

MARKSCHEME

November 2002

PHILOSOPHY

Higher Level and Standard Level

Paper 2

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

“Tao never makes any ado, and yet it does everything. If a ruler can cling to it, all things will grow of themselves.” Critically discuss this statement in the context of Tao Te Ching.

Key points

- Concepts of Tao
- The principle of non-ado, active passivity, as the principle of life and political rule
- The role of the ruler in the Taoist philosophy

Discussion

- Epistemological questions (knowledge about Tao that cannot be put into words but yet can be understood)
- Metaphysical questions (the reality of Tao) and questions related to political philosophy (the nature of power and authority)
- Accepting authority (the wisdom of Tao Te Ching) and the possibility of following such a seemingly contradictory advice (ruling without doing anything)

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

Confucius said: “Yu, shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you know a thing, say that you know it; when you do not know a thing, admit that you do not know it. That is knowledge”. Critically discuss this concept of knowledge.

Key points

- Knowledge is linked to the self-knowledge and capacity to recognize the limits of one’s knowledge.
- There is no analysis of knowledge (like Plato’s “true, justified belief”) and it seems that knowing *how* (competence knowledge) is prerequisite for knowing *that* (propositional knowledge).
- Because one can “say that you know” it is possible to communicate knowledge by use of language.

Discussion

- The epistemic and ethical are linked together – being honest to oneself about the limits of one’s knowledge is regarded as essential in knowing
- But how can one know that one knows something without possessing some sort of “meta-knowledge”?
- A critical comparison of Western and Chinese concepts of knowledge
- Is there a problem with what Confucius says? If you say that you know something, to determine whether you have knowledge we would need to determine whether you have knowledge of what you say you know. How is this supposed to be done, according to Confucius?

3. Plato: *The Republic*

Plato argues that “we should expect tyranny to result from democracy”. Explain his position and critically assess it.

Key points See *The Republic*, book 9, section 8-9.

- A tyrant will not hesitate to use violence against the people who bred and groomed him.
- Tyranny: “the most savage subjection from an excess of liberty”
- The analogy with the drones
- The tyrant as the natural evolution of a populist leader
- A tyrant, to maintain his hold on power, must always be provoking war. Ironically, this leaves him open to unpopularity.
- The necessity of purges and private armies paid off with stolen treasures and seized properties.
- “The tyrannical man is one who, either by birth or habit or both, combines the characteristics of drunkenness, lust and madness.”

Discussion

- A contemporary example of a tyrant who fits this description
- Is Plato’s argument that the tyrant will be the natural outcome of democracy correct? A historical example for or against
- Plato presents a very negative portrait of a tyrant. Is it possible to envisage a good tyrant? What would this be like?
- Is it not possible for a tyrant to be rational, restrained and lucid? An example is expected.

4. Aristotle: *The Nicomachean Ethics*

Explain and discuss Aristotle’s claim that happiness is activity in accordance with virtue. Could this claim still be valid?

Key points See *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X 1177 a10

- Analysis of both concepts: activity (*enérgeia*) and virtue (*areté*)
- The activity should be contemplative
- None of the attributes of happiness is incomplete
- That which is proper to each thing is by nature best and more pleasant; for man the life according to reason is best and most pleasant
- The relation of happiness to truth

Discussion

- Does contemplative life means non-action?
- Aristotles’ account of happiness is too intellectual
- Comparison with other conceptions of happiness
- It is impossible to apply Aristotle’s idea of happiness to the present, because his and ours are two different worlds.

5. **Aquinas: *Summa Theologiae***

Is free will a faculty of appetites *or* a faculty of knowledge? Explain and discuss Aquinas' view within the frame of his conception of free will.

Key points

- Analysis of the notions of free will, faculty, faculty of appetites or faculty of knowledge
- There is free will in the human being; without it, moral action would be meaningless.
- The human being acts by rational judgments not by instinct.
- Human action refers to contingent things, therefore it can choose between contrary things.
- The possibility of choosing depends as much on knowledge as on appetites.

Discussion

- Judgment is a faculty of knowledge, therefore free will is a faculty of knowledge.
- We choose because we desire, therefore free will is a faculty of appetites.
- We believe that we desire and act freely, because we do not know what rules us.

6. **Descartes: *Meditations***

“From all this I recognize that the power of will which I have received from God is not of itself the source of my errors any more than is the power of understanding. Whence then come my errors?” Explain and discuss.

Key points See *Meditation IV*

- It is impossible that God could ever deceive me. The capacity for judging given me by God will not lead me to err if I use it right.
- I am in a sense something intermediate between God and non-being.
- I fall into error from the fact that the power given me by God for the purpose of distinguishing truth from error is not infinite.
- My errors depend on a combination of two causes: understanding and will.
- My errors come from the sole fact that since the will is much wider in its range and compass than the understanding, I do not restrain it within the same bounds, but extend it also to things which I do not understand.

Discussion

- Descartes deduces the cause of the error from who I am, therefore he is arguing ontologically and not epistemologically. A purer epistemological approach would see the problem quite differently.
- Descartes' argument is based on the idea of infinity, but this is only a human representation.
- What does Descartes understand by truth and error?
- Descartes' argument is more theological than philosophical
- Is Descartes successful by his own standards: does he succeed in making error compatible with a benevolent, omnipotent God?
- Examiners should bear in mind that this is (perhaps) a more difficult question as it asks candidates to first identify the source of errors and then discuss it. It could happen that candidates will identify my being imperfect as the source of my errors, without connecting my imperfection to poor use of free will.

7. **Locke: *Second Treatise of Government***

“This holds in all the laws a man is under, whether natural or civil. Is a man under the law of nature? What made him free of that law?”

(Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government*, VI, 59)

Describe how Locke classifies laws into natural and civil ones. Is his classification instructive?

Key points

- The concept of the state of nature
- The role of consent in a civil society
- The concepts and roles of property and labour
- Paternal law

Discussion

- What are the obligations of people in a society?
- Alternatives to a model of society based on consent
- The transition from state of nature to civil society
- Are state of nature theories in political philosophy useful or desirable?

8. **Hume: *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding***

To what extent can Hume’s distinction between “relations of ideas” and “matters of fact” be explained from the point of view of empiricism?

Key points

- Examples of the relations of ideas given by sciences: geometry, algebra and arithmetic
- “Relations of ideas” is any affirmation which is either intuitively or demonstratively certain.
- Matters of fact are not ascertained in the same manner. The contrary of every matter of fact is possible; it does not necessarily imply a contradiction.
- The evidence of any real existence and matter of fact is founded in the present testimony of our senses, or the records of our memory.
- Reasonings concerning matter of fact seem to be founded on the relation of cause and effect.

Discussion

- Are there different ways of understanding empiricism?
- If all our knowledge depends on experience, mathematics does too.
- A satisfactory explanation can be given, if we conceive a reasonable concept of experience.
- The entire argument depends on the idea that all knowledge proceeds from experience.
- The argument is based on a theory of perception that argues that we really see a series of different impressions and we construct the unity of the object by means of imagination.

9. **Rousseau: *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality and Social Contract***

“...the general will alone can direct the forces of the state in accordance with that end which the state has been established to achieve – the common good...”

(Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, II, 1)

Explain Rousseau’s concept of the general will, and critically assess the relationship it has with the law.

Key points

- Concept of the general will; inalienable, indivisible, unrelated to any particular object, misguided but not in error
- The general will versus private will
- Law and the general will; the law giver, systems and classifications of laws
- The relationship between the general will and the social pact

Discussion

- Is the concept of the general will a coherent one; *e.g.* how can a will be unrelated to any particular object?
- Distinction between consent and general will
- Is the just state one where justice is identified with utility?
- What are my obligations to the state? – is Rousseau too demanding of his citizens?

10. **Kant: *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals***

Explain the distinction that Kant makes between having a price *and* having dignity.

Key points See *Foundations*, chapter 2, 435-55

- This distinction exists theoretically in the Realm of Ends to separate what is irreplaceable (an end-in-itself) from what can be bought (market price).
- That which has a price only has “relative value”, that which has dignity has an “intrinsic value”.
- Human characteristics can be said to have a price, *e.g.* verbal communication skills are marketable skills.
- Dignity pertains strictly to humanity, *i.e.* to those capable of morality: autonomy of the will is the ground for the dignity of every rational being.

Discussion

- It is often said that “everything has a price”, “everything can be bought”. What would Kant answer? Who is right?
- When we look at the way human life is a disposable good in some parts of the world, we are inclined to think that Kant’s distinction is an ironic description of a utopia. Indeed does human life have an intrinsic value?
- Conversely, should we not expand the concept of “intrinsic value” to the natural world which we have thus far considered as having only a “market price”? What consequences would this have on our market economy?

11. Nietzsche: *The Genealogy of Morals*

“That someone *feels* “guilty” or “sinful” is no proof that he is right, anymore than a man is healthy, merely because he feels healthy.”

How, according to Nietzsche, are men made to feel guilty or sinful? Critically examine the implications of his explanation.

Key points

- Slave morality versus aristocratic values
- Ressentiment and creative acts
- Will to power
- The priest and the ascetic ideal

Discussion

- Are there only two moral systems? The master’s and the slave’s moral systems?
- Is man truly free to create and select his own moral values?
- Is Nietzsche merely excusing the morality of “might makes right”?
- With Nietzsche’s moral relativism, are unspeakable acts (like genocide) given some legitimacy?

12. Mill: *Essay on Liberty*

What are the conditions, according to J.S. Mill, that must be fulfilled by society to be called a free society?

Key points See *On Liberty – Introductory*

- In brief, we must be free to pursue our own good in our way as long as we don’t harm others.
- Mill identifies three domains where individuals must be free
 - Domain of consciousness (liberty of conscience, of thought and feeling, absolute freedom of opinion and of their expression)
 - Liberty of tastes and pursuits: to be free to plan our life as we see provided that we do not cause harm to others even if they think we are foolish, perverse or wrong
 - Freedom of assembly with whom we freely choose provided it is not for the purpose of causing harm

Discussion

- Am I “my brother’s keeper”? How is respect for others’ liberty reconciled with the duty to prevent them from harming themselves?
- Is what Mill is arguing for a reflection of Western values, or is it fundamentally universal?
- Mill must postulate a minimum degree of Rationality in human beings to argue this position. Is it the case that reason dominates over passion? If not, what becomes of Mill’s position?

13. Freud: *Civilization and its Discontents* and *Outline of Psychoanalysis*

Explain the concept of sublimation in the context of Freud’s analysis of civilization and critically assess its role in the whole civilizing process.

Key points

- Sublimation as the deviation of sexual impulses towards non-sexual goals highly praised by society
- Artistic activity and intellectual work as the most remarkable activities of sublimation of such impulses
- Economic principle operating a transformation of non-acceptable impulses and thus avoiding frustration. Frustration leading to neurosis.
- Civilization as requiring the sacrifice of satisfaction of basic drives and sublimation as the displacement of that energy which will be used in cultural work. Cultural work as arising from the repression of part of the sexual energy.
- Sublimation of instincts as an important aspect of cultural development
- Civilized man as a repressed animal who had to give up a share of happiness for the security granted by social life

Discussion

- Freud’s reduction of all human activity to the dynamics of sexuality
- Artistic and intellectual sublimation of instincts is possible for a very few gifted men, does this mean that the great majority may develop a neurosis?
- Given the key role played by sexuality, is Freud reducing humanity to animality?

14. Buber: *I and Thou*

In the third section of the book, Buber comments on the Buddha. Explain how the Buddhist view and Buber’s view compare and critically discuss them.

Key points

- Buber refers to Buddha as the “Perfected” and the perfecter who knows the value of a “noble silence”
- Buddha made only one assertion: “There is, O monks, what is Unborn, Unbecome, Uncreated, Unformed”. Buber’s distinction between the way and the goal for Buddhists
- Buber’s view of the Mahayana (The Great Vehicle): a doctrine of delusion
- Buber’s criticism of Buddha’s statement on the annulment of the world (nirvana): The I-You relation persists with the world annulling the It-World.

Discussion

- Though he criticizes Buddha, is Buber really proposing another model?
- How is the I-You different from the Buddhist way? Isn’t I-It somewhat similar to the egolessness preached by Buddha? (Examiners are reminded that what the candidate must know is Buber’s characterization of Buddhism rather than Buddhism itself).

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

“Beliefs constitute the basic stratum, that which lies deepest, in the architecture of our life.” Critically discuss this statement.

Key Points See chapter III

- The distinction between “being what we believe” and holding an idea
- The metaphor of the individual life as a bank of issues
- The notion of belief. Belief as a collective or social opinion
- Collective beliefs impose on individuals their reality and force them to recognition
- Role of analysis of belief for Ortega y Gasset’s argumentative strategy, *e.g.* for the discussion of belief in science and reason
- Explanation of the notion of life

Discussion

- Is life constituted by beliefs? Which notion of life is needed in this context for such a purpose?
- Is it legitimate in this context to relate belief, need and desire?
- Does Ortega y Gasset’s account of belief imply religious aspects?
- Comparison with other philosophical theories of belief (*e.g.* Nietzsche, Kierkegaard).

16. **Wittgenstein: *The Blue and Brown Books***

Explain and discuss Wittgenstein’s statement that “understanding a sentence means understanding a language”.

Key points See *The Blue Book*, at the beginning, approximately paragraph 22.

- The use of signs
- “The sign (the sentence) gets its significance from the system of signs, from the language to which it belongs.”
- The idea that a sentence has life.
- Thinking as a mental state. Comparison of mental medium with the protoplasm of an amoeba.
- The notions of understanding, language and meaning.
- What is an explanation of meaning?

Discussion

- The question is a tautology: language is implied, because the question refers to signs.
- With this conception of thinking, conceptual explanations can be replaced by linguistic analysis.
- The possibility of operating depends not on the use of signs but on the action, even on corporal actions.
- There is no more to the meaning of a linguistic expression than its relation to other expressions, and that all expressions of a language play a role in determining the meanings of all others (holism).

17. Arendt: *The Human Condition*

Assess the distinction that Hannah Arendt makes between labour and work and critically discuss it.

Key points

- Labour produces the sustenance of the human life process and its consumption, thus creating a cycle of perpetual repetition.
- Work as the transformation of nature. “From the standpoint of view of nature, it is work rather than labour that is destructive, since the work process takes matter out of nature’s hands without giving it back to her.”
- Work: *homo faber*: work of our hands as opposed to labour: *animal laborans*
- Labour as the fight to keep the world clean and prevent its decaying
- “Both are devouring processes that seize and destroy matter, and the “work” done by labour upon its material is only the preparation for its eventual destruction.”
- Locke: Labour as creating private property; Adams: labour as source of wealth accumulation; Marx: “labour as the source of all productivity and the expression of the very humanity of man.”

Discussion

- Is the distinction between labour and work the same as the distinction between the subjective world and the objective world?
- Arendt claims that *homo faber* is the master of himself and his doings, which is not true of *homo laborans* who is subject to the necessity of his own life. Does this distinction matter?
- Can there be *homo faber* without *homo laborans*? Or vice versa? Are they simply two aspects of the same entity?

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

“...though the passionate man inspires a certain admiration, he also inspires a kind of horror at the same time.”

(Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity, II*)

Explain why de Beauvoir is ambivalent about the passionate man. Is her ambivalence justified?

Key points

- The passionate man, the serious man, the adventurer
- The concepts of freedom, choosing and transcendence
- The other and its necessity for a morality
- The distinction between absurdity and ambiguity

Discussion

- Are the types of man described by de Beauvoir plausible?
- How free are we really when it comes to choosing for ourselves as well as for others?
– economic, cultural, technological constraints
- Does de Beauvoir’s ethics dissolve into self-interested individualism?
- Does political action still have a real meaning and value in de Beauvoir’s ethics?

19. **Rawls: *A Theory of Justice***

The principle of *redress* is a guiding principle for Rawls' theory of Fairness. Explain its foundation and workings, and evaluate its effects.

Key points See chapter II, section 17: *The Tendency to Equality*.

- Definition: principle guiding the connection of undeserved inequalities (biological or socio-economic)
- Essential if equality of opportunity is to mean anything
- Society must invest more heavily in the underprivileged as opposed to investing in the already privileged, at least in the primary years of the individual
- Similarities and differences in the difference principle which is predicted on reciprocity and mutual benefit

Discussion

- In enforcing the principle of Redress, are we not overly taxing the already burdened middle class?
- It is often said that poverty breeds more poverty. Is there any hope that the principle of redress will stop that cycle?
- Is Rawls not simply presenting a lay conception of the Christian imperative of charity?
- Do we not face the risk of having a segment of the population acting like parasites on those who are privileged?
- Where is the fairness in a system where a segment of the population receives for free part of what the rest of the population worked (often hard) to obtain?

20. **Feyerabend: *Farewell to Reason***

Assess Feyerabend's claim that "societies dedicated to freedom and democracy should be structured in a way that gives all traditions *equal opportunities* [...]. Science is to be treated as one tradition among many, not as a standard for judging what is and what is not."

Key points See 2 *Political Consequences*, R2

- The benefit of studying different cultures, institutions and traditions
- The statement recommends an equality of traditions and not only equality of access to one particular tradition
- Criteria for identifying traditions and regulating opportunities
- The statement supports the demand of equal opportunities by considering possible benefits
- Analysis of possible implications of the idea of equal opportunities, e.g. who decides what is equal in the different cases?
- What does it mean to say that science is a tradition?
- Does it follow from what Feyerabend is saying that voodoo should get the same kind and level of funding as science and as much attention in school curricula?

Discussion

- Why should the claim be restricted to societies based on freedom and democracy? Is it not the case that this idea could apply to and be even more needed for other kind of societies?
- "Equal opportunities" is precisely one notion belonging to one tradition. Why should it be turned into the criterion against which everything is judged?
- In that case, would it not apply to this idea the same criticism made by Feyerabend to the idea of science? In other words, Feyerabend's position is not self-contradictory?
- Why should not science be a good judge for what is and what is not? If not science, what else could decide it?
- One could accept Feyerabend's idea and turn it on its head – as an argument against societies dedicated to freedom and democracy.

21. Foucault: *The History of Sexuality*

Explain and discuss Foucault’s claim that “power is tolerable only on condition that it masks a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms.”

Key points See Part 4, Chapter 1 Objective.

- Relation of Foucault’s claim with the central thesis that “history of the last centuries in Western societies did not manifest the movement of a power that was essentially repressive”
- The distinction between a “theory” of power and an “analytics” of power
- Characteristics that are frequently encountered in political analysis of power: the negative relation, the insistence of the rule, the cycle of prohibition, the logic of censorship and the uniformity of the apparatus.
- The same mechanics of power can be encountered, underlying both the theme that power represses sex and the idea that the law constitutes desire.

Discussion

- It seems that in Foucault’s view “power” has an objectivity in itself.
- The idea that power can be masked has its conceptual roots in Freud’s and Nietzsche’s conceptions.
- The analytics of power can be understood as a more comprehensive theory of power.
- It looks very difficult to analyse power without conceiving it in terms of law, prohibition, liberty and sovereignty.

22. Putnam: *Reason, Truth and History*

What reasons does Putnam use to defend his internalist perspective on truth? Critically comment on this perspective with particular reference to his view on values and facts.

Key points

- Brains in Vats, and the relationship between mental images and external objects
- Reference, meaning and intention
- Values **as** facts
- Moral *a priori* concepts as an ideal

Discussion

- Are there only two philosophical perspectives?
- Is there a significant difference between Putnam’s internalist perspective on truth and moral/historical relativism?
- Though Putnam rejects the idea that philosophy is about the meaning of words, doesn’t his argument against meaning as intention rely on this characteristic?
- Putnam admits that his argument against the fact-value dichotomy is based on a discredited view. If so, why does he persist with it and is he successful in overcoming the objections to it?

23. Taylor: *The Ethics of Authenticity*

What problems does Taylor find with “boosters” and “knockers” of contemporary culture when they speak about authenticity?

Key points

- Social science explanations
- Moral subjectivism and instrumental rationality
- Relativism and liberal neutrality
- The role and need for authenticity

Discussion

- Does Taylor simplify the issue of authenticity by having just two groups in the debate?
- Is the need for authenticity essentially a selfish need, one that must subordinate the needs of a society?
- Though Taylor makes a good case against either extreme, his solution is one that is so qualified and vague that, theoretically, it is trivial and, practically, it has no possibility of success.
- The last few decades of the twentieth century have shown that the market and its subsequent values are the only concepts that will guarantee general individual liberties, which are more important than any personal “self-realisation”.

24. Nussbaum: *Poetic Justice*

If civil servants are less likely to be readers of literature and more and more surrounded by economic cost-benefit analysis, how will this affect policy making outcomes?

Key points See *Poetic Justice*, chapter 1, Literary Imagination.

- Cost benefit analysis is devoid of an understanding of human beings. It operates solely on the assumed truth of *homo economicus*
- The consequences of narrowing our understanding of human life – impact on public virtues and impact on judicial decisions

Discussion

- Is this not a humanist / philosopher bias against economics?
 - Is it the case that literature portrays a vast array of human emotions and behaviours?
 - Will this impoverishment indeed result in lesser justice?
 - Examples
-