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**PHILOSOPHY
HIGHER LEVEL
PAPER 3**

Tuesday 7 May 2013 (morning)

1 hour 30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Read the text and write a response.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is *[30 marks]*.

In your response you are expected to:

- *develop a response in an organized way using clear, precise language, which is appropriate to philosophy*
- *identify pertinent issues regarding the philosophical activity raised in the text*
- *take an independent position about the nature of philosophical activity in relation to the ideas developed in the text*
- *draw upon, and show a holistic appreciation of, the skills, material and ideas developed throughout the course.*

Unseen text – exploring philosophical activity

Read the text below then write a response to it (of approximately 800 words). Your response is worth [30 marks]. In your response include:

- *a concise description of philosophical activity as presented in the text*
- *an exploration of the pertinent issues regarding philosophical activity raised in the text, relating this to your experience of doing philosophy throughout the whole course*
- *appropriate references to the text that illustrate your understanding of philosophical activity*
- *your personal evaluation of the issues regarding philosophical activity raised in the text.*

5 Philosophy (in general) has a constitutive relation to the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate forms of persuasion; between being, say, rationally convinced (the aim of philosophy proper) and being merely persuaded (the upshot of being taken in by, say, sophistry and illusion). Within analytic philosophy today ... this distinction is most often cast in terms of the presence or absence in a text of a clearly stated argument. Such an argument would present something like a series of valid inferential steps from premises to conclusions. In the absence of such ... “narrow argument” what one does cannot be a rationally “convincing expression of a philosopher’s claim on people’s attention”. Now, among the complaints one often hears directed against so-called continental philosophy is the perceived lack in it of clearly stated narrow arguments.

10 Socrates is often cited as a model of philosophical objectivity and integrity, famed for his willingness to “follow the argument where it leads”. Inheritances of philosophy that do not take the [narrow argument] path are often thought to have departed from ... “the dialogue of reason” which takes Socrates as its model. On the other hand, however, Socrates is equally famed as the gadfly who addressed himself to others, the one who talked philosophically to other people. And, whether or not
15 one explicitly attends to the point in one’s own writing it is clear that who one is addressing makes a huge difference to one’s prospects of convincing by means of narrow argument. As Cora Diamond observes in the following passage, this issue is especially acute in relation to our moral thinking:

20 “When we engage in philosophical discussion about such a subject as abortion, or the moral status of animals, whom should we think of ourselves as trying to convince? For if we proceed by giving arguments, we presumably do not expect to be able to convince anyone who is incapable of following our arguments, or who is too prejudiced to consider them.

25 And if we are talking about convincing human beings, surely it is a fact about many of them that one certain way of not convincing them is to try arguing the case ... No one who urges another philosopher to give arguments thinks of arguments as capable of convincing everybody. When we put forward arguments, or urge someone else to do so, we have a conception of what it would be to succeed in giving genuinely convincing arguments, and also of those who would nevertheless not be convinced, even should they attend to the arguments. Now, argument is simply one way people approach moral questions, and there are other ways of trying to convince someone of one's view of animals or foetuses or slaves or children or whatever it may be."

30 This is not an argument utterly against narrow argument. Diamond has no intention of suggesting any impropriety in the thought that developing such arguments is what "all [philosophers] do some or most of the time". Indeed, as I have suggested, one is likely to find narrow arguments in all the writings of the major so-called "continental philosophers" too. However, what Diamond wants to encourage her readers to acknowledge is that it is actually quite perverse to think that this is all that
35 any philosophers do, ... as if giving an argument in the narrow sense was the only thing which would represent a genuinely convincing expression of a philosopher's claim on people's attention.

When he reflects on ... analytic philosophy today, Bernard Williams is struck by how little attention is given to the fact that the recommended way of [doing] philosophy, namely the resort to narrow argument, would not actually convince many of those whose attention it claims [even though]
40 it is being held up as exemplary ...

Diamond, however, is not convinced that the [narrowly argumentative] way of thinking is genuinely exemplary, for she is not convinced that it correctly identifies "which human capacities are characteristically exercised in the development of [for example] someone's moral life, and more specifically of what it is for someone to exercise his [or her] capacities as a thinking being in that
45 development" ... [She, and Williams to some extent, disagree with seeing narrow argument as of first importance for philosophy, and thus the best way of reasonably convincing others, because it massively under-estimates the importance of imaginative capacities in our moral thinking.]

Now, while there may be a certain poverty of imagination in thinking of narrow argument as of first importance for doing philosophy, ... Diamond is not [just] calling for an imaginative supplement
50 to standard discussions. For Diamond, the imagination has a more ubiquitous and fundamental role to play because what it means to be a human being is something that is in itself imaginatively shaped and reshaped by us, it is in itself something we have creatively made something of in our thought and talk. On this view, unless we pursue [...] philosophy in ways that involve our capacity to "bring imagination to bear on observation" or to "recognize that that has been done", the development of
55 narrow arguments will prove "in a sense quite useless": what we do in [...] philosophy will have foregone the kind of thinking that can actually touch us or turn us round. So getting our imaginative capacities in play in, [for example,] moral thinking is not simply of supplementary assistance to achieving some kind of purely rational clarity about the evaluation of actions, or the solution of practical problems but is the *sine qua non* of bringing about the kind of lucid "seeing" that goes with
60 an alteration in a person's moral view: of bringing a person to see something they had (by one's own lights) hitherto failed to see. It should come as no surprise then that for Diamond the best model for such an effort is not narrow argument but imaginative literature.

65 On this view, what is at issue for a [...] philosopher is not especially a concern with the evaluation of actions or the solution of practical problems, but is a matter of addressing others with the aim of bringing about changes to what Iris Murdoch called “the texture” of someone’s being: that “vision of life” which shows up in all someone’s “reactions and conversation” ... For example, of making them into more sensitive and more refined readers of what legitimately goes on in philosophy that is not reducible to science-inspired plain-speaking and narrow argument.

[Source: © S. Glendinning, 2010, *Argument All the Way Down: The Demanding Discipline of Non-Argumento-Centric Modes of Philosophy*, Continuum, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.]
