



MARKSCHEME

May 2011

PHILOSOPHY

Higher Level and Standard Level

Paper 1

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Note to examiners

This markscheme outlines what members of the paper setting team had in mind when they devised the questions. The topics listed in the bullet points indicate possible areas candidates might cover in their answers. They are not compulsory points and not necessarily the best possible points. They are only a framework to help examiners in their assessment. Examiners should be responsive to any other valid points or any other valid approaches.

Using the assessment criteria

Candidates at both Higher Level and Standard Level answer **one** question on the Core Theme (Section A).

Candidates at Higher Level answer **two** questions on the Optional Themes (Section B), each based on a different Optional Theme.

Candidates at Standard Level answer **one** question on the Optional Themes (Section B).

Answers on the Core Theme and the Optional Themes are assessed according to the assessment criteria set out in the Subject guide.

SECTION A

Core Theme: What is a human being?

1. Passage from “Countering Students’ Fatalism Toward War” by John Horgan

This passage invites a reflection on the extent to which war and aggression are unavoidable features of human nature and on the very idea of human nature.

Key Points

- Different approaches to human nature. Approaches that suggest humans are innately aggressive and competitive *vs.* approaches that stress cooperation and collaboration or approaches that emphasize the socialization of human beings and the socio-historical character of human “nature” and social experience
- Theories of the state of nature
- Rousseau and the noble savages living in harmony with each other and with nature
- Theory of evolution, natural selection, the idea of “social Darwinism”
- Hobbesian anarchy of all against all
- Approaches to aggression and war that reflect a “worldview”, not necessarily drawing on a classical philosophical school, *e.g.* religious, political or cultural perspectives
- Different forms of violence
- Hobbes calls war the result of the conditions where people can do anything they like to pursue their wellbeing and secure their safety

Discussion

- War is the most profoundly destructive of all the forms that human violence takes; visionaries have prophesied the end of war or the threat thereof as a means of resolving disputes between nations
- Some anthropologists state that a large percentage of pre-state, tribal societies engaged in at least occasional warfare, and many fought constantly; tribal combat usually involved skirmishes and ambushes
- Some scientists trace warfare all the way back to the common ancestor we shared with chimpanzees
- If war is deeply rooted in our biology, then it’s going to be there all the time
- The role of rationalism in mankind’s development; the belief that our rationalism will conquer our “biology” and enable us to improve; challenges to this kind of optimism
- Egoism, self-preservation, desire to rule
- Competition as a means of survival
- Warfare is not part of the natural condition of man; civilization promotes less violent ways of effecting change
- The development of collective intelligence might make possible a different understanding
- The view of individual human experience and of more general social experience (including war) as generated by social and historical forces, which can be affected and transformed by human arrangements, institutions and politics
- Examples of such transformations of armed conflict into a peace agreement: Northern Ireland
- Transforming global politics and institutions as a means of addressing wars. Devising fair and sustainable solutions
- The social implications and danger of seeing war as inevitable and peace as impossible. The importance of countering fatalism, and of suggesting that there are always political reasons for wars that can be changed
- The devastation of war; its human, social, and economic costs. The benefits of peace and of a peaceful social life

2. Image of iPhone

This picture invites an exploration of the nature of human beings in the context of, among other issues, the incidence of communication, the creation of technology and hence an artificial world, and the relationship with others. Moreover, it opens possibilities of discussion on aspects related to human action and production, and the questioning of their ends and possible meanings.

Key Points

- Listening to music, communicating with others, accessing information and other possible functions of electronic devices
- Confucianism and other approaches with emphasis on the social character of our self
- Technological change and human condition
- Communication, intentions, understanding
- Approaches to technology, society and communication that reflect a “worldview”, not necessarily drawing on a classical philosophical school, *e.g.* political or cultural perspectives
- Transmission of information *vs.* human emotional exchange
- Human action; freedom and determinism; intentions, objectives and goals; scope and limits
- The impact of technology on human identity
- Personal choice
- Existentialism
- Human beings in the present world; mass societies, the individual and the collective
- Artistic, social, political implications of technology in relation to the human condition
- State of nature and civilization
- Art and human creation; *e.g.* Nietzsche’s symbols of Apollo and Dionysius
- Virtual reality *vs.* “reality”
- Cyborgs (half-human, half-machine conception of human being)
- Human and artificial intelligence

Discussion

- Technology as the transformation or manipulation of nature (the existing physical – material – and biological environments) to satisfy human needs and goals
- The extent to which we are constituted by our relationships
- The analogy between hand/device and body/mind
- The impact of technology in the present world
- Is the creation of this kind of complex, sophisticated technology a distinctive human feature?
- The degrees and modes in which technology affects our lives and our understanding of ourselves
- Technology as knowledge
- The moral/legal issue of downloading and not paying
- Does technology allow for the self to be defined outside or beyond the body?
- The human mind and technology
- The production of technology or the artistic creation as distinctive features of human beings
- Face-to-face communication *vs.* electronic communication
- Social networking sites and issues that arise
- Access to technology and the ability to define oneself in relation to technology

SECTION B

Optional Theme 1: Grounds of epistemology

3. Evaluate the claim that the extent to which any group can exercise power in the world is determined by its access to knowledge.

This question invites an evaluation of knowledge around the world and the idea that knowledge is power. Answers might challenge the claim and focus on knowledge in relation to other epistemological issues. The value of knowledge in advancing the interests of a group, the social production, ownership, and mediation of knowledge might be evaluated.

Key Points

- The reference of power through the perspectives of class, gender, or ethnicity, and their access to knowledge; the institutions or social constraints that inhibit the dissemination of knowledge, *e.g.* professional bodies, universities, economic ownership of ideas
- Social production of knowledge, and epistemological relativism; the possible connection between epistemological pluralism or perspectivism and democracies
- Language as a patriarchal construction, so knowledge generation, production and ownership is a male domain
- Objective claims for knowledge based on science, or based on Platonic epistemology
- Obstacles to accessing knowledge; patents, research grants, the institutionalization of knowledge restricted to universities and other special educational institutions; professional bodies
- The market value of knowledge; the categories of knowledge that generate economic benefits and power *e.g.* science *vs.* religious knowledge
- Intrinsic values of knowledge; ethical, religious, humanist
- The dissemination of knowledge and marketing of knowledge
- Certainty and human behaviour

Discussion

- Is it the case that knowledge is determined by those in power, or that knowledge bestows power onto those who possess it?
- Are societies or cultures without technological knowledge doomed to extinction?
- Are the factual claims of science the only ones that can have a global market value because of their “objectivity”?
- Is social knowledge based primarily on tastes, whims and values, rather than on strictly rational beliefs?
- If “real” knowledge of the world, as opposed to opinions or beliefs about it, is independent of the thinker, then is it the case that with enough time, all groups can access all knowledge?
- Is it justified that private companies own patents over knowledge?
- Does the modern view of the social construction of knowledge adequately address the traditional focus upon evidence, intuition, proof, *etc.*?

4. Evaluate the claim that determining the truth of my individual beliefs and experiences is a matter of determining how well they “fit in” with my other beliefs and experiences.

The aim of this question is to invite an evaluation of the various theories of truth such as correspondence and coherence, but also any other alternative(s).

Key Points

- Correspondence theory of truth; a statement, p, is true if, and only if, it corresponds with some fact
- Pragmatic theory of truth; a proposition, p, is true relative to its usefulness
- Internalist perspective on truth; truth is an idealized rational acceptability or ideal coherence of our beliefs with each other and with our experiences as those experiences are themselves represented in our belief system, and not to some external system
- Redundancy theory of truth; the predicate “is true”, only exists to effect economy of expression, and what is said with its aid could be said without it
- Coherence and truth; a statement, p, is true if it coheres with other statements, q, r, s ... and false if it does not. Interpretations of coherence vary from “consistent with” to “entailed, or is entailed by”
- Different approaches to truth, *e.g.* science, cultural relativism, pragmatism

Discussion

- In a coherence test for truth (or relationship model), must there be at least one proposition whose truth-value is obtained independently from the others?
- Is language the problem with all theories of truth? Our language permits other logically consistent and viable explanations and interpretations, and therefore the question of truth is unimportant
- Are these theories only useful together, *i.e.* that some types of propositions, such as ethical ones, lend themselves to truth-tests based on coherence, and empirical ones based on correspondence?
- Is the coherence theory just another form of relativism, as there can be many different and mutually incompatible systems of belief, which may all be internally consistent and self-supporting?
- If relevancy is a criterion for truth, then relevancy is value laden because any judgment we make requires conceptual resources that are provided to us by a particular culture; the presence and ubiquity of these concepts reveal something of the interests and values of that culture. Does this mean truth is relative?
- Arguments about the nature of truth
- Language and truth
- Rationality and other forms of justification of beliefs

Optional Theme 2: Theories and problems of ethics

5. To what extent can the responsibility for the predictable consequences of our actions be a moral principle?

This question invites an evaluation that might address, among other issues, moral principles, universalizability, the extent of the responsibility and the responsibility for the predictable consequences of our actions.

Key Points

- Moral principles indicate which actions are right or wrong
- A thesis of universalizability; relevantly similar cases must receive the same moral evaluation
- A simple way to understand universalization – “what if everyone did that?”
- The idea that moral judgments about particular cases entail universal moral principles, arguing that all correct moral reasoning must be understood in terms of subsuming particular cases under general moral principles
- The relation between factual statements and normative statements; from the factual claim of the form one cannot infer validly a moral claim of the form two; (1) all or most people do, or would upon reflection, approve of such and such type of action being performed, (2) such and such type of action ought to be performed
- The idea that underlying all right and wrong actions is some non-moral feature or property (or perhaps a small set of them) whose presence makes all right actions right and whose absence makes all wrong actions wrong
- Principles from the point of view of ethical positions; consequentialism, teleological ethics, utilitarianism, deontological ethics
- Situation ethics as an approach that houses the need to look at the whole situation before coming to judgment, and then applying the broadest of principles – “do the most loving thing”
- According to hedonistic versions of act utilitarianism, facts about how much pleasure and pain would be experienced by persons (and perhaps other sentient creatures), were some action to be performed, determine in every case whether or not the action is morally right

Discussion

- Do moral principles exist? Are they universal or relative to a particular situation or culture?
- Ethical monism – there is some single ultimate feature whose presence makes right actions right and whose absence makes wrong actions wrong
- Ethical pluralism – there is no such single ultimate feature, but rather a small set of irreducible ultimate features whose presence or absence tends to make actions either right or wrong
- The universality of reasons thesis is challenged by moral particularism; the rejection of the subsumptive model of moral reasoning and argumentation
- Moral reasoning and argumentation, instead of being a matter of subsuming particular cases under general principles, proceeds by examining the details of particular cases and making judgments based on one’s moral discernment about the case at hand
- Diverse cultural approaches to action and responsibility. An example from Hindu and Buddhist thinking – the attempt to provide an account of the world which allows for the possibility of our successfully entering into it as agents set on liberation from suffering. We need to be assured that there are reliable causal connections between events and actions such that it is possible for a person to enter into the course of events as a conscious agent whose actions have predictable consequences
- Models of moral principles stemming from religious accounts

6. To what extent should applied ethics be committed to the promotion of change in the world?

This question invites an evaluation of the goals of applied ethics. Answers might take different approaches, *e.g.* analysing the very nature or scope of applied ethics, examining cases of applied ethics, and tackling specific issues of its vast scope, among other issues.

Key Points

- Some characteristic features of applied ethics: (a) its greater attention to context and detail, and (b) its more holistic approach – its willingness to link ethical ideals to a conception of human nature and human needs
- Typical issues discussed are: abortion, euthanasia, personal relationships, the treatment of non-human animals, and matters of race and gender
- The Enlightenment belief that applying moral principles will inevitably lead to human progress
- These issues are best discussed in the context of some more general questions such as, how should we see the world and our place in it? What is the good life for the individual? What is the good society? In relation to these questions, applied ethics involves discussion of fundamental ethical theory, including utilitarianism, liberal rights theory and virtue ethics
- The wide scope of applied ethics includes, among others, medical ethics, matters relating to the family, personal ethical problems arising for the individual in the workplace, *etc.* In the public sphere, applied ethics may involve assessing policy in the light of the impact of advances in biomedical technology, a range of issues for the plural society, such as ethnicity or gender in relation to discrimination, cultural understanding and toleration
- Social and political positions which underline the need for commitment to change in the world

Discussion

- The promotion of change in the world might be a general responsibility not linked by itself to applied ethics
- Underlying many or all issues analysed by applied ethics are questions about justice, rights, utility, virtue and community
- Is applied ethics simply the application of ethics?
- Is the term “applied” redundant as there cannot be an “ethics” which is not applied?
- Applied ethics or application of ethics should be focused on the specific issue at hand, which is usually complicated
- The way in which many situations appear to involve conflicts depends on a particular historical situation; *e.g.* wealth distribution might only be solved by changing social, economic, and political relations
- Different approaches that inform applied ethics; deontology, consequentialism, virtue ethics, situation ethics

Optional Theme 3: Philosophy of religion

7. Evaluate the philosophical problems associated with the use of religious language.

This question encourages an evaluation of the philosophical issues that arise when encountering religious language, especially in a modern, and in many places secular, world.

Key Points

- Religious language from ancient times to a post-scientific age
- Religious language as analogy or symbolic
- Artistic, imaginative, or non-literal language as a route to conveying the religious worldview
- The inadequacy of language in capturing the divine, *e.g. via negativa*; other traditions and their reflection on the gap between worldly language and the divine
- Fideism and mysticism as reflected in many different traditions
- Wittgenstein’s language games
- The criticism of verification approaches to meaning and religious language
- Story telling as the route to religious experience in native cultures, *e.g. Hopi Indian language and belief*
- Emphasis in some Eastern traditions of religious understanding being transmitted through action rather than word
- Cognitive *vs.* non-cognitive approaches to religious language

Discussion

- Is it adequate to claim that science asks “how?” and religion asks “why?” Is this distinction too simplistic?
- Any criticism of language uses language itself to make its point
- Can any sense be made of notions that humans cannot experience, like perfection, infinity, ineffability *etc.*?
- The problem of verifying the miraculous
- The problem of communicating or verifying private, personal religious experience
- Metaphorical, poetic, symbolic, artistic language in relation to religion
- The Verification Principle itself cannot be verified by its own criteria for meaning
- Problems associated with anthropomorphizing God
- Knowledge of God directly or through feeling and talking about God’s effects in the world
- Are the “problems” associated with the use of religious language similar, in some ways, to those encountered when reflecting on poetic, figurative or literary language? If yes, what can we infer from this?

8. Evaluate the claim that God’s existence can be proved through observable features of the world.

This question enables an evaluation that can draw on more than one argument for God’s existence. Answers should make a link between an observable feature of the world and evaluate how such features are harnessed into an argument for God’s existence. Some answers might regard existence itself as an observable feature that points to the existence of God and therefore might draw upon traditions which consider existence itself as proof of God’s reality.

Key Points

- The cosmological argument, *e.g.* Kalam and Aquinas
- The Epicurean hypothesis
- The view that worldly features and human reasoning offer a route to God’s existence
- Hume’s discussion of the design argument – both for and against
- Design or teleological arguments; modern notions like “intelligent design”
- Design *qua* regularity; design *qua* purpose
- Paley’s watch maker analogy
- Modern versions, *e.g.* Brown and astronomy
- The anthropic principle
- The aesthetic argument
- Arguments from miracles
- The moral argument
- Personal internal experience
- Probability, *e.g.* Swinburne
- Traditions which draw upon existence itself as a pointer to God’s existence; ontological approaches

Discussion

- Kant’s treatment of the cosmological argument and other design arguments and his contention that our view of the world is shaped by the way our mind acts on it
- “God doesn’t throw dice” (Einstein)
- The discussion of imperfections of design; is God responsible for disease and natural disasters?
- Is there sufficient epistemic distance for a human to infer design about a world of which s/he is a part?
- Darwin’s contribution to arguments about design
- The cumulative argument for God’s existence
- What counts as an observable experience in relation to God?
- Hick and eschatological verification
- Non-Western approaches; animism, pan-theism, divine interventions

Optional Theme 4: Philosophy of art

9. Evaluate the claim that the main function of art is to humanize.

This question invites an evaluation of the various functions of art and whether the humanizing aspect of art is its most important function.

Key Points

- Possible definitions and understandings of “humanizing” and of what it involves or does not involve
- Humanizing as an idea; the development of compassion, empathy, toleration, intercultural awareness, self-awareness, and mutuality
- Mechanisms as to how art can humanize; revealing to the recipient and creator aspects of themselves and others
- Alternative definitions of the function of art; emotive, social agent of change, political advocate, replicator of nature, isolated creative acts, moral personal statements, education and communication
- Theories of art, such as imitation or representational, that contrast with the humanizing function
- Art as therapy which might be humanizing
- The need for humans to experience second-hand through the artistic from the activities of other humans
- Art as the medium to create a sense of humanity and commonness
- Art as a fundamental aspect of humanness
- Art’s ability to establish shared and common meanings

Discussion

- Should art do more than merely imitate nature?
- Ways in which art might transfer the best qualities to which humans can aspire
- Does art create opportunities for a human to see inside his/her fellow human?
- Does art state reality or merely restate it?
- How far does the shock and disturbance of art make humans aware of new aspects of themselves?
- Does art that simplifies reduce humanness rather than enhance it?
- Can art be cross-cultural and therefore not only an activity common to all humans but also a common language among all humans?
- Who “humanizes” whom? Is there a tacit power relationship in the terms of the question and in the understanding of art as “humanizing”?

10. “Art that rejects pure beauty in favour of a social cause offends the aesthetic experience.” Discuss and evaluate.

This question offers an opportunity to discuss and evaluate whether artistic pursuits should remain exclusively creative for their own end or be a vehicle and medium to convey or address wider social issues. This opens up a possible discussion and evaluation of what an aesthetic experience might or should be.

Key Points

- Art as an attempt to create perfection
- The absolute yet abstract idea of “pure beauty”, examples
- The relativistic nature of what people understand as beauty
- Art as a representation and imitation of nature; an attempt to capture a shifting reality
- A definition of the aesthetic experience
- The issue of intuition as a means to appreciate beauty
- Social causes that might use art: advertising, propaganda, different media trying to change human behaviour
- The need to have a disinterested experience when encountering a work of art
- “Popular” and “folk” vs. “high” expressions and conceptions of art

Discussion

- Does the descent from beauty produce a loss of ability to stimulate the human imagination?
- Rapture, excitement, delight and other aspects of personal gratification should not be belittled by agents of social change
- Is free play and imagination more important than stirring my social consciousness?
- Can art trigger social consciousness?
- Is the idea of pure beauty false, and merely a feature of the beholder? Consequently, art is subjective and has no value; in contrast, if art is only subjective, then by definition it has a social function that creates a unique individual response
- Can acts of creativity be solely that or should the audience give the act more function than creativity?
- What are the relationships between pure beauty and social cause? Are they always irreconcilable? Can one ever think of them together?

Optional Theme 5: Political philosophy

11. Evaluate the grounds for political obligation.

This question invites an evaluation of a basic theme in political philosophy – that of why any person should feel under an obligation to another person or to another agency. Answers might draw on a wide range of responses to political obligation from anarchic conceptions to democratic or authoritarian approaches.

Key Points

- The concept of obligation and the relationship with obedience to law
- Conceptions of the state
- Possible reasons behind political obligations, including self-interest or respect for law and mutuality
- Social contract theories
- The notion of the state of nature is used rationally to justify obligation – it is what we would do were we to live in such a pre-civilized state
- Obedience to the state as a duty; notions of consent
- Explicit consent dependent on accounts of the state of nature, *e.g.* Locke
- Voting as giving consent – is this explicit or tacit? In voting I am taking part in the process of government and even if I decide not to vote, I am making a decision about the process and expressing my will
- Tacit consent; inhabiting a country as consent
- Hypothetical consent
- Qualifications for dissent and disobedience; the extent of dissent from particulars or from the whole business of being governed

Discussion

- Problems with the account given by Hobbes and Locke who give a central place to a notional (and unprovable) original state of nature
- Obligation to obey a law implies consent; as it is not explicitly given, are there legitimate grounds to refuse to comply with some laws?
- Anarchy as a counter-example
- What is lost and gained by agreeing to/accepting political obligation – is it rational?
- Political obligation and popular approval – see objections to democracy
- Is our obligation to the state or to our fellow citizens?
- Can an individual have a right to revolution or is this something only a society has when its trust has been breached, *e.g.* Locke?
- Modern versions of social contract and political obligation theories, *e.g.* Rawls, Nozick, *etc.*
- Forms of justifying political obligation in relation to historical or concrete political situations

12. Explain and discuss the notion of freedom within the state.

This question invites an explanation and discussion of freedom within the political state, drawing on the extensive tradition of differing conceptions of political freedom for this exploration.

Key Points

- Freedoms as defined by the individual or by the state
- Positive and negative conceptions of freedom
- Negative freedom sees humans as “units of want” who desire to achieve these wants without restriction; this assumes humans know what they want and this also assumes people believe others will get in their way
- Negative freedom emphasizes what we can do and get, with the state acting as an arbiter
- The common good and negative freedom; negative freedom tends to concentrate on what the individual can or cannot obtain – what about the community?
- Positive freedom as an “exercise” concept stressing the degree of control an individual has over his/her life perhaps in the light of an over-arching ideal
- In positive freedom the individual pursues wants and desires according to beliefs and ideals, seeking “freedom to do x” rather than “freedom from doing y”
- The difference between lower order and higher order desires
- Negative freedom involves a concentration on achieving immediate desires but may leave aside the issue of whether such desires are in our interests
- Positive freedom may consider relational issues within a society and compromise the level of freedom available
- Freedom and its relationship with utility, *e.g.* Mill
- Positive freedom as an enabling concept (which also has a material side) providing persons with resources and opportunities to develop themselves

Discussion

- Freedom, justice and equality, *e.g.* Rawls and Nozick
- The difference between “the right to choose” and “choosing rightly”
- Issues of social elitism or education
- The sacrifice of equality when considering personal liberty
- Communitarian approaches to freedom *vs.* anarchic models
- The influence of background and circumstance on shaping desires
- Freedom and the market
- Acting for the good of others as a rational act
- Is freedom a cultural construct within a political context or is it a universal principle?
- Freedom in different regimes
- Positive freedom may imply a more extensive public sphere and role for the government, whereas negative freedom means less government intervention. Positive freedom may also mean policies like affirmative action to counteract disadvantages of background

Optional Theme 6: Non-Western traditions and perspectives

13. With reference to one or more of the non-Western tradition(s) that you have studied, evaluate philosophically the relationship of materialism and the material world to metaphysics.

This question invites a philosophical evaluation of how one or more non-Western tradition(s) approach philosophically the possible impact of materialism upon metaphysical aspects of their thoughts and actions, and the relationship of metaphysics to a material world. There might also be some comparative analysis of non-Western traditions with some Western traditions.

Key Points

- Non-Western traditions and perspectives that might be discussed could include: Indian (Jainism, Hinduism, Buddhism); Oriental (Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism); African (Kongo, Kawaia, Yoruba epistemology); Ancient Central and South American (Aztec, Mayan)
- The interaction of materialism in a variety of forms on metaphysical traditions in the form of commercialism, globalism, and empiricist traditions
- Conversely, the impact of metaphysics on a material world
- The counter-position: with the rise of materialism and commercialism some metaphysical traditions are revisited or reinvented; a rediscovery of Taoism, and some aspects of Buddhism and Hindu traditions
- In Hinduism, political and legal structures stress *prakriti* giving immediate gratifications of needs and desires, rather than long term perspectives into a life influenced by *purusha*
- The conflict of human rights, reflective of property considerations, compared to ideas of public order, reflective of order, rite, spirituality and discipline; Confucianism and Taoism being confronted with analytical empiricist traditions
- The conflict between matter forces (*shurirbal*), and metaphysical forces like *primal* (love), *satyabel* (truth), *dayabal* (compassion), *tapbal* (suffering) and *nitibal* (justice); Hinduism
- Fear and materialism replacing love and charity; many African traditions might have lost these fundamental traditional values
- Self-becoming expressed in terms of material gain as opposed to the benefit to future generations; honour and charity, the decline of Shintoism and worship of ancestors and family tradition
- Societal rewards based on wealth and goods; traditions would reward frames of mind and ability to reach high states of spirituality
- Economic and political pressures changing social hierarchies from those based on spiritual awareness to those based on economic wealth; classical Western economic class structures replacing caste and tribe
- Modern Indian philosophical stances that have moved from pure transcendentalism to non-dualism (*advaitavada*); a rejection of a solely spiritual component of the universe towards a blend of the scientific world with the spiritual world, a doctrine of oneness

Discussion

- To what degree is the increasing materialisation of cultures good or bad?
- Might poor rural communities maintain great adherence to metaphysical aspects of culture compared to richer urban communities?
- Does the “new revised” interpretation of traditional values and rites impact on remoter rural communities? The outlawing of ritual killing sacrifices might not have a wide effect upon peoples’ actions
- Is there a spiritual counter-action against increasing materialism
- The decline of spiritualism as a cyclical process in some traditions or the effect of materialism?
- The application of metaphysical traditions into movements of non-violence or violence
- Are increased levels of education, reflective of Western analytical/scientific traditions, having a greater impact than the rising tide of materialism?
- Are declining social structures such as extended families and wider community care actions having a greater effect than materialism?
- Are some metaphysical traditions increasing by being integrated to modern interpretations of science? *E.g.* string theory and a search for a theory of theories might be reflective of more holistic views of the universe/nature

14. With reference to one or more of the non-Western tradition(s) that you have studied, evaluate philosophically the relationship between human and non-human beings.

This question invites a philosophical evaluation of the changing interrelationship of human and non-human entities. One or more non-Western tradition(s) could be selected for a discussion and illustration of the differing definitions of human and non-human, their function and role within the chosen tradition(s).

Key Points

- Non-Western traditions and perspectives that might be discussed could include: Indian (Jainism, Hinduism, Buddhism); Oriental (Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism); African (Kongo, Kawaïda, Yoruba epistemology); Ancient Central and South American (Aztec, Mayan)
- The interaction between human/non-human, physical creatures and non-human metaphysical beings
- The respect and consideration of spiritual life in nature; many traditions accept the presence of souls and spirits in trees and sacred animals, *e.g.* North American indigenous traditions
- The sacredness of all life and the value given to them; the fact that humans cannot harm any life; Buddhism, Jainism
- The spirituality of particular animals, *e.g.* elephants, turtles, cows, serpents
- The transmigration of souls and reincarnation means that other creatures possess souls and the karmic consequences of responsibility, loyalty and compassioning immediately being transformed
- The issue of the beginning of life; whether embryos are humans or have personhood
- The equality of all life forms; Jainism
- The diversity of life forms, yet equality in the realm of *prakriti* (changing universe) and *purusha* (unchanging driving forces)
- The presence of forces and “people” incarnate such as in the form of Krishna and Brahman
- The equality of gods, spirits and some natural forms of life within Muntu in Bantu tradition
- The high status and free movement of Oba Aiku (undying king) and Elemii (giver of life) and Aseda (maker) in the physical world in some African traditions
- The role of spirits being the source of evil in human life; some African traditions
- The presence of consciousness in all bodies as bodies are a continuation of *awfe*; Carvaka tradition
- The issue of rights or order; traditions in India and China favour order over rights

Discussion

- How does the practice of animal sacrifice become resolved in some traditions?
- Bio-ethical issues and the status of “non-human” conditions in these traditions, *e.g.* the issue of stem cell interference
- The tensions and friction between traditions within the same or overlapping geographical areas, *e.g.* some would value trees and others would not
- The idea of “if not knowing one’s origin then one is a non-human (*nondo*)” in Nembe tradition
- Does a wide human and non-human community encompass the physical and non-physical world and create a more balanced existence?
- Does the wider understanding of self in these traditions allow for a more environmentally conscious existence?
- God’s ability to be incarnate in many forms might mean that the metaphysical plays a more important part in everyday life compared to Western traditions
- How does Western analytical thought and materialism infringe on the traditional status given to non-human entities?

Optional Theme 7: Contemporary social issues

15. To what extent is technological progress human progress?

This question invites an evaluation of the concept of progress, and the value and role of technology within and upon societies.

Key Points

- Definitions and conceptions of technology
- Technology as a symptom of an economic system where the pursuit of material goals impacts upon nature, and exploits and alienates workers
- Technology as a natural extension and activity of human nature rather than in opposition to it
- The benefits of technology in relieving humans from monotonous and dangerous work, and making more work available to women
- States of nature; usually a state prior to the advent of society, before economies and laws, where human activity was limited to survival
- Essential human condition; an umbrella concept that usually reduces the motivation for all action to a single motive or set of motives, such as pleasure, happiness, physical security, the need for love, *etc.*

Discussion

- Is it possible to apply the term “progress” to moral understanding and action, or only to empirical phenomena?
- Is there a goal to human progress? If so, and if achieved, does that mean an end to human progress?
- Have human interactions, conducted through modern means of communication, diminished our capacity to conceive of the other as a moral agent?
- Are state of nature depictions of an un-alienated humanity prior to civilization overly romantic and idealized?
- Is the great achievement of human civilization the ability to overcome the difficulties of living in the environment?

16. Evaluate the relationship between gender and power.

This question invites an evaluation of the relationships that exist between gender and power. Other issues, such as how institutions, or social conventions, limit power to one gender, or how the construction of both gender and power are often defined against, or in reference to, each other, might also be addressed.

Key Points

- Constructions of gender are based on biological, psychological, or other social norms; some of the norms are economic/political in origin *e.g.* democratic capitalism
- Social restrictions of power based on gender; political representation, religious participation, corporate participation; *e.g.* “the glass ceiling” (this is the ceiling that exists within jobs in terms of women rising beyond a threshold to positions of power within organizations. There is a ceiling to women rising in higher positions)
- Individuals are also restricted to roles based on gender; motherhood, fatherhood, and the societal expectations that come with each
- Patriarchy, language and power; some modern feminist thought argues that language itself is a patriarchal construct that seeks first to define women as “other” to man, and second, to embed in social organization a subordinate role. Both claims are based on the concept that language is the constructor of reality

Discussion

- Are the restrictive practices based on gender less relevant in Western societies than in Middle Eastern/African societies?
- How is language a male construction? How is it possible that “language speaks me” rather than “I speak and use language”?
- Has modern Western capitalism and technology liberated people from their biological gender? Has globalization heightened the understanding of repressive practices?
- Are there some roles that a man/woman cannot fulfil? Are they only biological, or are there social roles also?
- Has gender lost any of its political/social significance and merely become just another “lifestyle choice”?
- “Positive” discrimination; affirmative action

Optional Theme 8: People, nations and cultures

17. **The United Nations Millennium Declaration states: “We believe that the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world’s people. For while globalization offers great opportunities, at present its benefits are very unevenly shared, while its costs are unevenly distributed.” Evaluate philosophically this claim.**

This question is an opportunity to evaluate philosophically globalization, its effects and the issues it generates with regard to equality.

Key Points

- According to this declaration many countries face special difficulties in responding to this central challenge. Only through broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity, can globalization be made fully inclusive and equitable
- Globalization, sooner or later, affects with different intensity almost all spheres of public and private life
- The historical development of the formation of nations, the spread of and resistance to colonization, the globalization of culture and the influence of nationalist movements, and the development and spread of communication technologies
- The “malaise” of everyday modern life; the globalization of production
- The rise of internationalism
- Modern concepts of international relations as founded on Enlightenment principles
- Citizenship; local, national, global
- The basis of internationalism; humanism, Marxism, the Enlightenment, the contribution of religious belief, the concept of world peace
- Human rights

Discussion

- Does globalization increase social, economic and cultural inequalities?
- Is globalization guided by the economic forces of the world market?
- Is the intention of this declaration paternalistic?
- Reactions to globalization; a movement in Islamic political philosophy depicts muslims not as the antagonists of Western culture, but rather as being in the vanguard of the globalization of peace and social justice
- The proposal of a marriage between the Islamic monotheistic *Jihad* (universal struggle), Islam’s anti-racist and humanist agenda, and the need for global economic cooperation; culture as a vehicle for social change through integration of multiculturalism
- Some repercussions in Latin American thinking; the cognitive scope of the notion of the people as a collective of exploited social sectors united against all forms of dependency; attitudes towards historical and philosophical memory; the ideological dimension of argumentation, politics in relation to “being other/different”. The insufficiencies of traditional philosophy in the face of feminist or indigenous demands, conceptual ambiguities, the relationships between the social sciences and philosophy
- Great widening of social and economic disparities, of inequality, opportunities in life, resources *etc.*, between the Global North and Global South (and also within these) over the last 30 years
- Globalization increases the need for followers of different creeds and cultures to communicate
- Globalization as a vehicle of liberation from the restrictions of authoritarian ties
- Globalization and language; language is typically bound up with national identity, often in complex and contradictory ways. Movements of African nationalism sometimes embrace the language of the colonizer as the language of national unity, rather than divisively choosing among a number of indigenous languages
- Difference between cultural and commercial globalization
- Media influences *vs.* business influences
- Cosmopolitan morality
- Does globalization imply a universal morality?

18. Evaluate the claim that since each culture is different and has its own systems of meaning and value, cultural relativism is an unavoidable philosophical position.

This question invites an evaluation of the claim, offering the possibilities of sustaining/refuting it or developing an alternative line of argument. Answers might be focused on different aspects of culture.

Key Points

- Notions of culture
- Culture might be that which distinguishes one human group from another
- Human culture encompasses language, customs, morality, types of economy and technology, art and architecture, modes of entertainment, legal systems, religion, systems of education and upbringing; everything by virtue of which members of a group endow their activities with meaning and significance
- Types of relativism and cultural relativism
- Forms of sustaining over- or inter-cultural dimensions, *e.g.* some specific values, rationality
- Different attitudes towards other cultures; prejudices, discrimination
- The possibility of systematic and scientific knowledge of other cultures
- Epistemological, ethical and further implications of cultural relativism

Discussion

- Is there a basis in our common humanity for relationship and understanding just because we are humans?
 - Cultural relativism, as with any other form of relativism, is self-defeating
 - Are there good reasons to sustain a rigid distinction between the “same” and the “different”? Is it desirable?
 - Cultural relativism is the antithesis of absolutist theories of culture; this relativism deprives itself of the resources to criticize barbaric societies, old and new
 - In some African cultures the boundaries between self and other are not as rigid as in Western cultures, and interdependence rather than competition is a primary social value
 - Public policies often have different consequences for members of different cultural groups. *E.g.* the choice of official languages, the cultural content of education and the criminal law, the choice of public holidays
 - Can there be shared values? What might these be, or look like?
 - Is cultural relativism just another name for indifference?
 - Empathy and illusion in trying to understand differences
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