault: *The History of Sexuality*
Critically assess the view that power is everywhere.**

This question allows a critical investigation both of Foucault's theory of power and the role power plays in human relations.

Key points

- The notion of power is not just repressive and *juridico-discursive* but it controls knowledge and the exchange of ideas and forms our self-image
- Ideas are dependent upon context and therefore both knowledge and ideas can be dynamic
- Power does not have to be exercised to exist; it exists in all activities and is not applied to them
- Power is not hierarchical but is a complex web of interrelated activities and human relations; this matrix of relations is shifting continuously
- Knowledge and the motivation of our will controls power, but like power it is shifting and dependent upon context
- The matrices of power being interdependent, means that discourse is interrelational; the complexity of the matrices means that silence is not a result of repression but can be power too
- Resistance to power is a component and integral part of power itself and within itself it is a source of change
- The purpose of defining power is to try and understand sexuality and sexual discourse

Discussion

- If all knowledge is shifting and formulated by power, is this a relativistic view?
- Does the dynamic nature of power mean that a true understanding of power is vague until applied in a given context? Does this mean equally that knowledge is contextual and therefore dynamic and cannot be absolute?
- By rejecting power as only judicial/legal is power reduced to mere influence?
- Are all relationships power orientated? Can relationships of equality and mutuality be above and beyond power?
- Is this theory of power an effective tool to begin an analysis of sexuality?
- Does this theory of power mean that 'experts' hold power because they seem to control and define knowledge? Could this be a contradiction in that it could imply a hierarchy of power through knowledge?
- If power is a complex web and dependent upon context can we have any clear fixed understanding of power?
- How far is the theory another form of deconstructionism, which produces a relativistic ethical solution that is disguised as an absolute?

22. Putnam: *Reason, Truth and History*

Explain and discuss Putnam’s examination of reference.

Since the topic at hand involves many issues, concepts, cases and examples (*e.g.* brains in a vat, Turing’s test) different lines can be followed. The answer might not address all aspects, but rather some of them. Reference might apply to representations, terms, words, signs and the like.

Key points

- Some basic concepts employed: (a) ‘Extension’: the set of things a term is true of. (b) The ‘intension’ of a word is the set of possible objects denoted by the word in a possible world. (c) ‘Bracketing’ or ‘notional world’: a device which is used to talk of what goes on in someone’s head without any assumptions about the existence or nature of actual things referred to by the representations
- The reference of our representations is not fixed simply by our mental states; the conclusion of the analysis of ‘brains in a vat’ is that mental representations do not intrinsically refer to external things
- One view states that to fix the reference of our terms a conception of truth is necessary. The “received view” tries to fix the ‘extensions’ and ‘intensions’ of terms by fixing the truth conditions for whole sentences
- Putnam criticizes the “magical theories of reference”, which grounds the belief that some representations (in particular, names) have a necessary connection with their bearers. The opposite view is that a name only has a contextual, conventional connection with its bearer
- The bearer-name connection can be illustrated by means of a crawling ant which traces a recognizable caricature of Winston Churchill on a patch of sand

Discussion

- Putnam’s argument discusses the commonsense explanation that linguistic expressions have their meaning because they stand for things; on this view, words are like labels; in this case, words stand in some sort of one-one relation to (discourse-independent) things
- A common view is that representations are associated with the notions of operational and theoretical constraint. But, according to Putnam, there is nothing in the notion of operational or theoretical constraint that can directly determine what our terms refer to
- The problems implied by the discussion give rise to two main points of view: externalist and internalist. According to metaphysical realism (externalist perspective) the world consists of some fixed totality of mind-independent objects
- Putnam defends an internalist perspective which holds that “What objects does the world consist of?” is a question that only makes sense to ask within a theory or description
- If we assume a world of mind-independent entities, there are indefinitely many different ‘correspondences’ that represent possible reference relations; a way out consists in saying that our intentions, implicit or explicit, fix the reference of our terms

23. Taylor: *The Ethics of Authenticity*

Explain and discuss Taylor’s argument that individuals need to find authenticity through their dialogue with others.

This question enables a discussion of how Taylor outlines the place of individuals in society, and how he claims that authenticity emerges from engagement with others.

Key points

- Taylor is reacting against the enlightenment atomistic direction in understanding human beings; for Taylor we become individuals through our contact with others – that we are only individuals in so far as we are social
- Being authentic – being faithful to ourselves – is being faithful to something which was produced in collaboration with others
- Because we are shaped by our contact with others, we do not stand and assess other cultures just because they are there; respect for difference does not require respect for every human and culture
- The value which most threatens to destroy us is our worship of the ‘me’ separate from our dialogue with others; my beliefs, values, attitudes, loves *etc.* do not come from within, says Taylor, but in our public life together
- Modern social atomism encourages everyone to claim a right to hold any belief free from outside interference; in this system, authenticity takes the form of a ‘soft relativism’ which disallows the claim that any way of being is better or ‘higher’ than any other
- For the modern human the good life is whatever the individual feels subjectively good about; but this is no moral position, for morality becomes merely what you define it as and Taylor rails against choice as some inherent good in what he calls a ‘liberalism of neutrality’
- ‘Soft relativism’ rejects innate human nature, and makes duty, families and communities matters of personal choice, thus weakening their influence
- ‘Hard relativism’ may enable the pursuit of absolute moral commands through our different experiences of life
- Dialogical and monological relations
- ‘Horizons of significance’ and ‘significant others’

Discussion

- Taylor criticises ‘instrumental reason’ whereby social decisions are made on economic motivations alone
- The new social contract is to leave others alone to their private judgements, while you are left alone to yours
- Is individual choice not liberating? *E.g.* the continental existentialist response which venerates freedom in the individual
- Taylor sees in ‘soft relativism’ a rejection of transcendent values and in this category he places the past, God, nature, citizenship with others *etc.*
- Could different frames of reference really enable a common morality to be ‘discovered’?

24. Nussbaum: *Poetic Justice***Explain and discuss the connections between emotion and rationality.**

The question is firstly focused on the possible rational role of emotions, particularly as a contribution to public rationality; however other aspects of Nussbaum's argument, *e.g.* poets as judges, might legitimately be developed.

Key Points

- Nussbaum identifies her main concern by means of Walt Whitman's point of view: 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"
- In today's political life there is an excessive reliance on technical ways of modelling human behaviour, especially those that derive from economic utilitarianism; these models 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
- A novel like *Hard Times* is a paradigm of the education to public rationality by means of emotions. Emotions can sometimes be rational, and that the emotions of sympathy, fear, and so on, constructed by a literary work such as *Hard Times* are good candidates for being rational emotions
- Adam Smith's conception of the judicious spectator offers a way to evaluate emotions. He uses literary readership (and spectatorship at dramas) to illustrate the stance, and the emotions, of the judicious spectator. He attaches considerable importance to literature as a source of moral guidance

Discussion

- Compare and contrast with similar conceptions: in the tradition from Aristotle emotions contribute to public rationality insofar as they are individually shaped by virtues, *e.g.* prudence
 - Objections to emotions: (a) emotions are in a normative sense irrational; (b) emotions are very closely related to judgments. The problem is that the judgments are false; (c) emotions focus on the person's actual ties or attachments, especially to concrete objects or people close to the self; (d) emotions are too much concerned with particulars and not sufficiently with larger social units, such as classes
 - Considerations regarding the objections. (a) emotions whatever else they are, are at least in part ways of perceiving; Emotions enable the agent to perceive a certain sort of worth or value: (b) emotions are also intimately connected with certain beliefs about their object; (c) the reader of novels, receives a moral formation; (d) in a realist novel such as *Hard Times* appears the full world of human effort, that "real substance" of life within which, alone, politics can speak with a full and fully human voice
 - Public and private rationality
 - Nussbaum overestimates the role of emotions. There are other human dimensions which contribute to public rationality in a more decisive way, *e.g.* right and morality
 - There are good reasons to defend Plato's banishment of literary artists from the public realm. No matter how engaged art might be, eventually it is always oriented by and to fiction
-