



MARKSCHEME

May 2006

PHILOSOPHY

Higher Level and Standard Level

Paper 2

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

“In order to live in harmony we must not act.” Explain and evaluate this claim.

This question asks candidates to discuss the central tenets of how to achieve harmony *i.e.* inaction (freedom from desire). This will lead to living in a compatible way with the natural order. These are the key concepts in Lao Tzu’s answer to moral action and good governance. The Way is the freeing of desire and living in harmony with the natural order.

Key points

- *Wu wei* (inaction) is not literally passivity, but is the desire **not** to acquire desire, and to dispossess yourself of the ones you have; it is also to respond spontaneously to situations without pre-conceived goals or other motivations.
- How to overcome desire is seen in the life of the sage who, by living selflessly and without desire, inspires others to live in harmony with the natural order.
- When the natural order is not followed, justifications for, and categories of moral actions *i.e.* virtue, benevolence, rectitude and ritual, become the substitute for living an authentic existence; these actions are motivated by desires.
- Doing good in government: the concept of inaction means that the leader should not impose standards of behaviour on the people, but provide the conditions for living continuously with the natural order.

Discussion points

- Though withdrawing from desires, living humbly and not resisting authority may keep you alive, are you really living? Does living according to the Way sacrifice the quality of life for quantity of life?
- How are the desires for music or beauty less virtuous than not desiring music or beauty?
- To what degree is a leader justified in either being wilfully negligent or keeping people deliberately ignorant in order to live a harmonious life?
- How practical is Lao Tzu’s advice for a person living in today’s society that is geared toward work and success? Are meekness and humility assets in competitive societies?

2. Confucius: *The Analects*
Explain and assess the Confucian view of virtue.

The answer could explain and evaluate the importance and meaning of virtue within the context of Confucianism, which primarily is concerned with the correct ordering of this present life with its emphasis on the well-organized society, filial piety, and respect for ancestors.

Key points

- For Confucius, what characterized superior rulership was the possession of *de* (virtue). Conceived of as a kind of moral power that allows one to win a following without recourse to physical force, such ‘virtue’ also enabled the ruler to maintain good order in his state. Confucius claimed that, “He who governs by means of his virtue is like the pole-star: it remains in its place while all the lesser stars do homage to it”.
- A motive to the practice of virtue was the belief that the souls of departed relatives were largely dependent for their happiness on the conduct of their living descendants. It was taught that children owed it as a duty to their dead parents to contribute to their glory and happiness by lives of virtue.
- Confucius insisted chiefly on the four virtues of sincerity, benevolence, filial piety, and propriety. Sincerity was more than a mere social relation. To be truthful and straightforward in speech, faithful to one’s promises, conscientious in the discharge of one’s duties to others – this was included in sincerity and something more. The sincere man in Confucius’s eyes was the man whose conduct was always based on the love of virtue.
- ‘Filial piety is the root of all virtue.’ ‘Of all the actions of man there are none greater than those of filial piety.’ Filial piety prompted the son to love and respect his parents, contribute to their comfort, bring happiness and honour to their name, by honourable success in life.
- Another virtue of primary importance in the Confucian system is ‘propriety’. It embraces the whole sphere of human conduct, prompting the superior man always to do the right thing in the right place. It finds expression in the so-called rules of ceremony, which are not confined to religious rites and rules of moral conduct, but extend to the bewildering mass of conventional customs and usages by which Chinese etiquette is regulated.

Discussion

- The man of virtue and wisdom is described as one “who in the eager pursuit of knowledge, forgot his food, and in the joy of attaining to it forgot his sorrow”.
- Confucianism aims at making not simply the man of virtue, but the man of learning and of good manners. The perfect man must combine the qualities of saint, scholar and gentleman.
- A critical comparison with other conceptions of virtue could serve as starting point for an evaluation *e.g.* like Socrates, Confucius taught that vice sprang from ignorance and that knowledge led to virtue.
- Could this meaning of virtue be held in other social contexts *e.g.* modern societies?

3. Plato: *The Republic*

Analyse Plato's view about the role of women in his ideal state, and discuss the extent to which egalitarianism is possible in Plato's political philosophy.

The purpose of this question is twofold. First, it provides an opportunity for candidates to assess the status of women in Plato's ideal state as described in *The Republic*. Second, it is intended to make the candidate reflect upon the notion of egalitarianism. The candidate has the chance to explain why Plato gives little importance to differences between gender, yet stresses other differences among individuals based on such things as difference of skills, abilities, intelligence, parenthood. Therefore, candidates can discuss general aspects of Plato's political philosophy.

Key points

- Comparison between the role of guardians in the ideal state and the skills of other animals (like watchdogs) that are also in charge of supervision: male and female individuals can fulfill this task in both cases efficiently (although female individuals are, in general, weaker)
- The difference of nature between women and men is only relevant in matters related to procreation, not in matters related to the duties (like the duties attached to guardians) that they might better perform.
- An equal education for both genders is needed (both in animals and in humans) if they are going to fulfill the same duty (supervision, in the case of guardians).
- An egalitarian view of women and men may seem ridiculous to some of Plato's contemporaries; but the only reason for this is that it contradicted present custom.
- In reproductive practices, all female guardians are common to all male guardians, and vice versa: they are also equal in this context.

Discussion

- Plato is basically egalitarian about gender, but not about other features (skills, parenthood, intelligence). Why does he stress differences in this second kind of human characteristic and not in the first?
- Is Plato's egalitarianism about gender similar to today's notion of this idea?
- Plato stresses that, although mainly equal, women are in general weaker than men in all kinds of skills and abilities. Is this view coherent with present day society?
- Does Plato prefer egalitarianism more than liberty? Is his notion of justice and equality similar to our present day ideas about these notions?

4. **Aristotle: *The Nicomachean Ethics***

Discuss the extent of the relationship between wisdom and happiness.

The purpose of this question is to give the candidates the opportunity to explain the peculiar relationship between wisdom and happiness that Aristotle examines. Candidates might demonstrate an understanding of the meaning of these two concepts in the context of Aristotle's thought.

Key points

- Wisdom as the study or contemplation of eternal things
- Happiness as a complex of actions desired by themselves, as an end (virtuous actions)
- Wisdom as the most perfect virtue: the most self-sufficient for the sole individual
- Wisdom does not investigate happiness because happiness is subject to change.
- Wisdom is a part of happiness, its most important element; but it does not guarantee happiness. Wisdom and happiness are only glimpsed in our every day life.

Discussion

- The idea, defended by some recent philosophers (*e.g.* Unamuno), that knowledge and wisdom mainly cause unhappiness, instead of happiness
- The degree to which knowledge and wisdom might be self-sufficient activities for the individual
- Taking for granted that wisdom is a part of a happy life, is it really the most important part? Do we really develop the best of ourselves as human beings when we partake in intellectual activities? Are there not some other human abilities (love, compassion, humor, engagement, faith) more intimately connected to our human essence?

5. Aquinas: *Summa Theologiae*
The goal of the will is happiness. Explain and evaluate.

The aim of this question is for candidates to explain Aquinas's concept of will (practical action) and one of its purposes which is the desire for happiness. The concept of will is connected to Aquinas's concepts of sense appetites, the mind, and emotions.

Key points

- Our will inclines us to things in harmony with our need, and any movement in accord with an inclination is voluntary; we can control our behaviour by pursuing different means to our ends.
- Sense appetites take two forms: aggressive and affective; the former is for resisting whatever threatens our pleasure, the latter drives us to pursue our pleasure and avoid threats.
- Not all that we will must be willed; if there is no necessary connection with the goal of happiness, then these desires are not needed; to will a desirable good we must know the way in which it is good and desirable; every movement of will presupposes an act of knowledge, but not every act of knowledge presupposes our will.
- Emotions and the will: what is usually called love and desire are emotions that characterise sense appetites, but actions without emotion or excitement are possible and are more morally significant acts of will; reason governs appetite by means of a 'political' command.
- A desire for happiness is basic to human nature; it is the end and goal of all our intentional actions; all desires are under the control of reason; however, we cannot control our desire for our ultimate end, happiness.
- For Aquinas ultimate happiness is the contemplation of God.

Discussion

- The underlying premises of Aquinas's argument are that
 - all forms are accompanied by tendencies,
 - the more perfect beings have more perfect tendencies and desires
 - these desires are directed to things they are aware of, and not just toward objects they are naturally inclined toAs these claims are also presupposed by his categories of the soul, any of them could be challenged.
- Is the natural inclination of all our acts towards happiness? What if whatever brought me happiness was either dangerous to my health or against the law? Am I compelled to pursue it?
- Aquinas maintains that reasoned action is the defining characteristic separating humans from animals. Given new discoveries about rational behaviour in animals, would Aquinas have to consider them as morally, spiritually, and rationally equal to Man?
- Differences between happiness and pleasure.

6. Descartes: *Meditations*
Explain and discuss the scope of Descartes's concept of 'idea'.

The purpose of this question is to give the candidate an opportunity to explain the notion of 'idea' that Descartes develops throughout his *Meditations*, and to draw its connections with general epistemological or metaphysical understanding. Some of the main points of Descartes's text may be discussed following the thread of the notion of 'idea'. Answers can legitimately relate the notion of idea to main issues, *e.g.* the idea of God.

Key points

- Ideas as mental representations of entities. The mind only has access to these representations produced in itself, and not to the entities in themselves.
- These representations can be deceiving (and this is the origin of error) or truthful. The criteria for this truthfulness is that ideas are clear and distinct: so, it is an internal criteria to ideas themselves (evidence) what certifies its correctness (not an impossible comparison between ideas and the things that they represent: *adaequatio*).
- Problems connected to the possibility of deducing the existence of something from its idea only. The peculiarity of the idea of God and how He can be deduced from the perfection of the idea of Him. How God assures the truthfulness of at least some ideas.
- Innate ideas and acquired ideas; mathematical ideas and ideas that come from the external senses.

Discussion

- The beginning of idealism in Descartes and its comparison with realistic philosophies
- Do we really have in ourselves an idea of God? Is the existence of God known for the believer from an intellectual starting point (the idea of Him as the greatest perfection) or from other kinds of experiences?
- Ideas are certainly not a physical thing that we can find in the outer world. But are ideas really a purely mental thing, *i.e.* absolutely independent from the *res extensa*, from the body? Could we now see them, according to modern science, as an **activity** (not a bodily element) of a part of the body, *i.e.* the brain?
- Could the evidence of ideas be considered equivalent to truth?
- Could the possibility of being deceived by our ideas be the sole ground for a general mistrust on all our ideas? Or they can only deceive us sometimes precisely because, in general, we are used to giving them credit as long as they often do not lie to us?
- The contrast between formal and objective reality.

7. Locke: *Second Treatise on Government*

To what extent does Locke's notion of war justify aggression?

The question allows candidates to show an understanding of the difference Locke makes between war in a state of nature and in society.

Key Points

- A definition of war according to Locke, which is essentially conflict
- The illustration that an inefficient, ineffective State might be the cause of conflict
- The difference between conflict in a state of nature (war) and conflict in a society (aggression)
- Locke's restrictions on action in relationship to the sovereign or ruler
- Locke's point that war between two groups of people, one a sovereign state and one in a state of nature, is justifiable and between two sovereign states is not justifiable.

Discussion

- The idea that, when in society, conflict can be reduced by appealing to a common authority
- Whether Locke really wanted the individual to take the law into his own hands when protecting himself and his property
- The degree the individual or small group can act if a few perceive the state as not acting in their best interest. The issue of who defines best interest might be brought up
- Whether a more caring and paternalistic state might reduce or eliminate aggression
- A contrast with Hobbes might be made, in that Locke restricted a challenge against the sovereign while Hobbes allowed for it under certain circumstances
- The degree of freedom to act aggressively towards those who are in State of Nature who challenge the society. This might raise the discussion as to who defines the State of Nature and then how one behaves in national (*e.g.* parallel State) conflicts and wars
- The notion that in a broader sense Locke's argument could be the basis of 'just' wars
- There might be some link to the notion that a local militia would be allowed within the law *e.g.* USA and the gun lobby and the constitutional right to act against individual aggression. This could be contrasted with a state exercising more internal control, taking over or removing individual rights.
- The degrees of action that the individual is permitted to commit

**8. Hume: *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*
Explain and discuss the relevance of Hume's investigation of miracles.**

This question creates an opportunity for candidates to show their understanding of Hume's position on miracles, and how his analysis puts miracles into the realm of God, angels, and the area of faith.

The philosophical implications can be related to different issues, *e.g.* regularities in nature, causation, belief.

Key Points

- Explanation of Hume's definition of miracles being the work of God and angels
- Four reasons why they probably do not occur; insufficient evidence, suspension of reason, more a phenomena of non-civilised societies, contradictions within differing religions
- Use of the laws of nature and the process of induction and the seeming contradiction with miracles
- An analysis of his distinction between common sense and rational thought and belief.

Discussion

- Some miracles seem to be genuine, but Hume does not really accept this.
- Hume's position that miracles might be possible but not probable
- Hume does not really investigate the phenomenon of miracles but the nature of our belief in them, because he is more interested in the nature of belief than the miracles themselves
- How Hume deals with the nature of faith which is beyond proof.
- The strength of scientific knowledge as gained through objectivity, might be raised and questioned
- The closed approach of a naturalist's approach and the dislike of the metaphysical
- The role of the 'wise man's' need to have evidence and the nature of the evidence
- Reasons why the Bible's telling of miracles as well as accounts in other religious traditions might be valued and might be reliable
- Why belief should be seen as different from other sources of information.

**9. Rousseau: *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality and Social Contract*
Explain and assess Rousseau's concept of sovereignty.**

The question firstly asks for an explanation of central aspects of Rousseau's concept of sovereignty, which can be identified even if diverse interpretations of it have been developed in political philosophy. Moreover, answers could offer a variety of contrasting assessments.

Key points

- The state is a 'moral person' whose life is in the union of its members. Given that it cares for its own preservation, it must have a universal and compelling force in order to act. As nature gives each man absolute power over his members, the social pact also gives the body politic absolute power over all its members; and this power is sovereignty.
- The body politic or the sovereign, drawing its being wholly from the sanctity of the contract, can never bind itself to do anything derogatory to the original act, for instance, to alienate any part of itself, or to submit to another sovereign. Violation of the act by which it exists would be self-annihilation.
- Sovereignty, being only the exercise of the general will, cannot be transferred and that the sovereign, who is no less than a collective being, cannot be represented except by himself: the power indeed may be transmitted, but not the will.
- Sovereignty for the same reason is inalienable, is indivisible; and will is or is not.
- Rousseau criticizes the division of sovereignty according to its object (*e.g.* into force and will; into rights of taxation, justice and war) because it makes the political body separate bodies. He states that whenever sovereignty seems to be divided, there is an illusion.

Discussion

- Rousseau's main concepts, such as of state of nature, freedom, natural right, law, morality and property can be examined in relation to sovereignty.
- Concerning the dichotomy of popular-state sovereignty, it seems plausible that one can speak of both in Rousseau's theory.
- Rousseau sustains that the general will is always right and tends to the public advantage; but it does not follow that the deliberations of the people are always equally correct. Is this feasible in the real life of societies?
- What are the limits of the comparison between a political community and an organic body?
- What kind of reality has a general will? Is it something more than merely a fiction?

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

To what extent is an autonomous will a necessary condition for human dignity?

In this question, candidates could discuss Kant's argument that the ability to use practical reason (rational will) to form principles of conduct is the autonomy of the will, and is a freedom only experienced by rational agents. As an agent with an autonomous will, a person does not want to be used as a means to an end but as an end in itself. This becomes a universal maxim. Recognition of this autonomy in the self and in others constitutes a person's dignity.

Key points

- Autonomy (freedom): as it is not seen in the sensory world, the concept of freedom is recognised by the rational man as inherent to a rational nature; all ethical principles are formed from this understanding.
- Will (practical reason): action must have a principle and set before it an end; the principle is based on a wholly rational person exercising their inherent freedom, and the ends may be contingent; only persons are an end of unconditional value and ought not to be treated as a means to an end, but as ends in themselves.
- Argument for heteronomy: the laws governing human action depend on objects other than the will; there are empirical principles (pursuit of happiness) and rational principles (pursuit of perfection).
- Kingdom of ends: when persons with autonomous wills respect the autonomous and universalising wills of others; this ensures that all are treated with dignity.

Discussion

- If man creates his moral principles based on the concept of a wholly rational agent, then are those principles necessarily relevant to everyday human experience and utility, or just an academic exercise?
- Is it moral to propose a system of morality that places universality above consequences?
- Kant identifies universalizability as a necessary and sufficient condition for moral goodness. Are there supplementary characteristics?
- What other qualities could constitute a person's dignity? Are coma patients, infants, and the intellectually handicapped, beings that lack an autonomous and universalising will, without dignity?
- Why does heteronomy fail?

11. Nietzsche: *The Genealogy of Morals*

Explain and discuss the nature and role of ‘punishment’ for Nietzsche.

This question invites candidates to show how Nietzsche uses his own definition and origin of punishment to argue a case that punishment has two different functions and the links between his ideas in terms of morality and legality.

Key points

- How concepts develop historically: origin of punishment, out of indebtedness not fear
- The pluralistic purpose of punishment: debt and ritual
- The link between one person’s pain creating another’s pleasure and the affect on the desire for power
- The links or otherwise between guilt and punishment
- The notion of self-punishment might be developed.

Discussion

- A challenge as to whether there is a link between payment of debt and punishment which seems central to his argument. Contrasts might be made with some social actions which result in the infliction of pain as punishment or merely the payment of money *e.g.* some Muslim practices.
- An exploration of the phrase ‘I will make you pay’ and the phrase ‘paying their debt to society’
- The rise of justice as a possible replacement for punishment and the similar rise of mercy or the notion of misdemeanour not crime, therefore lessening the seriousness of the action and the reaction to it
- The establishment of legal systems, creating a decline or elimination of the guilty as it is the state that acts. This could lead to the guiltlessness of the state with the result that the offender could be seen as guiltless too. Examples might be terrorism and ‘state terrorism’ or murder and capital punishment.
- Arising out of self-punishment two ideas might be brought up: firstly the idea of helping others could be seen as self-punishment; secondly the idea of ‘love your neighbour as yourself’ might be seen as fear of the self and consequently, Nietzsche’s interpretation of God punishing himself with the crucifixion of Christ.

12. **Mill: *Essay on Liberty***

Explain and discuss Mill's ideas about the 'despotism of custom'.

This question provides an opportunity for students to explore the reasons why Mill opposes 'despotism of custom', and why he defends the ideas of individuality and diversity because they are good both for individuals and for society as a whole.

Key points

- 'Despotism of custom' as the tendency that tries to avoid diversity among individuals, *i.e.* individuality. Under the influence of this despotism, everybody tries to look more and more similar.
- But diversity must be defended on similar grounds as freedom of speech: it provides more opportunities to experience which is the best way of living, therefore it allows the progressive advancement of humanity.
- On the contrary, 'despotism of custom' stops the stream of history: this has happened in many civilizations, and it is for this reason that they were less developed than Europe, which kept more diversity inside itself.
- But, according to Mill, Europe is also falling under this 'despotism of custom' for many reasons. Education, improvement of communications, increase of commerce, ascendancy of public opinion: all of them make European diversity decrease, and put in danger the reason for European superior progress (individuality).

Discussion

- Was Mill's diagnosis of the strong assimilation tendencies of his time true? Nowadays, are Europeans less different among themselves than they were some centuries ago? In the case that it is so, has this phenomenon stopped European progress?
- Perhaps a more sympathetic view of customs is also possible from a utilitarian perspective: they might be seen as ways of living that have been tested through experience and have been of benefit to the majority.
- New tendencies of our time that also contribute to a lessening of diversity among individuals: globalization, mass-media
- Proposals for stimulating diversity and individuality: a new kind of education, social movements, support to artistic creation.

**13. Freud: *Civilisation and its Discontents* and *Outline of Psychoanalysis*
Explain and assess Freud's account of the qualities of the psychic processes.**

The question primarily refers to Freud's basic distinction between three qualities of the psychic: consciousness, preconsciousness and unconsciousness. Answers might also analyse the structure of the psychic apparatus (*id*, *ego*, *super-ego*), the opposition between pleasure principle and reality principle, and the cultural aspects implied in these concepts.

Key points

- What is called 'conscious' is the same as the consciousness of philosophers and of everyday opinion; everything else mental is 'the unconscious' (in a broad sense).
- Psychic processes that are not conscious are divided into the preconscious and the unconscious (in a proper sense).
- Conscious processes do not form unbroken sequences which are complete in themselves. Therefore there are mental or somatic processes which are concomitant with them and more complete.
- The process of something becoming conscious is above all linked with the perceptions which our sense-organs receive from the external world. This phenomenon takes place in the outermost cortex of the ego. Conscious processes on the periphery of the ego and everything else in the ego unconscious – such would be the simplest state of affairs that could be pictured.
- The inside of the *ego*, which comprises above all the thought processes, has the quality of being preconscious. The sole prevailing quality in the *id* is that of being unconscious. *Id* and unconscious are as intimately linked as *ego* and preconscious. In the former case the connection is even more exclusive.

Discussion

- Philosophers have argued that the idea of something psychic being unconscious is self-contradictory.
- Although the division between the three classes of material which possess these qualities is neither absolute nor permanent, it has been argued that it transforms the psychic into something substantial.
- Freud tries to base the division in clinical experience and scientific method, but psychoanalysis does not meet present scientific standards
- For Freud the idea of the unconscious is linked to his concept of sexuality. Is this sustainable?
- The idea of unconscious implies serious consequences regarding human action, morality, and legal responsibility.

14. Buber: *I and Thou*

Explain and discuss Buber's claim that the 'I' is the true standard of humanity.

The question allows for an explanation of Buber's twofold concept of the I in the pair words I-It and I-Thou (You). It is the degree to which we form authentic relationships that determine the humanity of the I.

Key points

- The I of an I-It lives exclusively in the world of treating all it encounters as an object; it is pre-occupied with understanding and categorising experience using causality; the I of the It world becomes conscious of itself and others as subjects of experience and use; the attitude of the I-It is to turn away from relationships.
- The I of an I-Thou lives in the moment of relation; they engage with others and participate without a goal other than participation in the relationship itself; God (or something equivalent) is glimpsed through these relationships with others, nature or art; the attitude of the I-Thou is to turn toward relationships.
- Relation is reciprocity and the more perfect the reciprocity the more perfect the relation; whoever stands in a relation participates in an actuality *i.e.* the establishment of a relationship which is transient and transitory; an I-Thou will become an I-It except if the relationship is with God (or something equivalent) that never becomes an I-It.
- The engagement with the world and others through conversation, art, and other actions that have no desires or ulterior motives are all I-Thou relationships; the strength of the I-Thou within the I word pair determines a person's humanity.

Discussion

- Is Buber justified in characterising the beliefs of the I-It world as all leading toward an inevitable degeneration, an attitude that embraces doom?
- Though Buber claims that the best relationships are symmetrical, is it possible to conceive of other sorts of relationships that can be as worthwhile and meaningful as a wholly reciprocated relationship *e.g.* belief in an indifferent god?
- In placing relationships above subject and object in the moral hierarchy, has Buber put the cart before the horse? Because a relationship is impossible without a subject/object, aren't these categories of more important moral worth?
- If the strength of humanity is the I of an I-Thou, then how can one tell the quality of this humanity if its quality and level of engagement is a purely subjective judgment, one made without the detachment of sober rational thought?

15. **Ortega y Gasset: *History as a System***
“Man needs a new revelation.” With reference to ‘historical reason’ explain and critically evaluate Ortega’s statement.

The purpose of this question is to offer the candidates an opportunity to describe the kind of ‘revelation’ that Ortega defends, *i.e.* the discovery in the twentieth century of a genuine ‘historical reason’ after the decay of religious faith and scientific reason. Candidates have the possibility of explaining the reasons for seeing this discovery as something urgently needed, and they may take advantage of this chance in order to discuss the extent to which Ortega’s diagnosis is pertinent.

Key points

- ‘Revelation’ as the contact of human beings with something that is seen as a new reality, not only a ‘mere idea’ about reality. This revelation thus entails faith (on the new reality perceived) and reason (that tries to organize and understand this reality).
- Scientific reason was a revelation at the time of Kepler and Galileo, but now (twentieth century) its development is seen as a ‘mental combination and nothing else’, something with ‘mere symbolic character’ and only appreciated for its utility. It has lost, therefore, its qualification as ‘revelation’ and today is only a ‘mere idea’.
- The new revelation must be sought in a sphere which was overlooked during the success of the faith in scientific reason: our very life, the only thing that is left in front of us after the decay of the religious and scientific revelations.
- In order to understand the reality of our life, we have only History, the science that studies the process that has made us the way we are. History was previously thought of as contrary to reason, but now a new reason (‘historical reason’) must be developed if we want to understand this new revelation.
- Historical reason tries to understand every human fact by seeing the way it has come into being, not by putting it under mathematical laws.

Discussion

- Was ‘historical reason’ really a ‘revelation’, in Ortega’s sense, in his time?
- Is science really thought of today only as a ‘mere idea’, and is it appreciated only for its utility and nothing else?
- Is the past really useful in order to understand the present? Or is it detrimental?
- According to Ortega, a society that lacks revelation is a decadent society. Is this idea of decadence appropriate? Could a society progress without faith in history, science or religion?

16. Wittgenstein: *The Blue and Brown Books*

Explain and assess why the philosophical craving for generality is a hindrance to understanding.

The aim of this question is for candidates to explain some of the problems Wittgenstein identifies as originating from general solutions to philosophical issues. This is contrasted with Wittgenstein's approach – a focus on the particulars – to firstly show that traditional questions in philosophy are based on misconceptions, and to also demonstrate that knowledge of the 'language games' provides us with a better (though not unproblematic) insight into meaning.

Key points

- Wittgenstein cites 4 problems of generality with regards to philosophical thinking:
 - the tendency to look for something common to all when it is not appropriate
e.g. beautiful things have beauty as an ingredient
 - the misconception rooted in language that a person who masters a general term has a general mental image, not a particular one
 - we also confuse the meaning of mental states when a universal is grasped *i.e.* confusion between mental states as a hypothetical mechanism, or as a state of consciousness like experiencing a toothache
 - philosophers are pre-occupied with the models of science and mathematics as a means for understanding via verification, and so mimic the scientific characteristic of unifying and generalising issues
- Wittgenstein's own treatment of philosophical topics like representational theory of perception, solipsism, the privacy of experience *etc.* highlight how confusion arises when a general approach is employed
- The 'language game' view *i.e.* an incorporation of the context, use and purpose of a word, and its relationships with other words, as an approach to understanding its meaning.

Discussion

- Though Wittgenstein points out mistakes when searching for general principles, the search itself is not without value, and the methods of mathematics and science ensure a degree of validity to arguments
- Rather than reduce confusion, does Wittgenstein's method make philosophical problems more intractable? If not, then what type of answers are we expecting?
- Does this description of philosophical activity *i.e.* investigating the meaning of words within language games, make philosophy a purely descriptive activity?
- If meaning is never transparent or complete, does this mean that truth is a convention that is culturally determined?
- Can the meaning of moral terms be understood using Wittgenstein's approach, or must one be silent on this issue?

17. Arendt: *The Human Condition*

Explain the hierarchy of human activities (labour, work, action) and discuss whether it justifies the seeing of the decline of 'action'.

This question gives an opportunity for the candidate to investigate Arendt's case for designating labour, work and action as the three fundamental human activities. It then invites them to explore her argument that suggests labour has become superior to action.

Key points

- A definition of labour (routines for survival), work (production of objects beyond subsistence) and action (complete human interaction)
- The role of speech and the interaction of humans
- Her differences between private and public realms
- Her case for the superiority and importance of action so as to increase human awareness of the 'Other'.

Discussion

- There might be some mention of her founding herself in Aristotle and the argument for and importance of the *polis*. Also the rooting of labour in the ideas of Locke and Marx.
- There might be some mention of the rise of introspection and the doubt of the 'self', and the world affecting one human's commitment to another.
- The presumed importance of speech and its link to political – public activity
- Possible questioning of the rise of labour resulting in the decline of action
- There might be some awareness shown that the ideas put forward are purely theoretical and no concrete evidence is presented to illustrate and support the argument.
- The value of political life being positive if not virtuous might be questioned with reference to the nature of politics in the modern world and why, or if, people are sceptical of political behaviour.
- The nature of our perceived consumer driven or scientific society might be used to illustrate the correctness of Arendt's assumption, in that people see others as means to an end.

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

Explain and discuss De Beauvoir's analysis of Marxism in relation to her Existentialist views.

The question invites an analysis of De Beauvoir's view of Marxism and an explanation of its relationship to Existentialism. Candidates may also find it appropriate to comment upon the concepts of 'freedom', 'subjectivity' and 'ethics'.

Key points

- Like Existentialism, Marxism is 'radical humanism', as long as it rejects any objective values as absolutes, and recognizes that only the will of human beings decide which goals are good and which are not. This is the reason, according to De Beauvoir, why the actions of the bourgeois, no matter how convenient they are for the Marxist program, are always distrusted: because of their situation, the subjective will of the bourgeois cannot be completely dedicated to a project opposed to their bourgeois way of life.
- Nevertheless, in Marxism, although the meaning of action is defined by human wills, these wills are not considered free: they must be determined by objective conditions (if not, it would be impossible to unite all proletariat under the same given program, *i.e.* Marxist revolution).
- But Marxism uses a vocabulary (when acting, but also when preaching action) that is a moral vocabulary, and therefore assumes freedom of the will. According to De Beauvoir, Marx commits a contradiction.
- The place of ethics in Marxism is then twofold. There is strong criticism of it as being outdated because it appeals to freedom; but there is also a strong defence that ethics should rule over all political action.
- The reason that De Beauvoir finds Marxism problematic is the following: it believes, like Christians do, that total freedom would mean not having to justify one's actions. But De Beauvoir's text tries precisely to explain the opposite. Existentialist ethics, requires a universal ethical justification of the value that we freely decide to set up: the wish for the disclosure to the world asserting oneself as free.

Discussion

- Counter arguments from a Marxist point of view
- Is there not a vicious circle in the fact that De Beauvoir's ethics consist in asserting the freedom that makes this very (free) ethical action possible?
- Is it really possible to avoid despair when someone accepts that there are no objective values, and that every value depends on our free will?

19. Rawls: *A Theory of Justice*

Explain and evaluate Rawl's notion of the veil of ignorance.

The intention of this question is for candidates to explain Rawls' concept of the veil of ignorance as a necessary condition for parties in the original position; the veil is necessary because of the formulation of, and agreement to, fair and binding principles in perpetuity. The concept of justice as fairness is not possible without the veil.

Key points

- The concept of the original position: in contract theory, a theoretical, abstract starting position is conceived that is agreeable to all parties from which collective decisions and binding agreements are made; fundamental to the original position is the equality of all parties.
- The veil of ignorance: a condition where parties in the original position are deprived of information that is of a particular or contingent nature; each party is assumed to possess a sense of justice and is rational, but cannot know their (or others) destiny or long term plans; they are motivated to do well for themselves and family, and because they cannot know future outcomes, make principles and agreements that all might find fair, regardless of social position or innate talents.
- Generality, universalizability and finality are essential characteristics for forming ethical principles; in the original position people are bound by these duties of rights because it applies to all choices of ethical principles.
- The two principles of justice that are necessary to a concept of justice as fairness are (i) equal liberty and (ii) equality of opportunity. Rawls's argument is that these are, at the very least, the two fundamental principles that persons in the original position with the veil of ignorance would reach.

Discussion

- Has Rawls set the conditions for the original position so stringently that there is little choice but to logically accept his argument and conclusions for his principles of justice?
- A discussion on Rawls's comparison to Kant with regard to forming maxims of action, particularly when it comes to the consideration of universalizability and perpetuity of principles; how forming principles of justice is analogous to the formation of the categorical imperative, both require an autonomous rational agent and a universal application.
- Though justice is supposed to be blind, does wilful ignorance of contingencies in the formation of principles ultimately make the justice system indifferent to the plight of victims and criminals?
- Rawls's argument for the principles of justice sounds noble and is worthy of support, but this is a utopian vision based on a fallacy: people cannot be wholly rational and cannot divorce themselves from their history and context. No amount of 'ignorance' can overcome the drive for self-interest.
- Rawls's argument seems to be applicable only in democratic societies.

**20. Feyerabend: *Farewell to Reason*
Explain and evaluate whether rationality is still possible.**

Answers could develop aspects of Feyerabend's discussion on relativism and identify in them issues related to the idea of reason, considering it from different perspectives such as epistemological, political, cultural.

Key points

- Feyerabend complains that the ideas of reason and rationality are ambiguous and never clearly explained; they are deified hangovers from autocratic times which no longer have any content but whose 'halo of excellence' clings to them and lends them spurious respectability.
- Societies dedicated to freedom and democracy should be structured in a way that gives all traditions equal opportunities *i.e.* equal access to federal funds, educational institutions, basic decisions. Democratic societies should give all traditions equal rights and not only equal opportunities.
- Citizens, and not special groups have the last word in deciding what is true or false, useful or useless for their society.
- For every statement (theory, point of view) that is believed to be true with good reasons there may exist arguments showing that either its opposite, or a weaker alternative is true, or show a conflicting alternative to be at least as good, or even better.

Discussion

- Reason is indispensable, in almost all activity we permanently make use of reason: it is the capacity which allows us to come to grips with the conditions we are living in.
- Feyerabend's criticism does not take into account differences in the traditional idea of reason *e.g.* according to Kant reason no longer provides first principles for cognition, it only provides perspectives of totality.
- Relativism is a result of cultural confrontation, an attempt to make sense of the phenomenon of cultural variety. Feyerabend is well aware that the term 'relativism' itself is understood in many different ways. He merely endorses views which no-one would deny, but which do not deserve to be called relativist, such as the idea that people may profit from studying other points of view.
- It seems that Feyerabend would like to base the criteria he is arguing for on beliefs or decisions. When we try to justify them, we should come back to reason and arguments.
- Is it only the traditional philosophical sense of reason that is renounced, or all forms of reason?

21. Foucault: *The History of Sexuality*

Explain and discuss the distinction between ‘the right of life’ and the ‘right of death’.

This question allows the candidate to investigate Foucault’s claim that there has been a shift in the purpose of power and the establishment of what he calls ‘bio-power.’ The candidate might explore how the result is the politicisation of life.

Key points

- Definition of the right to death simply referring to a ruler keeping someone alive or executing them. Comparing this to the right to life which now involves the extension of life
- The invention of ‘bio-power’ involving the reduction of the human to an economic unity and secondly the impact of this on population control
- The link to the rise of capitalism and increasing role of politics in people’s lives.

Discussion

- There might be some challenge to the basic premise that Foucault bases his argument on the rise of sexuality.
- A contrast between the exercise of power restricting activity, stopping people doing things, and the application of power in encouraging people to do things or what they ought to do
- The shift of capital punishment from an act of destruction to an act of protecting life and the moral dilemma that it raises
- With the shift to ‘right to life’ there arises the tendency to increase peoples views as to the degree of separation between private life and public life.
- The problem of governments exercising ‘bio-power’ can be driven by different motives and examples could arise like China’s populations control policy and that advocated by Eire or the Catholic Church.
- This might not be a new phenomenon with politicians’ (or others’) private lives becoming of more interest and more public, given the nature of Greece or Rome in Ancient times.

22. Putnam: *Reason, Truth and History*

“The mind and the world jointly make up the mind and the world.” Critically assess.

The quote reflects the core of Putnam’s position on the mind-body problem using metaphorical language. It is also directly related to the debate between realism and idealism, and to Putnam’s externalist account of mental content. Given the characteristics of Putnam’s discussion, which includes a quite detailed analysis of different positions, answers could develop various aspects of these positions.

Key points

- Some relevant positions that could be discussed: parallelism, interactionism, identity, monism, functionalism.
- Examples such as the split brain or the inverted spectrum. The case of brains in a vat can be dealt with when framed into this discussion.
- Philosophy has become anti-aprioristic. But once we have recognized that most of what we regard as *a priori* truth is of a contextual and relative character, we have given up the only good ‘argument’ there was against mind-body identity.
- Realism about *qualia*, a position for which Putnam argues, sustains that there is nothing hidden behind them, no noumenal fact of the entities really being conscious or really not being conscious.
- There are only the obvious empirical facts related to the notion of consciousness we actually have *e.g.* rocks and nations are dissimilar from people and animals.
- Our world is a human world, and what is conscious and not conscious, what has sensations and what does not, what is qualitatively, similar to what and what is dissimilar, are all dependent ultimately on our judgments of likeness and difference.

Discussion

- Some of the above mentioned positions, or others such as dualism, could be sustained against Putnam’s argument.
- Does the brain have non-physical properties?
- Putnam develops a qualitative position on the mind-body relation; is it limited and insufficient?
- Putnam’s examples are relevant but too selective.

23. Taylor: *The Ethics of Authenticity*

“Authenticity is clearly self-referential, but this doesn’t mean that the self and what the self refers to must be self-referential.” Critically discuss.

The question invites a critical exploration of Taylor’s suggestion that we will find genuine fulfilment only in something which has significance independent of us or our desires.

Key points

- According to Taylor to confuse these two kinds of self-referentiality is problematic. It closes off the way ahead, which cannot involve going back behind the age of authenticity.
- Self-referentiality of manner is unavoidable in our culture. To confuse the two is to create the illusion that self-referentiality of matter is equally inescapable. The confusion lends legitimacy to the worst forms of subjectivism.
- The development of modern art gives a good example of how the two kinds of subjectivation are crucially different and yet how easily they are confused.
- Taylor refers to the shift from an understanding of art as mimesis to one that stresses creation. It concerns what he calls the languages of art, that is, the publicly available reference points that poets and painters can draw on.
- The shift: where formerly poetic languages could rely on certain publicly available orders of meaning, now has to consist of a language of articulated sensibility.

Discussion

- To block out an exploration beyond the self is to deprive us of one of our main weapons in the continuing struggle against the flattened and trivialized forms of modern culture.
- Some writers are not subjectivist with reference to the content. Their agenda is not the self, but something beyond: Rilke, Eliot, Pound, Joyce, Mann are among them.
- Taylor’s ideas such as ‘horizon of significance (contexts that are meaningful for the self)’, ‘narcissism’ (wrong and radical and kind of self-reference), can be discussed in connection with the issue introduced by the passage.

24. Nussbaum: *Poetic Justice*

To what extent should literature enlighten the moral behaviour of political leaders? Explain and evaluate.

This question asks candidates to show an understanding of how Nussbaum sees literature as having a moral component and whether exposure to all or some literature could and should affect the moral behaviour of leaders. The candidate might also question the premises and challenge the argument.

Key points

- Function and value of art as a means to creating empathy and possibly to transcendence
- The claim that art generally has an implicit, moral component which should be transferred to or gained by the person who encounters the art form
- The issue that education, to a lesser extent these days, addresses the emotional side of humans and hence today compassion is devalued
- The importance of affecting a change of behaviour – more tolerance and awareness of the plight of ‘lower classes’ – among leaders by their encounter with literature.

Discussion

- The possible narrowness of Nussbaum’s interpretation of literature *e.g.* only nineteenth century novels
 - She might be overstating the humanisation function of literature
 - Some questioning of the limited range of emotions that Nussbaum wishes to develop – sympathy and tolerance and whether tolerance is an emotion and can be developed in the same way
 - A questioning of why this exposure to literature is to be limited to the leadership ‘class’.
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