



MARKSCHEME

November 2001

PHILOSOPHY

Higher & Standard Level

Paper 1

Paper Specific Guidance - Key points and Discussions

How to use these guidelines

The aim of the following guidelines is to give an indication to assistant examiners of the kind of responses to the questions the paper-setting team were anticipating when they prepared the examination papers.

They show that in the candidate's answer you should expect some relevant knowledge and some attempt to analyse or evaluate the theme or text under consideration.

However, they are not a prescriptive list of the points a candidate must include to be rewarded. Some candidates will make perfectly valid points that are not noted here or take a different approach to the topic. In all cases, therefore:

- *be open-minded to the candidate's answer and expect a variety of responses*
- *exercise your own judgement in deciding whether the candidate's answer is an appropriate response to the question.*

Section 1: Myself and Others

1. If we take into account the influence of hereditary and environmental factors, does attempting to 'create myself' still make sense?

Key points

- What do we mean by hereditary and environmental factors?
- Biological and social determinism (examples)
- Is personality reduced to these determinants?
- For fatalists ('hard determinism') yes, but then they can explain neither uniqueness and diversity (children from the same family) nor the feelings of remorse or revolt against these determinant factors; and they deny that our decisions and actions can have an influence on the present and the future or that we can be responsible for them.
- 'Creation of myself' does not mean creating myself from nothing: it takes account of factors which determine personality and those aspects which deny a fatalistic approach (diversity/revolt/decision/responsibility). These factors allow us to explain but not predict personality ('soft determinism').

Discussion

- 'Creation of myself' is an illusion: we do not control revolt or decisions - we are controlled by them; as for diversity, it can be more easily explained by socio-cultural factors than biological ones; and responsibility is an invention of moralists.
- Another illusion is possible: we believe we are 'creating ourselves' but in fact we are copying such or such a model.
- However, isn't it necessary to try and cultivate our personality? 1) Isn't the position of the fatalist that of someone who prefers death to life? 2) Who will take care of my personality if I don't? Is this something I can hand over to someone else?
- The prime responsibility of the individual is to be aware of the factors which determine him or her, to decide what to think of them and how to react to them, and not to be taken in by the false identities which are constantly presenting themselves.

2. What is the role of time in the process of knowing others?

Key points

- The content of the notion of ‘time process’: a never ending adventure, the correction of first impressions, interaction, growing awareness of each one’s complexity and uniqueness *etc.*
- The other as a perpetually changing individual
- The impact of the perpetual changes in the other on the possibility of knowing him/her: is that a positive or a negative impact?
- I am also changing. How does this impact on the possibility of knowing the other?
- If knowing (each other) appears to be more than labelling each other once and for all, what does it entail? (Superficial) information *vs.* (deeper) communication

Discussion

- Is it possible to meet people for the time of a brief encounter and yet get to the core of their self?
- Knowledge of (psychological and sociological) stereotypes shorten the required time: is that a strength or a weakness?
- If knowing is a time process, does the kind of contact we get with others through the Internet, chat lines, e-mail, telephone *etc.* allow that process or disturb it?
- What do we mean when we say that a friend we have not seen for many years has remained ‘just the same’ when we meet her after a number of years?

NB: Candidates are allowed to express more epistemological views (Does time make knowing possible or impossible?). They should focus, however, on knowledge of the other and not neglect the notion of process as asserted in the question.

Candidates are also allowed to express more existential views (The other as a everlasting mystery; time, *i.e.* fleetingness, as the very condition of human life). They however should not lose the specificity of the question (knowing the other and knowing as a process).

3. In some societies, sex and love are dissociated from one another. Should we accept this or should we protest against it?

Key points

- Is the assumed dissociation a fact? When? Where? (Ex: Sex dissociated from love following the ‘sexual revolution’).
- Types of protestations: Christian churches, feminism...
- Sex without love: quantity or quality? mechanical? partial? egocentric?
- Platonic love: without sex. Is it possible?
- Is sex an aid to love or an impediment to love?

Discussion

- Love: reciprocal relation of a loving being to a loved being? How does it affect our perception of the sexual life?
- If sex is a legitimate physiological need, why restrict it to a loving relationship?
- Is our vision of sex and love culturally acquired?
- Is sex without love always a perversion or only in some instances?

Section 2: Individuals and Institutions

4. **We often hear people say: ‘This is my right! It is my right to watch as much TV as I want!’ With the help of examples answer the following question: What does it mean to have a right to something?**

Key points

- What is a right? Who or what decides what is a right? Who or what is entitled to rights? *e.g.* does nature have rights?
- The issue of natural *vs* positive rights
- Originally rights came about so that people would be protected. This has changed into an entitlement mentality: right to watch TV (the abuse of rights).
- Difference between right (free speech) and privilege (watch TV)

Discussion

- Do rights come without duties attached?
- Could we justify denying a segment of humanity some fundamental rights? (*e.g.*: bombard Iraq with the hope of creating a lasting peace in the Middle East).
- Do we have a duty to our fellow human beings to fight for the recognition of their rights or is this moral imperialism?
- The *limits* on the use of my rights: I have the right to free speech but I don’t have a right to incite violence.

5. **Societies control our lives to a great extent while at the same time guaranteeing liberty. Is that a real contradiction or only an apparent one?**

Key Points

- What do we mean by control exerted by society? From norms and laws, education *etc.* to the mechanism of public control of information media; control exerted by the neighbourhood *etc.*
- What does it mean to guarantee Liberty? Which kinds of freedom are protected? (ex: the right to hold meetings)
- Is there a contradiction? Or are some of these control mechanisms in fact guaranteeing Liberty? (ex: the prohibition to promote hatred or racism)
- In any case, could I live in Liberty outside of a social framework?

Discussion

- We often confuse Liberty with economic freedom. Why is it not the same thing? Why does this difference matter?
- The Hobbesean theme: is social control essential if we want to prevent societies from falling into chaos? *e.g.* Yeltsin’s Russia lacked social control and fell into the chaos created by the Mafia.
- The virtual society of the Net lacking control and therefore full of abuse of Liberty: child pornography, terrorist groups, *etc.* Does it need controls or is this the frontier for Liberty?
- Examples of Big Brother control: video cameras everywhere to prevent theft, electronic verification of identity, *etc.*

6. **‘Since some people are more intelligent than others, we should in the name of the common good entrust them with all the power.’ Explain and critically assess this statement.**

Key points

- Sources of authority: *de facto*, *de jure*
- Which qualities should those who exercise political authority have? Why intelligence?
- The concept of common good
- Repartition of power between rulers and citizens

Discussion

- Measuring or defining intelligence
- Is there a necessary connection between being intelligent and being a good ruler?
- Is there a connection between intelligence and the preservation of the common good?
- Is entrusting all the power to some people contradictory to the aim of the common good?

Section 3: Human Environment

7. **‘The first step to wisdom consists of being at ease with your own culture; the second step is to appreciate other cultures more than your own, but the true wisdom is not to feel at home in any one.’ Explain and critically assess this statement.**

Key points

- Notion of wisdom: is it possible to provide a concept of wisdom that is non-contextual and non-historical?
- Explanation of the three steps in one’s own words
- Assumption that ‘true wisdom’ implies scepticism and cultural relativism

Discussion

- How could the statement be justified, apart from accepting the author’s position at face value?
- Strengths, weaknesses and limits of cultural relativism (tolerance, indifference)
- The possibility of combining conflicting cultural elements in your person

8. **The use of Nature to satisfy human interests has led to devastating consequences: because of this we might decide that ‘Nature has rights and should be treated as an end and not as a mean’. Is this view correct?**

Key points

- Assumption that Nature has been used to satisfy human interests, and that this has led to a disaster. Explanation and examples.
- What image of Nature does the idea that Nature has rights or that it should be treated as more than a means entail?
- Nature as a person, to whom respect is due. Therefore we are not allowed to harm her.

Discussion

- Originally the human attitude towards Nature was a kind of legitimate self-defence (if humans didn’t master Nature, Nature would devastate them). Is this still true?
- On what grounds should we preserve Nature if it is not out of interest? Is Nature something we can ‘admire’ or ‘love’?
- Is the domination of Nature which has taken place an intentional murder? Or rather the simultaneous effect of various and complex technologies, which are difficult to control?
- Nature as an end, as a Mother, as a Goddess. Is such worship as legitimate as any other kind of worship?
- Could a personification of Nature be a welcome guideline for human behaviour (ex: concept of Nature in Buddhism)?
- If we refuse both the idea that Nature has the same fundamental rights as a ‘person’ and arguments based on (even long-term) human interest, how can we argue in favour of a respectful management of natural resources?

9. Is work a necessary condition for being a human?

Key points

- Notion of work: is a human being condemned to work? Is it our fate? Or do we have a right to work? Does a society have a responsibility to provide us with work?
- Does work make you a member of society? The role of money, the notion of dignity.
- Does the notion human being necessarily involve the idea of work?

Discussion

- The difference between the sufficient and necessary condition
- The idea of work as necessary is a modern concept vs. the idea of the 'demonstrative leisure' in history.
- The concepts of work: work and alienation; work as a value in itself or as an instrument to acquire money or benefits
- Connection between work and human needs
- Can unemployment mean a loss of humanity?

Section 4: Reason

10. When speaking and writing, am I the one who is using an 'instrument' – language – or is language ruling and mastering me?

Key points

- As a system of oral and written signs, common to a certain group of people, and designed to make communication possible, language seems to be an 'instrument'.
- However, while I feel I am the one who sends oral and written signs to others, I forget that the system of signs existed before me and has structured my way of perceiving, thinking and expressing things. The person who speaks or writes is not aware of the rules s/he's following. To become aware of the rules of even one's own language is quite difficult.
- 'Mastering language': it is the same illusion - I can make progress in learning my own language or a foreign language, but I will somehow always stay a foreigner because of the fact that such a system of signs consists of so many more elements than I'm actually using, and of so many possible combinations and connotations.
- Negative consequence: I think and express far fewer things than I could if I knew all languages, or if I knew my own language through and through.
- Positive consequence: less superficial, less instrumental uses of language are possible (ex: a certain kind of literature, poetry, idiolects), which may convey more or new meaning.

Discussion

- If it is impossible to learn all languages, is it impossible to know a language through and through?
- What is the significance of the fact that when we have learnt a foreign language, it becomes easier to learn another new one?
- If, to me, the world is as my language says it is, does this mean that it is my own language which prevents me from further investigation and comprehension?
- Should we conclude from the fact that languages have a deeper structure (syntactical and lexical) which we are not aware of, that we are far more determined than we believe?

11. Can we be without perceiving?

Key points

- What is it to be? To breathe? To be conscious? To feel? To know? To act? To create?
- Do perceptions involve sensations, or can we 'perceive' by other means?
- Can there be a life that does not involve perception? (Micro-organisms? Vegetal world?)

Discussion

- The famous case of Helen Keller: illness as a baby left her blind, deaf, mute but, through very astute training, she became a fully developed adult living a full life.
- What about the case of people in a coma, or worse, in a vegetative state? Do they perceive? Can we say that they actually 'are'? Can we even know the answer to these questions?
- What about the foetus? Is it? Does it perceive? Do we know?
- If perception generates not only consciousness of the surroundings but also self-consciousness, what would happen to me if my surroundings were destroyed?

12. Is there a solution to ‘the perennial war between reason and heart’?

Key points

- Notions of ‘reason’ and ‘heart’: they correspond to a traditional dichotomy (ex: Pascal’s *esprit de finesse* and *esprit de géométrie*; Nietzsche’s typology - Apollo/Dionysus; psychoanalytical principles of pleasure and principle of reality *etc.*).
- Assumption that there is a competition (antagonism, conflict, war) between ‘heart’ and ‘reason’: human beings are said to be doomed to disharmony.
- A recurring antagonism: due to what exactly? Human nature? Fate? Something else?

Discussion

- Theoretical backgrounds: various theories of mind as a heterogeneous entity
- What kind of solution to the assumed conflict can be thought of? Alternative views of the human mind.
- The view that the heart’s reasons may be better reasons and rational reasons poorer ones, or that the heart attains ‘the truth’ while reason, being discursive, is only able to catch a part of ‘the truth’. The problem of the grounds for such a statement.
- Moral interpretation of the question: conflict between ‘what I want’ and ‘what I should do’.
- Is it impossible for emotions to be rational and for reason to be guided by emotions?

Section 5: Meaning and Value

13. Is there such a thing as moral knowledge?

Key points

- How do we develop our moral values? By imitation? intuition? reflection? trial and error? learning from books? through pain and joy?
- Does moral knowledge only enhance moral values?
- If morality is knowledge, can we have disagreement about it?
- How can morality be said to be ‘a knowledge’ and ethics a matter of personal deliberation? Is that not a contradiction?

Discussion

- Possible interpretations of the question: as a moral problem - ‘what you want’ and ‘what you should do’; as a problem of mind - psychoanalysis, theories of mind.
- A possibility of rational emotions and reason controlled by emotions. Possible balance between reason and emotions.
- What would happen when that ‘war’ is over?

14. Is it the case that only non-religious people can realise the full meaning of death?

Key points

- Assumption that religious people find some kind of solace in their faith that to some extent mitigates the horror of death, while non-religious people would accept mortality.
- What does the ‘full meaning of death’ mean? On what grounds can we decide that?
- What is a non-religious person? Someone who practises out of habit, respect for traditions, or personal comfort, without a firm belief? Someone who has a view of life based on other beliefs than the one established by a religion? Someone who doesn’t respect anything or anybody?
- I probably won’t ever truly face the reality and realise the meaning of my own death, but only the death of others (because I can’t see myself dying as others do nor regret my presence on earth as others do).

Discussion

- Is it possible to live an authentic life if I ignore my finitude? Doesn’t death (fleetingness) give a greater value to everything?
- How would I live my life if I were immortal or never ageing?
- Is faith an obstacle to a true confrontation with death? Does a serious consideration of our own death and the death of others generate wisdom?
- Should we live as if we were never going to die or as if we might die at any second?
- Where does the fear of death come from? Is it the case that it is not non-religious people, but women who ‘are less afraid of death than men because they are more experienced with birth, blood and the fragility of things’?

15. **‘Since there are various interpretations of Holy Scriptures, it is impossible to know what a Higher Being wants of us. Therefore, religious people must also formulate a meaning for their lives.’ Explain and critically assess this statement.**

Key points

- Assumption that there are Holy Scriptures (a plurality of) and various interpretations of each. Is it the case? Examples.
- Assumption that such a corpus of texts, if it were unambiguous, might contain ‘what a Higher Being wants of us’ (notions of Divine Revelation; of the unicity of truth / unambiguity of ‘knowledge’).
- Assumption that there is no other meaning for my life than God’s purpose for me.
- Assumption that religious people should rely on Holy Scripture if Holy Scripture were unambiguous (= that a religious person need not and even is not allowed to design his/her life by him/herself).

- Statement 1: Given the fact that Holy Scriptures allow a multiplicity of interpretations, religious people shouldn’t deduce any guidelines for their lives from one or other of those interpretations.
- Statement 2: To rely on a text out of ‘faith’, and not out of unambiguous knowledge, is not a defensible position.
- (Therefore) statement 3: Religious people have the same obligation as non-religious people to ‘formulate a meaning for their lives’.

Discussion

- *Some subtlety may be expected in the discussion of the assumptions, for instance:* how to understand the ‘us’ in the quotation? Should we think that a Higher Being has one purpose for the whole humanity or a specific purpose for each of us? How do we know that? If the latter is the case, would Holy Scripture still be of any help?
 - Does the ‘fact’ that Holy Scriptures allow many interpretations imply that those are of no reliability, of no relevance? Does any ‘truth’ exist outside of ‘interpretations’? If ‘interpretation’ excludes ‘truth’, does it exclude any judgement about the respective value of each interpretation?
 - Difference between (acting out of / thinking out of) knowledge and (acting out of / thinking out of) faith. Is ‘meaning of life’ ever based on ‘knowledge’? Is it contradictory to state that *religious* people should definitely use other grounds than *religious* sources to design a meaning for their lives?
 - However, the strength of statements 1 and 3 (see key points) is that it might prevent religious people from despair and nihilism, reminding them that any person, religious or not, should search how to design a meaning for her/his life. But should we do that? Why can’t we live in a meaningless world? Shouldn’t we aim at getting rid of any preoccupation about ‘the meaning of life’? (Camus’ answer to the existential experience of the absurd, for instance).
-