



MARKSCHEME

November 2001

PHILOSOPHY

Higher & Standard Level

Paper 2

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 A

W.D.Ross, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*

Key points

- What is a promise? A special kind of speech (a word that commits me to the other, a word in which the other puts his/her faith).
- Therefore, to promise something implies to fulfil the promise.
- Common sense seems to support the view that the duty of fulfilling promises doesn't allow any deliberation about consequences, nor the search for any justification. ('You should because you've said you would.')
- Though, there may be cases where fulfilling a promise becomes secondary (example of the dilemma between fulfilling a promise and relieving distress).
- Some duty may be 'more of a duty': there may be a hierarchy of duties, whereby not the quality of the result determines which of the acts is the best one, but the very position of that act on a scale of duties. (Ross seems to insert here the difference between hypothetical and categorical Imperative as a hidden frame for his argument.)

Discussion

- Why is not to fulfil a promise / to break a promise a fault? Notions of loyalty and betrayal (leader, friend) and of social value of words (the loss of value of 'given words' might lead to social anarchy). Examples.
- Or are such notions as faith and loyalty 'out of the time'? Why?
- If I am definitely bound by promises made in the past even though circumstances may have changed, is it because not to fulfil a promise is a contradiction in terms? (How can I ever 'promise' something again if I don't consider a promise as something that has to be fulfilled?)
- But is it really sound to do something in a blind way because I said I would? Or is it better to deliberate whether and why I should do it and eventually decide not to do it? (= strength and weakness of respectively categorical and hypothetical imperatives, applied to the text.)
- How to decide between two duties? Who says that 'relieving distress' is a duty? In which sense would it be a higher one or a more compelling one than 'fulfilling a promise'? Which ethical or meta-ethical assumptions do we need to clarify that?

SECTION B

1. Plato: *The Republic Books V–VII*

Explain and discuss the meaning of the metaphor of the Sun in Plato’s philosophy.

Key points

- The Sun as the metaphor for the Good
- The Sun as source of growth and light, the Good as source of reality and truth
- The Sun as giving visibility to the objects of the material world, the Good as giving intelligibility to the intelligible world
- The eye’s power of sight and the mind’s power of knowing
- The process of growth: following the same process as the discovery of light, the final step is the understanding of truth and its origin.

Discussion

- Can we accept this idea that the Good is outside the world? Is this an incentive or an impediment to change the unfairness of the world surrounding us?
- Is it possible to verify whether leaders do indeed know the truth (*i.e.* that they have ‘seen the light’)? If so, how? Do you think that this necessarily guarantees a better political leadership as Plato claims? Why?
- The danger of a political leadership guided by a theological idea. Is Plato proposing a theocracy?

2. Aquinas: *Summa Theologiae*

Explain and discuss Aquinas’ view that to want implies to choose, but does not imply freedom.

Key Points

- To want concerns purposes or ends; without deliberation upon and election of means there is no realisation of what we want.
- We are master/mistress of such an election, our choices belong to us, *i.e.* human beings have free-will.
- This is so because we have been given reason, *i.e.* understanding and reasoning.
- To deliberate, judge/choose, and act is possible for us precisely because of the combination of reason and will.
- But a human being is not *causa sui*, as God is; and our acts may be made impossible by circumstances. Thus we are not free.

Discussion

- The strength of Aquinas’ view that without deliberation upon and election of means there is no realisation of what we want: will remains a vague inclination or a declaration of intentions.
- However, what about his justification of free will by reason? Either we have reason and don’t elect other things than the best aims and means (therefore we have no real choice); or we are not gifted with reason and this explains that our choices may not concern the best aims and means (we have free will, but no reason).
- What is then the relevance of Aquinas’ ‘free-will-without-freedom’ theory for us today? Isn’t it difficult for us to accept the tutorship of reason on the will or the restriction of freedom on the rational faculty of making decisions?

3. **Descartes: *Meditations/Discourse Part 4***
Explain and discuss Descartes' theory on free will.

Key points

- What is Descartes' theory on free will?
- I only make errors when I don't use my free will properly.
- According to Descartes, God gave me free will for a specific reason. What is it?
- Free will and the relation with truth and falsehood
- Indifference as the 'lowest degree of liberty'

Discussion

- Is it 'an imperfection in God that he has given me the liberty of judging or not judging on matters on which he has given me no clear and distinct knowledge'?
- Descartes' theory does not square with the correspondence theory of truth. Is this a shortcoming of his theory of truth?
- The paradox of being granted free will and being condemned to err if I use it. Is there any solution?
- Is Descartes implying that our behaviour must be rational in all instances? Is this a sane way to live one's life?

4. **Locke: *Second Treatise of Government***
Explain and discuss Locke's view of the rights and duties of the conqueror.

Key points

- The unjust conqueror: 'he who puts himself in the state of war with another and unjustly invades another man's right ... can never have a right over the Conquered.' The conquered are not to be slaves.
- The just conqueror obtains the consent of the conquered.
- The conqueror in a Just War has the right to kill the conquered, but he does not have the right to their possessions.
- The difference that the Just War makes with respect to killing the conquered. Locke's argument that the conquered had already forfeited their right to life by initiating the War.
- The conqueror's duty to seize no more than the vanquished could forfeit.
- The conqueror's duty to respect the dominion of the conquered over their political destiny. Liberty is a right, and the conqueror cannot take it away.

Discussion

- Can we ever justify intervening in another country's internal affairs? If no, what if genocide is committed in that country? Should the international community stand by, watching and doing nothing?
- The importance of distinguishing the Just War from other types of conquests. Does the assumption that it is legitimate to take the life of the Conquered still prevail?
- The paradoxical assumption that in a Just War the right to keep one's possessions is superior to the right to life.
- Colonialism and Imperialism did not follow Locke's prescriptions. Do you think that the world would be a better place if they had?
- Can we ever justify a Conqueror's right?
- Examples such as the claims of the native people of America to their land.

5. **Rousseau: *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality***

Explain and discuss the idea that Rousseau's 'good Savage Man' does not have any historical value but has value as a criterion against which to measure the development of humanity.

Key points

- Rousseau's acknowledgement that he cannot prove that the Good Savage has ever existed
- The Good Savage as a model, a paradigm
- Does it make sense to talk about the development of humanity? And to do so with reference to a 'benchmark'? Who/what is to say what this 'benchmark' is to be?

Discussion

- The Good Savage as a model or paradigm: is it useful? does it work? At the metaphysical level? at the political level? at the moral level?
- Now that anthropology has provided us with a more scientific model of the 'primitive man', should we discard the 'Good Savage' paradigm as ill-founded historically?
- Does humanity develop? The history of the twentieth century shows humanity's destructive activities have reached new frontiers never anticipated in the past to the point of threatening the survival of humanity. Is this a development? How else could we measure it?
- Would an attempt at maintaining myself in a non-rational state lead me to happiness? *i.e.* can I return to being a 'Good Savage'?

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

Explain and discuss how the Categorical Imperative can help us to resolve moral problems.

Key points

- What is the Categorical Imperative?
- Why does Kant propose three formulations of the Categorical Imperative?
- The difference from the Hypothetical Imperative
- Does the Categorical Imperative contain elements to help us resolve moral conflicts? Are they helpful when we find ourselves faced with a moral problem?
- Can moral problems ever be said to be resolved?

Discussion

- The Categorical Imperative as a reasoning model to apply in all instances where we face a moral decision. A quick and simple way to arrive at a decision?
- Kant's categorical imperative may help us when we face a moral problem but when it is a moral conflict, *i.e.* in a situation where I must choose between two equally valid moral duties, how does the Categorical Imperative help us, if it helps at all?

7. **Nietzsche: *Genealogy of Morals***

Explain and discuss why, according to Nietzsche, ‘forgetting represents a form of robust health’.

Key points

- What should we forget, according to Nietzsche? Especially feelings of shame and culpability.
- In which sense is forgetting healthy, according to Nietzsche? In the sense that feelings of shame and culpability are an obstacle to a joyful, affirmative way of life.
- What is the relation between forgetting and health? Forgetting brings health.

Discussion

- A very controversial position because, traditionally, a good memory in general and an awareness of one’s failures and shortcomings in particular are considered as a psychological and moral strength.
- Nietzsche’s statement appears more acceptable if we understand it as a plea for a selective memory: let us remember the events and feelings we can live with, and forget the ones which debilitate our energy. Living demands selection (Examples of events and traumas with the perennial remembrance of which it is impossible to live.)
- Core of Nietzsche’s argument: shame and culpability are destructive, exactly as resentment. Nietzsche attacks them as he criticises other so-called Christian virtues for being a form of nihilistic self-hatred.
- But, if ‘healthy’ because not punishing oneself, isn’t ‘forgetting’ a too easy or lazy solution? Does it lead to a superficial life? Does it demand an even more robust health to be able to both remember and forgive?
- The example of political leaders who promote both a duty to remember and a duty to offer apologies for past cruelties. What would Nietzsche have found in such an attitude?

8. **Marx: *The German Ideology/Theses on Feuerbach***

Explain how and when, according to Marx, philosophy is ideological and discuss this view.

Key points

- Marx’s notion of class and class struggle
- Marx concept of ‘dominant ideas’ as supporting the interests of the owning class
- The interests of the working class as the yardstick of the truth
- Idealistic philosophy as an alienated consciousness. (Christianity as ‘opium for the masses’; Hegel’s or Feuerbach’s views as needing ‘to be put back on their feet’.)

Discussion

- The concept of ideology. How could Marx justify that his philosophy is not an ideology? Is it possible that a philosophy is not an ideology?
- Marx would claim that his philosophy is not an ideology because it does not serve the interests of the owning classes. Does this create a problem of circularity?
- Would Marx’s philosophy become an ideology in a Communist society?

9. **James: Pragmatism**

Explain and discuss James' view that pragmatism is both an approach to knowledge and a guide to everyday life.

Key points

- Old truths have been acquired through past experiences and they have successfully passed the verification process.
- The practical difference true ideas make: 'we assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify them'; how? through experience?
- New experiences have built in their own verification processes: they are true if they work.
- New experiences combine with old truths to enlarge our body of knowledge.

Discussion

- If it were the case that new experiences are simply added on to old truths, we would never discard any theories as false, and yet it happens all the time.
- Does reason play a role in this validation of truths?
- Is James proposing a new 'cogito': 'It works therefore it is true'? Can we encounter things or situations that work yet we cannot accept them? How do we decide that 'it works'?
- Could it be the case that something worked in the past (therefore it is an old truth) but my new experiences that work now contradicts what worked in the past? What am I to do then?

10. **Russell: Problems of Philosophy**

Explain and discuss Russell's view on falsehood.

Key points

- Notions of falsehood and error
- Notions of the complex and the role of believing
- Falsehood as a property of belief, and opposite to truth
- Falsehood as a lack of correspondence between a belief and a fact

Discussion

- Why does Russell insist on introducing the idea of the complex instead of simply thinking falsehood is between two terms?
- Is it possible to 'know' that something is false?
- Is the coherence of a belief a guarantee of its truth?

11. **Freud: *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis 1909/Outline of Psychoanalysis 1938***
Explain and discuss Freud's assertion that his theory paints a true picture of the mental life because he based it on a vast amount of clinical observation.

Key points

- The connection between observation of behaviour and knowledge of the mental life
- The specificity of 'clinical' observation by doctors; by psychologists
- The possibility of having a 'true picture' of anything
- The problem of induction

Discussion

- The problem of appearance and reality
- Theory-laden observation and interpretation: the relation between Freud's hypotheses and their falsification by observation
- Does the fact that Freud produced different formulations of his theory of the psychical apparatus mean he was unscientific or that he was a cautious researcher?

12. **Sartre: *Being and Nothingness***
Explain and discuss why Sartre does not see my objectifying of the Other as being a form of 'bad faith'.

Key points

- The notion of 'bad faith': accepting my facticity
- If 'good faith' means loyalty to my freedom, I have no duty in that matter towards the other
- 'The other': why do I need to objectify her/him?

Discussion

- Sartre's existential solipsism, his conceptual framework fixes the perspective on 'me'
 - If my objectifying of the Other is not rejected as being a form of bad faith, why should I ever stop doing it?
 - Accepting Sartre's view how can I ever know, value and love the Other (the object)?
 - Is objectifying the Other a means of preserving my freedom or losing a possibility of sharing it?
-